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History of early education in Middlesex County, 1669-1890

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HISTORY OF EARLY EDUCATION

IN

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

1669 - 1890

BY

HOMER ALTON McKANN

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

OF THE

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IN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
LIST OF TABLES	2
CHAPTER I. COLONIAL EDUCATION IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, 1669-1776	1
CHAPTER II. EARLY IDEAS OF STATE CONTROL AS THEY AFFECTED THE COUNTY, 1776-1811	25
CHAPTER III. EARLY LEGISLATION AS IT AFFECTED EDUCATION IN MIDDLESEX, 1811-1870	32
CHAPTER IV. THE PROGRESS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, 1870-1890	58
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY	75
APPENDIX A. PRIVATE SCHOOLS	79
APPENDIX B. OUTSTANDING MEN OF THE EARLY PERIOD	82
APPENDIX C. A DESCRIPTION OF URBANNA, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, 1840	83
APPENDIX D. STATE SUPERINTENDENTS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1870-1890	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE I.	NAMES OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS AND THEIR REPORT, 1847	48
TABLE II.	DATA ON EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, 1818-1861	50
TABLE III.	PROGRESS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, 1871-1891	68
TABLE IV.	DATA ON SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, 1871-1891	70

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present a clear and accurate history of education in Middlesex County from 1669 to 1891. The account is complete in so far as available material has made it possible.

The material presented in this thesis is an original investigation in that the information was secured, largely, from primary sources. This represents the first earnest effort to write a complete and detailed account of the development of education in Middlesex County. The facts were secured by diligent search through court records, legal documents, School Commissioners' reports, State School reports, contemporary histories, magazine articles and from information given by older people of the county.

In spite of the fact that Middlesex has splendid records covering long periods of years, the method of reporting changed from time to time and this made it impossible to complete Tables II and IV. If school reports were made during the period just prior and during the War Between the States, they were not found by the writer.

This thesis is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education. It was written under the direction of Mr. W. Daniel Ellis, of the Summer Session Faculty of the University of

Richmond. To him sincere appreciation is expressed for stimulation and valuable criticism.

I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation also to Mr. Carroll C. Chowning whose rare knowledge of Middlesex County history enabled him to direct the writer to valuable source material. Acknowledgment is made also of the helpful information and suggestions rendered by many elderly people of the county.

I wish to express my grateful appreciation to my wife, Bertha Beazley McKann, whose faithful assistance, advice and encouragement have aided me in every phase of this study.

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION IN COLONIAL MIDDLESEX

1669 - 1776

Middlesex is one of the twelve Virginia counties named for English shires, and even at the early date of its separation from Lancaster County, which embraced a large area of the Tidewater section, there is evidence of its historical, social and educational importance. In the old vestry book of Christ Church Parish there may be found evidence for approximating the date of the county's establishment.

"It can be taken as possible that Middlesex County (at least provisionally or in some sense) was established between September 27, 1667 and September 16, 1688, or as highly probable that it was finally established sometime between September 27, 1667 and February 5, 1669 and as certain between September 27, 1667 and October 30, 1669." 1

1. Chamberlayne, C. G., The Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish Middlesex County, Virginia. p. 1.

The county is located in the eastern part of the state of Virginia. It lies, long and narrow, between two navigable rivers, the Rappahannock and the Piankatank, extending south as far as Stingray Point on the Chesapeake Bay. It was to this point that Captain John Smith came in 1608 while on an exploratory voyage up the Chesapeake Bay. Across the Rappahannock to the north lies Lancaster County. South of the Piankatank lie the counties of Mathews, Gloucester, King and Queen, and Essex County borders it on the west.

The physical conditions existing in this county, and this was true of most Virginia counties of the seventeenth century, were not so favorable to popular education as those prevailing in the colonies of New England. There almost all of the settlers were from the first, grouped in villages and towns and concentration in one place of the people of each settlement made it possible, even practicable, at an early date to carry on some system of public instruction in each community.

Middlesex, on the other hand, was composed of large plantations, fronting on the rivers. The county is some forty miles long with an average width of six miles. The topography of the county and the nature of the country lent itself to the plantation system which grew up in Virginia during the Colonial period. Vast plantations were acquired by grants or patents based on "head rights" The London Company gave

to each man paying his passage to the colony, fifty acres of land and another fifty acres for each additional person brought over by him.¹

The estate of Henry Corbin was four thousand acres. He transported four score persons to the colony in 1662.² That of Captain Ralph Wormley was three thousand acres, extending ten miles along the south side of the Rappahannock River, and including the old Indian town of Nimcock which was later named Urbanna. Wormley transported to this county three score and four persons, all white except nine negroes, June 6, 1649.³

The estate of Charles Grimes in Middlesex was six hundred acres, bounded on the northwest side by "Nimcock Creek" and on the southwest by the swamp.⁴ He also owned one thousand acres across the river in Lancaster County.

Sir Thomas Lunsford, Knight Baronet, was granted three thousand, four hundred and twenty-three acres on the south side of the Rappahannock river, October 24, 1650; head rights, sixty-five persons.⁵

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1. Nugent, Nell Marion, Cavaliers and Pioneers, Abstracts of Virginia Land Grants and Patents, Vol. I, page 24.
 2. Nugent, Nell Marion, Cavaliers and Pioneers, page 25.
 3. Ibid., pp. 181-182.
 4. Ibid., pp. 354.
 5. Ibid., pp. 200.

Richard Perrot was granted eight hundred and fifty acres. Major Beverley owned one hundred, sixty-five acres in Middlesex on the north side of the Plankatank, April 12, 1666; head rights, four persons. He continued to add to his possessions until at the time of his death (twenty-four years later) he held more than fifty thousand¹ acres, chiefly in the frontier counties.

These holdings were increased from time to time by inheritance and purchase, and after a few generations they became vast estates consisting of thousands of acres, not all in one county. Such a system of large holdings resulted in a scattered population, families living miles apart, often depending upon water transportation as their chief means of communication. Each great planter with direct shipping connections in England imported all commodities needed for himself and neighbors and had the goods delivered to his own wharf. This method discouraged the establishment of towns. There was not a town in the county until 1705, at which time the General Assembly ordered that a town be built at the Indian village of Nimcock. Had any public school system been established, the number of schools needed would have of necessity been out of all proportion to the number of children to be taught. It was not as if

1. Stanard, W. G., Major Robert Beverley and His Descendants, The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. II, page 412.

the children were drawn from a village built up around a church and schoolhouse. In Middlesex most children would have had to travel long hours on horseback to reach a remote schoolhouse. Public schools did not develop in colonial Virginia, where all of the physical conditions were so unfavorable.

Let us not conclude that there was a dearth of intellectual interests among the people, since the opposite was the case. Although the plantation system retarded free education in Virginia, the ruling class during the entire colonial period persisted in their efforts to provide the traditional educational opportunities for their children. Here were settled Englishmen, most of whom desiring to better themselves in a new country, men who had no desire to break away from the mother country, determined to take every opportunity to improve their status; in a word, here were Englishmen determined to be a race of gentlemen.

This determination showed itself rather forcibly in the fact that in spite of a wilderness to conquer, and Indian "butcheries" along the river in 1677, Ralph Wormley and Richard Perrott carefully planned the preparation of their sons for college in England, where they matriculated in 1665 and 1674 respectively. Bruce gives an account of the Indian troubles along the river as indicated by the following statement:

"As soon as the news of the ravages and

butcheries arrived the General Assembly provided for an army of a thousand men Middlesex was not less prompt than the others and it seems that Major Robert Beverley furnished food in sufficient quantity The cost to Middlesex of the march against the Indians was estimated at nearly thirty thousand pounds of tobacco." 1

"Two years later in 1679, Middlesex raised thirteen troopers for the march. This march cost the county fifty-six thousand pounds of tobacco or six thousand dollars in modern value of money." 2

Let us see how these fathers, among this new landed aristocracy, so far from cultural centers, were mindful of the education of their children, lest they grow up into "ignorant bores."

There were to be found a handful of books in the possession of many of the settlers which were listed in inventories as "parcels of books." Often the titles of the volumes were omitted, but the fact that these settlers placed sufficient importance on the possession of books to bring with them a few choice books, gives us some notion as to their conception of social and intellectual values.

When the titles were listed they reveal a high cultural level of those who read and valued them. The books in a person's library indicate the reading habits of the owner. Ralph Wormley, Secretary of State, took time to

1. Bruce, Alexander, Institutional History of Virginia, pages 88 - 92.

2. Ibid., pages 95 - 96.

collect a library of five hundred separate titles, a larger number than any other Virginian had collected up to that¹ time.

Paul Wilstach's description of the Wormeley home is quoted below:

"Rosegill in the eighteenth century held a chapel, a picture gallery, and a noble library. In 1701 the library embraced five hundred titles. The builder of Rosegill and the founder of its picture gallery and library was the second Ralph Wormeley who having entered Oriel College, Oxford, in his fifteenth year in 1665, completed his studies, returned to Rosegill and eventually became a member of the House of Burgesses, a member of the Council, Secretary of State, a trustee of William and Mary College, naval officer of the Rappahannock and eventually president of the Council. According to a contemporary he was the most powerful man in Virginia.

"It was the fifth Ralph Wormeley who having completed his studies at Eton and Cambridge, returned home about 1761 and became the greatest book collector of all Tidewater." 2

In the last testaments of many planters we find evidence of interest in intellectual pursuits through such provisions as these: "In Madam Dudley's Romme a parcoll of³ books . . . f100."

In the will of James Blaise, this desire for the education of two cousins is stated:

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1. Wright, Louis B., The First Gentleman of Virginia, p. 197.
 2. Wilstach, Paul., Tidewater Virginia, pp. 236 - 237.
 3. Will Book of Middlesex County, 1701, pages not numbered.

"I desire you, my dear wife, to lett my two cousins, Mary Osband and Agatha Vance, have two years schooling apiece and then return home to learn household work of my wife if then alive." 1

Samuel Batcheloer in his will of 1756 expressed this desire:

"I wish that my two sons, William and Thomas be kept in school until the age of sixteen, then to be bound out to some good trade." 2

In 1692 while William Byrd was perfecting in London his social and intellectual accomplishments, Christopher Robinson of Middlesex was also at school there. His father who passed away during the year 1692 provided one thousand and two hundred dollars for his son's education.

These ladies and gentlemen in a frontier society were anxious that their sons have every advantage, and consequently they sent them back to English schools and colleges to complete their education.

From a list of Virginians attending school in England before 1775, the following names from Middlesex County appear:

1. Ralph Wormeley	Oxford 1665*
2. Henry Perrott	Grays Inn 1674**
3. Harry Beverley	place unknown 1694***
4. John Beverley	" " 1694

-
1. Will Book of Middlesex County, 1700, pages not numbered.
 2. Will Book of Middlesex County, 1756, pages not numbered.
 3. Virginia Historical Magazine, Vol. V, pp. 198-199.

5. Robert Beverley	place unknown	1694
6. Bartholomew Yates	Oxford	1695
7. Ralph Wormeley	place unknown	1702
8. John Wormeley	" "	1702
9. Peter Robinson	Oxford	1713
10. Christopher Robinson	Oxford	1721 & 1723
11. Chickley Thackery	Oxford	1724
12. Bartholomew Yates	Oxford	1733
13. Ralph Wormeley	Eton	1760
14. John Randolph Grimes	Eton	1760
15. Philip Ludwell Grimes	Eton	1760

* The first student from Colonial Virginia to matriculate in an English University, Oriel, Oxford, England, July 14, 1665.

** The first law student from Colonial Virginia entered Gray's Inn, London, November 14, 1674. His brother Richard who was born February 24, 1650, was the first male white child of English descent born in Middlesex County. Richard was also the first male white child born on the Rappahannock.

*** Transactions carried out by the executors of Major Beverley's estate paid to two merchants in London for entertaining and accommodating Major Beverley's sons, Harry, John and Robert Beverley the sum of forty pounds.

The county most numerously represented in English schools at this period was Westmoreland, with nineteen men listed, and Middlesex was second, with fifteen men mentioned.

From a study of this list it would indicate that the private educational facilities in Middlesex County, for preparation for college, were comparable with those in the mother country since these men were able to go from the

county to do work in the English schools.


Due to the lack of any complete record of how other planters' children in Middlesex were taught, we may rely upon the answer given by Governor Berkley in 1671 to the inquiry of the home government as to the course taken in the colony concerning churches and schools. His significant reply is as follows:

"The same course that is taken in England out of town; every man according to his ability instructing his children." 1

The tutorial system of education was used in England "out of towns" and was that used by the wealthy landed gentry in Virginia for the education of their sons.

Thus we see that schools began in private homes. Some competent person of desirable character and influence was chosen by the planter to prepare his children, especially the sons, for life in the early period. The education received by the daughters of many well-to-do planters did not always include the art of writing. As late as 1704 Mary Carter placed her mark of signature as witness to the will of Thomas E. Hedgecock. In 1707 Elizabeth Blaise signed her name "E". Sara Yates, wife of the minister of Christ Church Parish signed her name as witness to the will

1. Cubberley, Elwood P., Public Education in the U. S., page 23.

of Henry Thacker and Judith Wortham signed her name in 1759.¹
In 1710 Mary Hazelwood, the first woman to have a will recorded in Middlesex County, placed her mark . The will²
was signed by four men all of whom signed their names.

The following citation from Weeden's Economic and Social Conditions in New England, quoted by Cubberley, is interesting because it sheds some light upon existing educational practices in New England during the Colonial period:

"In the eighteenth century the daughters of men holding important offices in town and church were obliged to make their mark instead of writing their signature." 3

There were three firmly established classes in Colonial Virginia. There were the planters, the negro slave and indentured whites and the small planter, often called "the yeoman." During the earlier Colonial period Middlesex County was dominated by men who wished to carry on English religion, tradition and educational principles. The English government did nothing toward the direct encouragement of education during the long years covering the American Colonial period, and there was no semblance of free education except for the poor. This attitude helps

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1. Will Book of Middlesex County, 1759 - Original Copy, pages not numbered.
 2. Ibid., 1710.
 3. Cubberley, Elwood P., Public Education in the U. S., p. 52.

to explain why the feeling prevailed so long in Virginia that a literary education was a matter of individual concern only and that free education was for paupers and¹ orphans.

It was customary for gentlemen to remember the poor in their wills and endow schools to support of the schoolmaster and perhaps to pay the tuition of some of his pupils who were unable to pay.

In 1685 William Gordon of Middlesex gave one hundred acres of land for a free school in Urbanna on which land a schoolhouse was built and a school was conducted for some years. In 1700 the court of Middlesex reported that the said land "now lyeth void." At a meeting of the Vestry of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex County, on the 5th day of January, 1685, the following entry is found:

"It is ordered by this present Vestry that Mr. William Daniel present church warden for ye Middle Precinct for this ensuing year to imediately take into his possession the hundred acres of land left by the last will and testament of Mr. William Gordon, late deceased, for ye use and benefit of a free school, together with two cows and their increase, and that ye said Mr. William Daniel church Warden, to proceed according to the will of the testator, etc." 2

As proof that such a school existed in 1691 let us note

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1. Monroe, Paul, The Founding of American Public School System, pp. 13 - 14.
 2. Middlesex County Order Book, 1680-94, p. 239.

that the Vestry of Christ Church was ordered to pay Claud Vallott for work done on "ye free school" two hundred and fifty pounds of tobacco.

"At a vestry meeting for Christ Church Parish held on the 24th of November, 1691 a payment of two hundred and fifty pounds of tobacco was made to Claud Vallott 'for work done on ye free school.' At the same meeting the vestrymen ordered the church wardens to 'enquire after the two cows left for the use of the free school by Mr. William Gordon, deceased, and delivered to Mr. Duel Pead, our late minister.' When Mr. Duel Pead resigned as minister of Christ Church Parish and returned to England in 1690, he turned over to his successor the farm stock then in use at the "The Glebe."" 1

Thirty-eight years after the bequest made by William Gordon, John Mayo, 1723 a resident of Middlesex, bequeathed property² for the education of poor children. In 1764 James Reid, of Urbanna gave a lot in Urbanna, between Mr. Young's and John Robinson's, to the Vestry of Christ Church for a free school.³ Alexander Frazier in his will of July 4, 1769, leaves the land he purchased of Mr. James Reid to the Parish of Christ Church in the county of Middlesex for the benefit of a free school for poor children.⁴

Thus we find in our search for information on the early schools of the Colonial period that generous men from

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1. Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish Middlesex County, p. 71.
 2. Will Book of Middlesex County: 1701, pages not numbered.
 3. Deed Book of Middlesex County: 1764, pages not numbered.
 4. Ibid., (pages not numbered.)

time to time bequeathed property to be used by church wardens for the education of poor children and orphans. The following excerpts taken from the Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish Middlesex County indicate that some of the wardens were faithful to their trust:

"Ordered that the church wardens prepare copies of the will of Mr. William Gordon relating to land given to this parish for a free school and also the will of Mr. John Shepherd and bring suits for the recovery of same." 1 (1728)

"To the Church wardens for the rent of the free school land to be employed toward the schooling of poor children." 2
. "The balance being nine pounds and three pence half penny of which one pound eleven shillings and eight pence is 3 to be applied toward schooling poor children."

"1751 - To the rent of free school land five hundred pounds of tobacco."

"1752 - Same notation or entry was made - Order to investigate was carried out."

"1752 - To the sherif for the Qt. Rents of the free school land - 110 pounds of tobacco."

"1755 - To rent of free school land five hundred pounds of tobacco." 4

In Beverley's History of Virginia it is recorded that according to law a special session was held in each county at least once a year for the purpose of passing upon all matters relating to the welfare of the poor. In no case

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1. Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish Middlesex County, p. 213.
 2. Vestry Book of Christ Church Middlesex County, 1749-1750, p. 273.
 3. Ibid., p. 284.
 4. Ibid., pp. 278 - 285.

does that court appear to have been more scrupulous and zealous than in requiring that the commands as to education should be strictly carried out.

Such systematic and faithful care as is shown in the Orphans book of Middlesex reveals a great concern for the education of the orphans.

In the Orphans Book of 1760 - 1820 in the report of the guardians of the orphans there is frequent mention of money spent for their schooling. In some cases the name of a tutor was given. In a very detailed report, of William Montague, guardian of Samuel Montague, for the year 1761 - 62 we find these items:

Sept. 1 1761 - "To John Bradfeet for board and schooling, one pound, one shilling six pence.

Sept. 1762 - "To John Gardner for schooling, two pounds one shilling six pence.

April 1762 - "To John Gardner for schooling six shillings six pence.

Jan. 1762 - "To John Gardner for schooling 1 two pounds one shilling, six pence."

The yearly report for Benjamin Hackney gives the payment in 1757 of four pounds for schooling, board and clothing. For the next three years the same sum was reported by his guardian, John Berry.

An interesting report was made in 1763 by Isaac Jones, guardian of Charles and Jane Dudley. "For schooling four months, and one tenth part of building schoolhouse - sixteen shillings." This is interesting for two reasons. No difference was made between the girl Jane and her brother Charles as to the type of education each should receive. The second interesting fact is, that this is the first mention made in the Orphans Book of the existence of a schoolhouse.

The names of Mr. Naison, Peter Montague and James Greenwood appear as teaching during this early period. In 1763 John Gardner was teaching Ludwick Jones and Samuel Montague. It would seem that John Gardner was teaching either in a schoolhouse or in a home of some planter.

The Orphan's Book gives no mention of poor orphans being cared for by the court. Beverley, commenting on the care taken of the poor, declares with a note of pride that the paupers of the county were not taken care of "at the common rate of some countries, that gave but just sufficient to preserve the poor from perishing, but the unhappy creature was received into some charitable planter's house, where he was at public charge boarded plentifully."

1. Ibid., 1763.

2. Beverley, Robert, History of Virginia, page 223.

In the Middlesex Deed Book 1679 - 1694 John Ascough apprenticed his step-son to Christopher Robinson for a period of eight years on the following conditions: "He will instruct said apprentice in all business as concerns his said office of the court." It appears that the child in some cases was taught more than reading and writing.

Another account of binding out a child as an apprentice appears in the Middlesex Order Book 1680 - 94. "Mary Gibbs, widow of Gregory Gibbs, brought her son William Gibbs this day into court and bound him unto William Richard Willis till he come of ye age of twenty one years, he being tenn years of age. The said Willis is under oath obliged to teach ye said son William Gibbs to read and teach him ye art and trade of shoe maker and do furnish him sufficient diet and clothing during ye said time." No mention was made of teaching him to write. The Virginia Law of 1643 ordered the overseers and guardians of the "poor orphants" to educate and instruct them according to their best endeavors¹ in Christian Religion and the rudiments of learning."

"In 1656 a law was passed which ordered that the orphan be bound to some manual trade only when his estate was so inconsiderate as not to reach to the free education

1. Henning Statutes at Large, Vol. I, pp. 260 - 261.

or where there was no relative willing to keep the orphan.¹"
It was not until 1705 that the master of the orphan was
required to teach him to read and write the necessary basis
of religious instruction.²

As early as 1597 England passed a poor law author-
izing the justices to raise weekly or otherwise by taxation
of every inhabitant, sums for the education and the relief
of the poor. A tax or duty was imposed by England in 1692
for educational purposes and it was collected at Urbanna,
Middlesex County, the seat of customs. The act placed a
duty on all goods exported "for the maintainance and en-
couragement of a learned and pious ministry and also for
the advancement of learning."³ Some of the taxable goods
were: hides, tanned 2¢, raw 1¢; wool 6¢ a pound; iron 1¢
a pound.

The problem of caring for the poor in Virginia
did not come until the latter part of the Colonial period.
Robert Beverley in his History of Virginia writes a descrip-
tion of this section of Virginia:

"The people live in so happy a climate
and so fertile lands that nobody is partic-
ularly poor I remember the time
when five pounds were left by a charitable
testator, to the poor of the parish he lived
in and it lay nine years before the executors

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1. Henning Statutes at Large, Vol. I, p. 416.
 2. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 375.
 3. Middlesex Deed Book, 1703 - 1720, p. 100.

could find one poor enough to accept the legacy."

Very careful consideration was given to the education and up-bringing of the poor orphans. A Virginia law enacted in 1643 ordered the overseers and guardians of the orphans, to educate and instruct them according to their best endeavors in Christian religion and the rudiments of learning. To provide further for the orphans, workhouses were established in the colony. This was also an English practice which was transplanted in Virginia.

The first workhouse law passed in 1646 provided for a flax house in Jamestown to which orphans and poor children from each county were to be sent to learn "carding, spinning and knitting of stockings under a teacher as shall be appointed.¹" These workhouses were often educational institutions as well as for the care and employment of the poor. In An Account of Several Workhouses (London 1732) a description of these workhouses is given. We are told that in the seventeenth century children in workhouses were taught the occupation of carding, spinning, knitting and stocking making, but in the eighteenth century they were taught to read, write, say the catechism and less often to "cast ac-²counts." An order is found in the Christ Church Parish

1. Hennings Statutes at Large, Vol. I, p. 336.

2. Wells, Guy Fred, Parish Education in Colonial Virginia, p. 59.

Vestry Book 1767 that the warden agree for a workhouse and a proper person to look after and take care of the "poor¹ house."

Public education then was a charity which was regarded as an obligation of the church of England. In the county of Middlesex this responsibility was accepted by the wardens of Christ Church Parish.

In 1705 Apprentice Laws in Virginia included the element of education as well as support. The Virginia laws made three distinct groups of poor children: the poor orphans, children being brought up in poverty by their parents and illegitimate children. A law previous to 1769 provided that bastard children and mulattoes be bound out as servants, but in that year they were put on the same basis as the poor² children and apprenticed under the same laws. All apprentices must be taught a trade and instruction in reading and writing should be given to all classes of children as that³ given poor orphans.

George II passed the law in 1748 making it the duty to bind out children who were not receiving the proper training at home. "And to prevent the evil consequences attending the neglect or inability of poor people to bring

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1. Chamberlayne, C. G., Parish Vestry Book Christ Church, 1767, p. 336.
 2. Hennings Statutes, Vol. III, p. 375 (1705).
 3. Ibid., Vol. VIII, pp. 374-77, (1769).

up their children or they neglect to take due care of the education of their children and their instruction in the principles of christianity in such case it shall be lawful for the church wardens to bind every such¹ child or children apprentices - Law to go into effect 1751."

There are orders in the Christ Church Vestry Book binding out poor children which add interesting details.

"The Vestry have agreed to bind Thomas Griffin to Sam Leo as an apprentice according to law. That ye Church Wardens or either of them bind him." (1709) 2

"Ordered that the church warden bind ---- Moxom, daughter of Thomas and Eliza Moxom to John Murrey and his wife only till she attain the age of eighteen years." (1714)³

"Ordered that Joseph Jacobus of the age of fifteen years May last, be bound by the church wardens to Mathew Hunt 'till she⁴ have attain the age of twenty and one years." (1714)³

"Ordered that the Church warden bind Mary Preston to Nicholas Bristow, as the law directs." 5 (1722)

Although the church accepted the education of the poor and orphans at a very early date it was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that the ministers, "Parsons", began to teach in the "free schools."

1. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 401, (1748-1755).

2. Chamberlayne, C. G., Christ Church Vestry Book, p. 115.

3. Ibid., p. 136.

4. Ibid., p. 136.

5. Ibid., p. 100.

The reader's primary function (as in England) was to act as minister and substitute in his absence or in case of a vacancy in the ministerial office. He took immediate responsibility of the care of the chapel and catechized children and servants.

In reply to a set of questions sent to the ministers in Virginia in 1724 inquiring about the conditions in their parishes, twenty-nine ministers made reply. In response to the question concerning education not one made reference to his teaching school, although private schools were mentioned. It is likely that it was more common toward the end of the Colonial period for the ministers to act as tutors and teachers. The advance of culture and the growth and importance of William and Mary College were factors creating a demand for the Latin instruction which the ministers could give.

In examining records which give information regarding the ministers' activities as teachers, sixteen references have been found to such activities. The Reverend James Wilson, 1658, in Elizabeth River Parish, and Mr. Bartholomew Yates, 1716, Christ Church Parish.

Mrs. Elizabeth Churchill, a resident of Middlesex stated in her will drawn up in 1716 that she desired "Mr. Bartholomew Yates to undertake the instruction of my son in his own house in Latin and Greek." Mr. Yates was to receive the "two best beeves and four of the best hogs, over

and above what he shall demand for teaching and board.¹
Mr. Yates was pastor of Christ Church Parish in Middlesex
County in 1724 and he probably was in 1716.

The records of this period have suffered from
neglect, but they indicate that the "parsons" did exert
an influence on education during the later Colonial period.

An advertisement published in the colony by a
young English minister in 1771 indicated his intentions
to teach as well as serve as pastor, and considering his
qualifications he most probably carried out his intentions.

"To the publick: a clergyman of the Church
of England, a sober young man, with good
character would serve as a minister to the
church in any of his Majesty's Plantations,
upon trial on resonable terms. He proposes
to teach Ladies and Gentlemen in French,
Latin, Greek, English Language, Book Keeping,
Algebra, Geometry, Surveying." 2

The attitude of the people of Middlesex on the
problem of negro education is shown by the following extract:

"Subject: Christian Education in Middlesex -
Slaves. A proposition from the county of
Middlesex for Christianizing Negroes and
Slaves was read.
Ordered

"The (that) the Same be refered to the consid-
eration of the Committee of Propositions and
Grievances to Examine the matter and report
their Opinions therein to the house."

-
1. Middlesex Will Book, 1716, (pages not numbered).
 2. William & Mary Quarterly, Vol. II, p. 178.

Wednesday, November 16th, 1720

"On consideration of the Proposition of
Middlesex County -

That a Catechist may be provided to Instruct
Negroes in the Christian Religion, --
Resolved

That the Same be rejected as Imprac-
ticable." 1

1. Journal of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1712-1726,
Vol. V, p. 253.

CHAPTER II

EARLY IDEAS OF STATE CONTROL AS THEY AFFECTED THE COUNTY. 1776-1811

Virginia became, during the Colonial period, a colony of large landholders and dependents. The whole educational philosophy had been built upon the educational policy expressed by Governor Berkley when he said, "The same course that is taken in England out of town, every man¹ according to his ability instructing his children," and providing for the indigent. From this philosophy Virginia evolved two classes, a landed aristocracy, educated and trained in leadership, and a less privileged group which gradually went into a poverty of social inefficiency and became finally the poor whites of Virginia.²

During the entire Colonial period those who could

1. Henning Statutes 1671, Vol. II, p. 517.

2. Maddox, William A., The Free School Idea in Virginia Before the Civil War, p. 5.

afford to, had their children taught by a tutor. From time to time "free schools" appeared for the children of the poor and indigent where they were given a practical education.

In the change from colony to commonwealth the free common school gradually grew. The transition was slow, for a free school system could not evolve until the state assumed the responsibility of educating all classes.

The period just after the Revolution was a critical time for the colony, when little thought was given to education. The leaders did not feel that the subject of education was important enough to be included in the State Constitution of 1776.¹ The first twelve state constitutions drawn up after the Revolution (Virginia being one of the first six 1776) made no provision for education. Education was still a private matter.

The following extracts from the Chancery Court Papers of Middlesex County for December 18, 1788, show² that private schools were conducted at that time:

"Mrs. Ann Robinson, executor of Charles Robinson, deceased, 1789, claims sum of ten pounds from estate of Colonel Edmund Berkeley for board of his two sons, Carter and William.
Berkeley, - - -

1. Cubberley, Elwood P., Public Education in U. S., p. 84.
2. Papers labeled Estate of Samuel Klug in a/c with Edmond Berkley, Saluda, Virginia, Middlesex County.

"The affidavit of Oswald L. Kemp taken to be read in evidence in a suit now pending in the County Court of Middlesex between John Berry, pltf., and Carter B. Berkeley, deft., affiath and saith

"That he the said Kemp went to school to the Reverend Samuel Klug during part of the year 1787, during the year 1788-89 and part of the year 1790 - and recollect Mr. Wm. Robinson son of Mrs. Ann Robinson, with whom the sons of Col. Edmund Berkeley, Carter B. Berkeley and Wm. N. Berkeley boarded during part of the year 1788 and during the year 1789-1790. 1

"The affidavit of Dr. George Spratt taken to be read in evidence in an injunction now pending in the County Court of Middlesex between John Berry, Pltf. and Carter B. Berkeley Deft.

"Dr. Spratt states that he went to school to the Reverend Klug; recalls that Wm. Robinson and his brother Charles Robinson, went to school to the Reverend Samuel Klug in 1789 and believes that they went to school to him a part if not all of 1790." 2

An interesting petition was made voicing opposition to supporting teachers of the Christian Religion:

"November 10, 1785. To the Honorable Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Delegates:
The petition of the inhabitants of the County of Middlesex humbly shewith that wherein it hath pleased your Honorable House to publish a Bill obliging the inhabitants of this state to pay the teachers of the Christian Religion, and have requested their opinion concerning it-- Your Petitioners do therefore most earnestly declare against it to be contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel and the Bill of Rights and that Legislature should not assume Modes of Religion,

-
1. Sworn statement before W. George, a Magistrate for the County of Middlesex, dated December, 1805.
 2. Oath to above made before W. George, December, 1805.

directing the manner of Divine Worship, or the Method of Supporting its Teachers. Your Petitioners therefore trust that the wisdom and uprightness of your Honorable House will leave them entirely free in all Matters of Religion and the manner of Supporting its ministers that so peace and harmony may abound which otherwise be much disturbed: And they shall ever pray." ¹

In 1779 Thomas Jefferson wrote the Report of the Revisors of the Virginia Bill for the More General Diffusion² of Knowledge which is generally believed to be the first American proposal for a modern state school system. This bill proposed to lay off every county into small districts or hundreds five or six miles square. Each district was to establish a school for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. The tutor was to be supported by the hundred and every person was entitled to send his children three years gratis and with pay as much longer as he saw fit.

A later Act, that of 1796, created an administrative body called the Board of Aldermen, to introduce primary schools. It was composed of three members to be elected for a one year term. Their duties were to divide the county into school districts of convenient size for the daily attendance of the children who were to be taught three years without charge, and to appoint and remove teachers and to levy

1. Petition Book of 1785, Middlesex County, Virginia.
2. Thomas Jefferson and George Wythe, Report of the Revisors, LXXXIX. Ford, Letters of Jefferson, Vol. II, p. 220.

taxes to be used for these purposes. A clause in the Act probably kept the board from ever functioning. It stated that the court of each county was to determine the year in which the first election was to take place, and until this was done no election was to be held. Since the court was made up of men upon whom the proposed tax would fall it would seem that they were not inclined to tax themselves¹ for the education of all children.

Jefferson's bill for education failed to be carried out in many instances because there was the lack of any historical background or precedent except the pauper schools, poor laws and apprenticeships, all of which were in bad repute, being thought of as charity.

In a letter to J. C. Cabell, Jefferson speaks of "culling from every condition of our people the natural aristocracy of talent and virtue and of preparing it by education at public expense the care of public interest."² To provide for the "geniuses" it was to be the duty of the overseer to select each year the most promising boy of the hundred school for two years free tuition and board at the nearest district high school or academy. From these boys twenty of the very brightest were to be sent to the University of William and Mary for any course they might select.

1. See House Journal, December 22, 1796, p. 126.

2. Ford, Vol. II, p. 407, Jefferson, Thomas, Third President of the U. S. Writings 1760-1826.

It was Jefferson's ideal to give the "opportunity of higher¹ education to the genius of the common people."

In 1818, some ten years after his retirement from the presidency, Jefferson writes in a letter to Mr. Cabell: "A system of general instruction which shall reach every description of our citizens, from the highest to the poorest, as was the earliest so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an² interest."

Again in 1818 Jefferson makes answer to a letter from Nathaniel Burwell, Esq., on the topic of the education of women: "A plan of female education has never been a subject of systematic contemplation with me. It has occupied my attention so far only as to the education my own daughter³ occasionally required."

Since, as we have seen, the Church had control of free education in the colonial period, its properties went to the aid of education under the new system. Since too, public education in the colony had meant the education of orphans and the very poor, we find the words "glebe" public education and the "orphans" and "poor" closely linked, and a feeling generally that the poor were the only ones who

1. Ibid., p. 408.

2. The Writings of Thomas Jefferson Edited by Andrew A. Lipscomb in 20 volumes; Vol. II, p. 11.

3. Ibid., Vol. XV, p. 165.

should be educated by state control.

In Middlesex as in the case of many counties, church lands were taken over by the Commonwealth and sold for the benefit of the poor. It was only natural it would seem, that these funds should be used for free school purposes. The General Assembly, December, 1809, permits the sale of land for a "free school" in Middlesex County.

Another form of public school support was still to be found in Middlesex. After the Revolution the will of Colonel Robert Blakey (1828) of Middlesex County bequeathed one thousand dollars for the benefit of the "free schools." The Acts of Assembly, March 30, 1838 gave Middlesex County Commissioners one thousand dollars from this estate to assist in the establishment of the District System of Common Schools.

CHAPTER III

EARLY LEGISLATION AS IT AFFECTED EDUCATION IN MIDDLESEX, 1811 - 1870

The Act of Assembly of 1810 establishing the Literary Fund gave Virginia the system commonly spoken of as the "pauper system" because only the children of the poor received any benefit. This system, as unsatisfactory as it proved to be, was adhered to with minor changes for over fifty years. The fund was established by devoting the proceeds of all escheats, fines and forfeitures to the encouragement of learning. Annual appropriations were made in each county for the fund, in proportion to their white population, for the sole purpose of instructing poor children in the elements of learning. The complete text is quoted herewith:

Act of Assembly, 1810

1. "Be it enacted, that all escheats, fines, confiscations, penalties and forfeitures and all rights in personal property occurring to rightful proprietor, be and the same

hereby appropriated to the encouragement of learning and that the auditor of public accounts be and is hereby required to open an account known as the Literary Fund. To which he shall carry every payment made into the treasurer on account of any escheat or confiscation which has happened or may happen or any fine, penalty or forfeiture which has been or which may occur; Provided always that this act shall not apply to militia fines."

2. "And be it further enacted that the fund aforesaid shall be divided and appropriated as to the next legislature shall seem best adapted to the promotion of literature; Provided that always the aforesaid fund shall be appropriated to the sole benefit of a school or school commonwealth, subject to such orders and regulations as the General Assembly shall hereafter direct."
3. "This Act shall be in force from the passing thereof." 1 (Passed February 2, 1810).

In 1811, one year after the creation of the Literary Fund, an act was passed providing for the administration of this fund. Provision was made for a board of directors of the Literary Fund, consisting of the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Treasurer, Attorney General and President of the Court of Appeals. The General Assembly of 1811 protested against the funds for any purpose than the education of the poor.

Extracts from the Act of 1811 are quoted below:

An Act to provide for the Education of the Poor

1. "Be it enacted by the General Assembly.

That sums of money which have occurred or which may hereafter occur to the literary fund established by an act to appropriate certain fines, escheats, penalties, confiscations and forfeitures, to the encouragement of learning shall be and the same are hereby vested in the following persons to-wit: The Governor, lieutenant governor, treasurer, attorney general and president of the court of appeals of the Commonwealth, for the time being and their successors are hereby constituted a body and corporate under the denomination of the president and directors of the literary fund, with powers to sue and be sued And they shall have power to appoint a clerk without their own body and such other officers as they may deem necessary And the said president and directors shall report to the general assembly once in every year the state of the funds committed to their charge, with such recommendations thereof as to them shall seem advisable."

2. "And be it further enacted. That in future aid of said fund, the president and directors are hereby empowered to raise annually for a period of years not to exceed seven, by lottery any sum not exceeding thirty thousand dollars."
3. "And for the more speedy and certain collection of the literary fund throughout the Commonwealth the said president and directors are authorized and required to appoint in each county and corporation therein an attorney or agent for the collection of the funds, of that county or corporation, who shall act without fee or emolument, and whose duty it shall be to report to the president and directors, from time to time such portion of said fund as any officer appointed to collect the same may have collected and failed to pay into the public treasury"
4. "And be it further enacted. That as soon as sufficient fund shall be provided for the purpose it shall be the duty of the directors thereof to provide a school or schools for the education of the poor in each and every county in the Commonwealth."

5. ". That the literary fund herein mentioned shall be appropriated to the sole benefit of schools to be kept in each and every county in the Commonwealth, an object equally humane, just and necessary involving alike the interests of humanity and the preservation of the constitution, laws and liberty of the good people of this Commonwealth: the present General Assembly solemnly protest against any other application of the said funds by any succeeding General Assembly to any other object than the education of the poor."

6. "This act shall commence and be in force from the passing thereof."

(Passed, February 12, 1811) ¹

The attempt of the legislature of 1818 to strengthen the "Poor School" law of 1811 came as a result of increasing public sentiment in favor of free public education, and as a result of the dissatisfaction with the handling of the revenue derived from the literary fund.

The law of 1818 provided for the appointment of school commissioners, who were wholly unpracticed in such matters except as dispensers of charity funds. They were to determine the number of poor children to be taught and the amount to be paid for their children. A more effective administration of the funds was established by the election of a treasurer who was placed under bond. This act further provided for the establishment of the University of Virginia, with an appropriation of fifteen thousand dollars annually

1. Acts of Assembly, 1811, Chapter VIIII, pp. 8-10.

from the literary fund.

A premium was placed upon pauperism since a formal declaration of poverty must be made by those wishing to benefit by the Act of 1818. The commissioners were regarded as dispensers of gifts to the very poor. With all its weaknesses and faults the Primary School System was initiated.

From the time of its enactment, this law which is quoted in abstract below, was subject to hostile attacks by those who held to the principle that primary education should be provided for rich and poor alike.

Law of 1818

An Act appropriating part of the revenue of
the Literary Fund for other purposes.

1. "Be it enacted by the General Assembly. That for the purpose of duly applying a part of the income of the literary fund to the primary object its institution, it shall be the duties of the courts of the several counties as soon as may be in the present year, and annually thereafter, in the month of October, to appoint no less than five nor more than fifteen discreet persons to be called school commissioners for the counties. The said commissioners shall annually appoint one of their body treasurer

The said commissioners shall have the power to determine what number of poor children they will educate, what sum shall be paid for their education; to authorize each of themselves to select so many poor children as they may deem expedient and to draw orders upon their treasurer for the

payment of the expense of tuition and of furnishing such children with proper books and materials for writing and cyphering. The poor children selected in the manner aforesaid, shall (with the assent of the father, or if no father, with assent of the guardian) be sent to such school as may be convenient, to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic.

That it shall be lawful for the said commissioners to appoint one of their body as clerk.

That the president and directors of the literary fund shall annually pay to each of the said treasurers such proportion of the sum of forty-five thousand dollars as the free white population of the country bears to the whole free white population of the Commonwealth

That all money, funds, debts or property now held by the overseers of the poor of any county or corporation and derived from or acquired by the sale or forfeiture of Glebe lands, and which shall be unapportioned by the citizens of such county or corporation shall after the passage of this act be vested in the said school commissioners.

That the school commissioners shall annually present a statement to the president and directors of the literary fund

Be it further enacted that there shall be established in some convenient and proper part of the state, a university to be called, "The University of Virginia."

Be it further enacted that there be appropriated, out of the revenue of the literary fund the sum of fifteen thousand dollars per annum Provided, however, that the appropriation hereby made to the University shall in no manner impair or diminish the appropriation herein before made to the education of the poor in the several counties." 1

School Commissioners of Middlesex apparently carried out faithfully the will of the legislature and the year following a detailed report was submitted and an annual report was made to the president and directors of the literary fund.

The first report of the school commissioners of Middlesex County to the president and directors of the literary fund is inserted bodily because it represents the first complete and accurate school report that has come to light in this study.

Urbanna, Middlesex County
December 2, 1819

Gentlemen:

In compliance with the Urbanna, Middlesex County law under which we now make our annual report for the present year, the following table exhibits at one view all we are required by the law to report.

No. poor children who ought to be educated	No. actually sent to school	No. of schools to which poor children were sent showing number sent and their prices						
		One school at \$5. per term	2 ditto at \$6. per term	1 ditto at \$7. per term	1 ditto at \$8. per term	2 ditto at \$10. per term	Current expenditure for schooling in 1819	Total number of schools
	6	6					\$30.00	1
	11		11				66.00	2
	4			4			28.00	1
	4				4		32.00	1
	20					20	200.00	2
Totals 61	45	6	11	4	4	20	\$356.00	7

. The progress of our children sent to school has been as great under all circumstances as we could have expected and there is indeed among the number one or two geniuses of the first rate and more unusually bad - Owing to the great distance some had to go to school, the actual worth of the labor of others by their parents has prevented as regular attendance at school by some as we could have wished, but believe from the evident prospect of the increase of schools in the county and the

proof the poor will have of the advantages of education will in a short time remedy the all which is duly submitted.

Signed

¹
RICHARD M. SEGAR, Prest.

1. Data taken from handwritten report of the school Commissioners 1818, Vol. I, pages not numbered.

It is interesting to note that the number of children who should be in school was reported. The report also shows that the indigent children were sent to private schools and the tuition was paid by the commissioners. Note also that the school commissioners refer to the poor as "our children."

Under the Acts of 1818 the minutes of the first meeting reveal interesting data and are quoted in extract:

"That the following rules be adopted by the Board for its government:

Rule 1. That when the board meets it shall be the duty of the clerk to call over the names of the members and if it shall appear that a majority is present it may proceed to business.

Rule 2. That at every annual meeting of the board they shall appoint a President and clerk who shall serve that year.

Rule 3. That whenever any member wishes to make a proposition to the board it shall be made in the form of a resolution in writing and on offering it shall rise and address Mr, President, reading it and making any observations explanatory of the same he may wish.

Rule 4. That before any resolution can be received it must be seconded by some other member than the one offering it, upon which the President will read it to the board and take the question on its adoption.

Rule 5. That any member shall have the right to enter his protest against any proposition which may be adopted.

Rule 6. That any member during the sitting of the board shall behave himself orderly and decently and in addressing the chair shall use decent and respectful language, using no personal allusions to any member calculated to offend.

Ordered. That the clerk make out five subscription papers (petitions) proposing to the people of the County the application of the money which has been raised from the sale of the Glebe and other public property in the County to the education of the Poor Children in the county in furtherance of the fund already created by the Act of Assembly on that subject."

In the November report:

"The majority of the free holders and housekeepers have consented that the interest of the funds arising from the sale of the Glebe and free school lands and other public property shall be vested in the school commission."

"Resolved that the members of the Legislature from the county use their best endeavor to procure the passage of a law authorizing the sale of a lot of land in the town of Urbanna bequeathed for the benefit of a free school by one Alexander Frazier and the amount thereof be vested to be used in the aid of the fund."

"Resolved. That the Treasurer do purchase as soon as he conveniently can for the use of the children to be sent to school, twenty four of the Universal Spelling books, twenty four copies of Scott's lessons of the New Testament and twenty four quires of writing paper."

The following men constituted the first school commission in Middlesex County under the Act of 1818.

Thomas Healy
James Chowning (refused to serve)
George D. Nicolson
Anthony New, Jr. (dead)
John Chowning
Richard M. Segar
Henley Woodward
Richard Claybrook
William Jesse
John Street
William L. Montague
Robert Blakey (replaced A. New, Jr.)
Robert Barrick (replaced James Chowning)

The Report of the School Commissioners 1818-1857 is

kept in the original handwritten form in the fireproof vault of the courthouse in Saluda, Virginia. This is an accurate and interesting account of the public school education in the county during the very early years of its development.

The commissioners' report not only reveals their ideas but the reaction of the people in the county toward the schools. These reports indicate that the system was totally inadequate. They point out it is necessary to pay higher tuition in order to employ teachers better qualified. In many reports note is made of the fact that these poor children show as much as or greater progress than those who have wealth. Some teachers hesitated and some refused to enroll the poor, owing to the tuition allowed by law. The report of 1837 carried a note of optimism closing with this, "In a few years we will have the pleasure of knowing that all children in the county are attending school, the rich and the poor."

The school commissioners clearly expressed their views and reactions in relation to the system in force at the time and gave a vivid picture of educational provisions as shown by extracts from their reports quoted below:

Abstracts of School Commissioners' Report
Middlesex County

1
1834. - follows 1832

1. Dates refer to year in which report was made.

"Resolved that there shall be annually appointed by the School Commissioners a committee of their own body to consist of four, only two of whom may act, whose duty it shall be to visit the schools to which the poor children are sent, once in the month of June and once in October or as soon after as convenient, to examine the said children, ascertain their progress, the attention paid by teachers to their schools, time each poor child entered school - his attendance at school and make report at the next meeting." 1

1830 -

"It is agreed on by the school commissioners at this meeting that no poor child shall commence school earlier than ten years old except in case of a superior genius, and also at the rate of four cents per day for tuition."

"All children whose parents do not own property with their own labors sufficient from the profit thereof to support the family and pay for tuition of the children come within the meaning of the law."

In this meeting steps were taken to lay off the county into nine districts.

In 1831 the School Commissioners "beg leave to suggest the propriety of raising the price of tuition of the poor children." The commission felt that it was very necessary that teachers better qualified be employed "some who could give their whole time to their schools, objects certainly desirable."

1832 -

"The Commissioners consider the improvement of the poor children sent to school fully equal to that of those in more fortunate circumstances

1. A compiled report of the School Commissioners from 1818-1861 in table page II.

and in several instances much greater for whilst the wealthy frequently depend upon their wealth for their future support and promotion, the poor are more attentive and diligent in the hopes of qualifying themselves to support their families without hard manual labor."

1836 -

"... to extend the benefit of the fund to the higher grades as there is a larger balance in the treasurer's hands. This balance has been increased by the increase of the quota and by the difficulty of getting teachers to take the poor children in their schools owing to the price allowed by law for the tuition of the poor. We are decidedly of the opinion that the price allowed by law for tuition of the poor children shall be increased, as the price for tuition in good schools is much higher and is increasing; and as it would enable the School Commissioners to obtain more competent teachers. At the present price the School Commissioners have no inducements to offer the competent teachers, or to such as are competent to take into their schools the poor children, when as it will be seen by the treasurer's account that no poor child pays over four or five dollars and for the other children the teachers receive ten to twenty dollars. Under such circumstances teachers who are qualified will hardly refuse children when they can receive the higher price to take in those for the lesser. We believe the subject cannot be too strongly urged on the legislature as unless there be some remedy provided in fear the great benefit expected from the fund may be lost."

1837 -

"Because of the increase from the Commonwealth together with their own fund being in their estimation sufficient for the education of all the children in the county of the class heretofore sent, they have determined to extend the benefits of the fund to a higher class. The principal reason of this increase of balance in hand has been owing to the want of schools in the county. To obviate this evil they have determined to endeavor to procure four or

five teachers and to locate them in different parts of the county most convenient for the schools. Should they succeed in their effort their whole fund will be expended next year. They are now suing to recover about nine hundred or a thousand dollars which are due them and contemplate petitioning the Legislature to authorize them to lay out this sum in building schoolhouses, so as to enter fully into the district system which they consider much the best. Should they succeed in this object, they believe that in a few years they will have the pleasure of knowing that all the children in the county are attending school, the rich and the poor."

1839 -

"Since the last meeting have laid off the county into six districts, in each of which we designed building a schoolhouse and as early as possible to adopt the district system. They would respectfully suggest to the Legislature the propriety of enacting such a law or laws as that each county may be divided into districts of convenient size and secure competent teachers so that benefits of education be extended alike to all."

The county was divided into six districts and one hundred and seventy-six dollars was taken from the school fund to build a schoolhouse in each district.

1841 -

"They entered all poor children within their districts over the age of nine years, making no distinction as to sex. Their attendance is irregular but progress is equal to that of the children in the same school. In some schools we have permitted them to learn any of the branches they and their parents may desire. The commission has erected their houses and had school in all but one. They have not been able to carry out their plans owing part to the failure of their memorial of the late Legislature."

1843 -

"The term indigent means those whose parents or guardians are unable to pay their

tuition between the ages of eight to fourteen years. They have never descriminated between girls and boys. The commissioners visited their schools and found that the improvement made by such as attended regularly is in general very satisfactory."

1843 -

"On the 24th of February, 1845, the school commissioners ordered that not more than four cents per diem be paid for each days actual attendance of each poor child at school for the present year.

Also ordered that the schoolhouse in District No. 3 be removed by the citizens of said district from its present location to Clarks Neck meeting house, provided it be done without expense to said board."

It will be perceived that most of the above schools extended their scholastic year several months beyond the 30th of September which closes the fiscal year, when they terminate frequently are not resumed again by the same teachers so that some of the accounts paid by the treasurer are only for balances occurring between the 30th of September and the close of the school but the same or other schools are in operation for about ten months."

1847 -

"The School Commissioners ordered the Supt. of Schools Robert Healy, to pay to Armstrong and Berry twenty one dollars and thirty eight cents for books he purchased."

1848 -

"The School Commissioner's report to the Supt. of the literary fund. That within the year ending 30th of September 1848 there have been in operation 14 common schools. That from the best information they can obtain there are in the county 264 poor children entitled to the benefits of the fund of whom 164 have been sent to school and educated for different periods during the year at the said common schools. The average price of tuition exclusive of books, paper etc. has been $4\frac{1}{2}$ cents for every days attendance of said child. There remains unexpended in the hands of the treasurer on the 30th of September 1847, \$141.74.

For further data see table No. 2.

That there is a small amount yet unpaid

TABLE NO. I

NAMES OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS AND INFORMATION REPORTED BY THEM, 1847

Names of School Commissioners from each district	District number	No. of indigent children in each district	No. of indigent children in school	Amt. of money for each district to disburse
Robert McKann	1	61	24	\$53.10
Wm. L. Gatewood	2	84	45	\$79.65
Thomas B. Evans	3	53	25	\$44.25
Dr. Richard A. Christian	4	94	36	\$63.72
J. B. Blake	5	71	38	\$67.26
John L. Blake	6	112	73	\$129.21
Totals	6	475	241	\$438.19

not having been presented for tuition. They have been in the habit of sending to school all children they could induce between the ages of 8 - 14 whose parents are unable to pay for their tuition and such as they considered indigent. They have never discriminated between boys and girls. That in addition to the sum heretofore allowed them it would require four hundred dollars more in order to enable all poor children to participate. The improvement made by such children as attended regularly has been about equal to the others in the same school."

Data on Education of Poor Children in Middlesex County is
1
given in the following table.

1. Compiled from School Commissioners' report, 1818-1861, Two Volumes, handwritten.

TABLE NO. II

DATA ON EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, 1818-1861

Date	No. of Indigent children	No. in school	Rate per day	No. of Teach- ers	No. of days aggre- gate atten- dance	Aver. atten- dance of each child	Aver. expen- ses of each child	Bal. on hand	Pd to teach- ers	Funds for educa- tion Literary F. and other sources	No. of Common Schools
1818	61	46								\$492.34	
1819	61	45						\$79. ^{3/4} 27		452.49	7
1820		55								468.44	
1821		32		6						324.12	
1822		36		6						310.52	
1823		34		6						295.61	
1824		36		8				47.31		563.62	
1825		45		8				32.88		370.78	
1826		49		8				43.26		369.70	
1827		44		6						351.35	
1828		50		5							
1829		47									

(cont'd)

TABLE NO. II (cont'd)

Date	No. of Indigent children	No. in school	Rate per day	No. of Teach- ers	No. of days aggre- gate atten- dance	Aver. atten- dance of each child	Aver. expen- ses of each child	Bal. on hand	Pd to teach- ers	Funds for educa- tion Literary F. and other sources	No. of Common Schools
1830											
1831	100	65	4¢	14	6543			260.63	261.72	563.92	7
1832	150	133	4¢					60.33	454.36	600.24	9
1833	150	131	4¢						324.12	416.42	9
1834	100	64	4¢	6	5217				208.68		6
1835	80	72	4¢	8	4919			55.39	196.76	285.07	8
1836	110	84	4¢	8	6093			126.23	243.72	414.99	9
1837		53	4¢	5	4973			282.18	198.92	502.46	
1838	175	115	4¢	16	9354			217.43	374.16	653.83	11
1839	150	121	4¢	13	8915			195.99	356.60	578.29	10
1840	175	137	4¢	17	9360			151.24	374.40	548.32	9
1841	175	97	5¢	12	6714			133.67	369.90	503.57	10
1842		111	5¢	10	8189			.35	490.09	490.44	9

(cont'd)

TABLE NO. II (cont'd)

Date	No. of Indigent children	No. in school	Rate per day	No. of Teach- ers	No. of days aggre- gate atten- dance	Aver. atten- dance of each child	Aver. expen- ses of each child	Bal. on hand	Pd to teach- ers	Funds for educa- tion Literary F. and other sources	No. of Common Schools
1843		114	4¢	11	7078			.20	312.51	338.80	8
1844	142	87	4¢	13	5697			.12	219.22	354.12	13
1845	175	86	4¢	13	5776			75.11	231.04	365.07	11
1846		102	4¢	12	7311			108.78	292.44	440.06	12
1847	475	92	5¢	9	5897			141.74	294.85	506.69	14
1848	264	164	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢	15	9422			37.56	423.92	506.69	14
1849	275	145	4¢	15				7.52	352.86	402.51	11
1850	260	124	4¢	15				42.67	301.76	384.53	15
1851	264	124	4¢	9	5985	66 $\frac{1}{2}$	\$2.66	116.69	239.40	392.27	15
1852	175	82	4¢	9	6675	81	3.24	78.35	220.08	436.99	
1853	194	87	4¢	7	5502			171.44	417.35	510.44	
1854	194	57	4¢	10	4690			322.98	187.60	678.84	
1855	184	99	6¢	10	7966	80	5.09	160.27	477.96	795.28	

(cont'd)

TABLE II (cont'd)

Date	No. of Indigent children	No. in school	Rate per day	No. of Teach- ers	No. of days aggre- gate atten- dance	Aver. atten- dance of each child	Aver. expen- ses of each child	Bal. on hand	Pd to teach- ers	Funds for educa- tion Literary F. and other sources	No. of Common Schools
1856			6¢								
1857	211	137	6¢	13	8004	58	2.06	24.03			
1858	213	141	6¢	18	8428	59	3.54	58.99			
1859	203	129	6¢	19	9477	72	4.33	29.15	562.64		
1860	213	137	6¢	18	8032	60	4.07	92.99	545.91	609.75	
1861	210	135	6¢	15	7928	58	3.52	200.13	475.68	702.74	

During the years 1834 - 1845 a number of interesting petitions relating to education were drawn up by the people of Middlesex and presented to the legislature.

In 1838 the school commissioners of Middlesex County petitioned the General Assembly to pass a law authorizing the commissioners to organize the county into six districts and build six suitable schoolhouses for the accommodation of all parts of the county and in procuring proper teachers for the schools to be established in said districts.

The money for this was granted by the General Assembly from the estate of Colonel Robert Blakey, a sum of one thousand dollars.

In the commissioners' report of 1837 mention was made of the fact that they were trying to secure a sum of nine hundred or a thousand dollars for use in building six¹ schools, etc.

In 1841 the petition of Richard A. Christian and others praying for the establishment of school districts in the county (Dated July 12, 1841) was sent to the General Assembly.

The same year a counter petition was presented against the law passed by the General Assembly for building of the six schoolhouses. The petitioners claimed it extended very unequal advantages to the poor children in the different

1. School Commissioners Report - 1837. Pages not numbered.

sections of the county. More of the children being located near some of the schools, this making the labor of that teacher greater than other teachers in the county. This petition was signed by sixty four persons.

The petition of 1846 is inserted bodily because it shows the sentiment of the people toward the educational problems of the day.

Petition of January 9th, 1846

"Urbanna on the 22nd December 1845 upon the subject of Education the following Resolutions were adopted:

1st. Resolved that the system of Education at present in use in Virginia is in our opinion inadequate to the wants of the community.

2nd. That as far as this meeting can do so we do hereby instruct our Senator and Delegate to the Virginia Assembly to support the plan recommended by the Education Convention lately held in Richmond and that we are willing to submit to such taxation as shall be necessary to carry into effect the same -

3rd. That a copy of these resolutions be sent to Dr. John R. Taylor and Alex. K. Shephard, Esq. with a request that they lay them before their respective houses and that they be published in the Richmond papers.

4th. That so far as this meeting can do we hereby instruct our Senator and Delegate to vote against any continued opposition to the University of Virginia."

GEORGE NORTHAM Chairman

R. L. MONTAGUE. (Sect.)

Amended Primary School Law 1846.

It has been shown that prior to 1845 the state had assumed the task of providing for the elementary education of poor children only through what has been termed "Pauper Schools." Although public sentiment in favor of a general system of education for rich and poor alike had been slowly developing in Virginia, the point had not been reached when the state legislature was ready to enact a compulsory public school system.

The legislature of 1845 - 46 adopted what was called a "Fee School System" which any county had liberty to adopt by the vote of the people. One good feature of the bill was that the county board of school commissioners determined the amount needed for the support of the schools in the county. Counties were permitted to levy a school tax. It became the duty of the county court of lay off the county into districts and to appoint a school commissioner for each district. The board of school commissioners, thus formed, were to appoint a school superintendent.

A Bill Amending the Present Primary School System
1
1846 - Four sections of the bill are quoted herewith:

1. "Be it enacted by the General Assembly - That the superintendent of the Literary Fund shall annually fix a uniform rate of compensation to teachers per diem and shall publish on the first of January in every year the rate of compensation per diem together with the quota to which each county

shall be entitled, copies of which publications he shall transmit to the superintendent of primary schools.

2. It shall be the duty of the several county and corporation courts, at their October terms respectively to lay off, according to accurate and well known boundaries, the territory of their counties into any number of districts, having regard to the territorial extent and population of the same; and shall appoint for each district one school commissioner.

3. The said commissioners, when elected shall respectively constitute for their term of service a board for each county or corporation.

4. It shall be the duty of the school commissioners, of whom nine shall constitute a quorum, to assemble annually at the several terms of the county and corporation courts, respectively at their several courthouses and elect by viva voce vote, a superintendent of the schools of the county."

From the data compiled in table Data on Education of Poor Children in Middlesex County it would seem that the passing of the bill of 1846 did not cause any immediate change in the educational picture in Middlesex County. Beginning with report of 1835 the School Commissioners had made rather detailed reports which were continued until 1861.

No school records of public education have been found for Middlesex covering the period of the War Between the States. The last report of the commissioners was made in 1861 and the next report was that made by Superintendent J. Mason Evans in compliance with the bill of 1870.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROGRESS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

1870 - 1890

The history of universal, free education in Middlesex begins, one might say, with the provisions of the Constitution of 1868 and the Acts of Assembly, passed in the pursuance thereof. For it was at the convention of delegates, meeting in Richmond on December 3, 1867, that constitutional provisions were made for the establishment of a state system of free, public education.

It was at this convention of delegates, meeting in Richmond, to pass a bill providing for a system of state public schools, that the step was taken. Its composition was altogether unlike anything ever before seen in a constitutional or legislative body in the state. As to the membership of this convention Knight says: "Fourteen of the delegates came from New York, three from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and England; one each from Maine, Vermont, Connecticut,

New Jersey, Maryland, Washington City, South Carolina, Ireland, Scotland and Canada; twenty-two were native Virginia¹ negroes and thirteen were native white radicals."

"There were eleven members on the committee for education. Three of these were conservatives and eight² were radicals. Three of this number were negroes."

The negroes aided by the radicals contended for the same school for girls and boys. The conservatives opposed the proposition and finally won. The constitution³ was finally adopted by the convention April 17, 1868. It imposed upon the legislature the responsibility of providing, at its next meeting, a state system of free schools. Furthermore, the legislature was required to elect a state superintendent of public instruction, as its first act in behalf of education. This official was then to report, thirty days after his election, "a plan for a uniform system of free schools." There were a dozen or more applications for the position, but Rev. W. H. Ruffner, who was ably supported by General Robert E. Lee and other prominent Virginians, was elected as the first state superintendent. Upon the request of the Chairman of the Committee of Schools and Colleges, Superintendent Ruffner prepared a bill to be

1. Knight, E. W., Reconstruction and Education in Virginia, p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 5.
3. Knight, E. W., Reconstruction and Education in Virginia, p. 12.

submitted to the legislature. This bill with some changes was passed without any serious opposition. It was signed by the Governor and became a law July 11th, 1870, a day which marked an epoch in the history of education in Virginia.

Extracts from the Act are quoted herewith:

Acts of Assembly, 1869-70 Chapter 259.

An Act to establish and maintain a uniform system of Free Public Schools. Approved July 11th, 1870.

1. "Be it enacted by the General Assembly - That there shall be established and maintained in the state a uniform system of public free schools.

2. "The public free school system shall be administered by the following authorities to-wit: A board of education, a superintendent of public instruction, county superintendents of schools, and district school trustees. 1

47. "The public schools shall be free to all persons between the ages of five and twenty one years, residing within the school district and in special cases to be regulated by the board of education, those residing in other districts may be admitted; provided, that white and colored persons shall not be taught in the same school but in separate schools. Under the same general regulation as to management, usefulness, and efficiency; but no person shall be allowed to attend any public school whose father, if he be alive and resident within the school district and

not a pauper, shall not have paid the capitation tax in aid of free schools last assigned on him. 1

56. "There shall be and are hereby set apart as a permanent and perpetual literary fund, the present literary funds of the state, the proceeds of all public lands donated by Congress for public school purposes of all escheated property, of all waste and unappropriated lands of all property accruing to the state by forfeiture, and all fines collected for offences committed against the state donations made for the purpose, and such other sums as the general assembly may appropriate - The same shall be known by the Literary fund, and shall be invested and managed by the board of education " 2

The public school system which was established by the Act of 1870 was heartily opposed in Middlesex County at first, but for the year ending 1871 Mr. Evans reports to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction as to the sentiment in the county toward public education: "Public sentiment was at first very adverse, but now, with comparatively few exceptions, favorable." 3

Mr. J. Mason Evans, Churchview, Virginia, was the first division Superintendent of Middlesex elected under the law of 1870. He served the county in this capacity from 1871 until 1884 when Mr. R. T. Bland of Saluda, Virginia, was elected superintendent.

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1. Acts of General Assembly, 1869-70, p. 413.
 2. Acts of Assembly, 1869, p. 415.
 3. Virginia School Report of 1871. The First Annual Report of the Supt. of Public Instruction, p. 151.

The report of 1872, although rather brief does show the public sentiment in the county toward the public school system. In connection with their annual statistical reports, the county superintendents were asked to make written statements on eleven points. The replies are quoted¹ in abstract in Mr. Ruffner's report of 1871.

1. History of public sentiment concerning public schools.

"Public sentiment is generally favorable, and if the funds justified an extension of the terms, I believe it would soon be universally so. What opposition exists constitutes but little hindrance to the work."

2. Have colored people continued to manifest a great desire for education?

"An increasing desire."

3. Views as to the probable working of the present mode of raising local school funds.

"There is no particular objection to the mode, but serious objection to the legal restrictions upon the amounts to be raised. I believe my people would vote me a much larger amount for county and district purposes."

4. It is desirable that the required minimum of school attendance should be reduced. If so, to what number?

"In some localities it will be absolutely necessary to reduce the minimum to not less than fifteen."

1. Virginia School Report of 1871 of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, p. 150.

5. Has any improvement been observed in the qualifications of teachers?

"In many cases very decided improvement, particularly with those who have been induced to study the Page on Teaching."

6. Brief account of teachers' institutes or other educational meetings held during the year.

"The annual institute last year was well attended and interesting, and I trust profitable. It seemed to produce a favorable impression upon the masses of both races."

7. To what extent has uniformity of text books been secured?

"If there is not entire uniformity of text books there have been but few exceptions, which exceptions will not be allowed this year."

8. Are the records of the District and County School Boards properly kept?

"The records were satisfactory to the County board, and seemed to furnish accurate information of what had been done."

9. Any improvement, or prospect of improvement in schoolhouses.

"Improvements will be made just in proportion to the funds for that purpose."

10. Any litigation grown out of taxation for school purposes?

"None"

11. Any public property destroyed by violence?

"None"

Mr. Ruffner mentions some of the difficulties met with in establishing the new system.

1. Prejudices against a public school system.
2. Poverty or the feeling of poverty among the people.
3. Aversion to the education of the negro at public expense.
4. Want of suitable schoolhouses and appliances.

¹
writes:

In the February Educational Journal Mr. Ruffner

"What shall we call our schools? The full designation is of course "Public Free Schools" but what shall we call them for short? Many people have an aversion for the term "free schools" but we do not believe the term public will be an offense to anybody. Let us therefore, in order to offend the prejudices of none say Public Schools."

A diagram and detailed description of the ideal school building was published in the Virginia Journal, June 1871.

The size of the school was twenty-five feet by twenty-nine feet, height of ceiling twelve feet. There were two entrances, one for the boys and one for the girls. There was a vestibule and wardrobe for boys and girls through which they passed before entering the schoolroom. Between these two doors the teacher's desk and chair were placed on a platform five feet wide.

1. The Educational Journal of Virginia, Wm. H. Ruffner, What Shall We Call Our Schools, p. 154.

Desks were placed two and a half feet from the teacher's desk, two and a half feet from side and rear walls and the aisles between the desks one and a half feet wide. The schoolroom was twenty-three and a half feet wide by twenty-two and a half feet deep and seated forty pupils. It was noted that in most localities this house could be built for seven hundred dollars.

In the school report of 1871 eleven schools were in operation in various parts of the county. From conversations held with elderly persons who attended school in some of the first public schools, it is believed that these schoolhouses were the ones built and run, in a few instances, by the church wardens and later by the school commissioners.

Mrs. Lula Healy gave a very interesting account of how school was "kept" in the old schoolhouse in Hermitage Church yard. Miss Georgie Smith taught in 1872. School opened in October and ran five months. Mrs. Healy entered that year at the age of five. There were no blackboards at first. She believes they were first used there about five years later. Mrs. Healy recalled with a smile, that there was always great confusion around the water bucket after recess on warm days and that going back to the spring for more water after recess was a coveted privilege. There was a card hanging on the wall near the door. On one side was printed "Out", on the other side "In". When a child was

excused he turned the card to read "Out"; when he returned to the class he turned the card to "In."

The enrollment had to average twenty-five children and the teacher was paid twenty-five dollars a month. The superintendent examined each teacher. Those receiving the highest rating received thirty dollars; second, twenty-five dollars, and those rating lower received twenty-two a month.

The elementary classes were taught "ciphering in arithmetic", work in grammar, United States History and reading. School opened at nine o'clock and closed at three.

The following is a list of text books adopted in Middlesex in 1871.

Spellers - Holmes's and McGuffey's
Arithmetic - Davies' and Venables'
Geographies - Guyot's and Maury's
History of United States - Holmes's
Wall Maps - Guyot's
Numeral Frames - Bancroft's
Numerical Charts - Walton and Cogswell's
Readers - Holmes's and McGuffey's
Grammars - Bullion's and Harvey's
Writing Books - Spencerian System
Dictionaries - Webster's and Worcester's
Terrestrial Globes - Schedler's

Numerical Tables - Walton's

School and Family Charts - Wilson and Calkin's

In Mr. Ruffner's report published in the Educational Journal, May 1872, Middlesex was listed as one of thirty-one counties where a seven and a half cent tax on the hundred dollars was levied. All tax asked for by the County Board has been levied in thirty-one counties and Middlesex was again listed. There was also a dog tax of fifty cents levied that same year for schools.

In 1872 a report was published giving a comparative school report of attendance in the counties. Middlesex was listed eleventh from the first. In 1871 the attendance was five hundred and ninety-seven; in 1872 there were eight hundred and ninety-one children in attendance. (See table - Progress of Public Schools in Middlesex from 1871-1891).

In the Educational Journal of Virginia, September, 1873, Superintendent Ruffner comments on a teachers' Institute at Churchview, Middlesex County, which was held the second and third of July, 1873. The report of this meeting had been sent in to the Office of Public Instruction by Mr. Evans:

"The attendance was not as large as desired. Many female teachers found it impossible to travel the distance to the meeting. It was proposed that next year the trustees require a pledge from every one to attend if possible or that trustees show preference to those who make the pledge and take the Journal."

"The County Superintendent explained the

TABLE III

PROGRESS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY 1871-1891

Year	Schools			Average months taught	Number of Teachers			Average Salaries		Number Enrolled in Schools		
Date	White	Colored	Total		White	Colored	Total	Male	Female	White	Colored	Total
1871	5	6	11	4.96	5	6	11	\$23.61	\$22.00	276	321	597
1872	9	7	16	5.32	14	4	18	25.55	29.77	452	439	891
1873	9	7	16	5.0	10	7	17	23.24	30.52	380	483	863
1874	10	7	17	5.2	12	5	17	26.32	27.00	406	384	790
1875	8	7	15	5	8	6	14	26.32	27.00	357	368	725
1876	9	8	17	5	10	7	17	26.36	22.42	374	479	853
1877	9	8	17	5	10	7	17	26.48	25.00	332	462	794
1878	11	7	18	5	11	7	18	25.62	26.67	390	428	818
* 1879	4	4	8	5	4	4	8	25.00	25.00	126	271	397
1880	7	6	13	5.85	7	6	13	24.74	24.90	278	384	662
1881	9	8	17	6.87	9	8	17	25.00	25.00	247	400	647

* September report to State Superintendent. "Much dissatisfaction with division of school funds, thus causing a suspension of so many schools."

TABLE III (Cont'd)

Year	Schools			Average months taught	Number of Teachers			Average Salaries			Number Enrolled in Schools	
Date	White	Colored	Total		White	Colored	Total	Male	Female	White	Colored	Total
1882	12	8	20	6.8	13	7	20	26.11	22.86	333	468	801
1883												
1884	13	10	23	6.4	13	10	23	27.37	23.10	360	508	868
1885	12	10	22	7.14	12	10	22	26.35	24.15	350	452	892
1886	14	12	26	6	14	12	26	24.15	27.67	406	592	998
1887	14	12	26	6	14	12	26	27.45	27.00	448	618	1066
1888	14	12	26	5.8	14	12	26	24.21	25.22	429	663	1092
1889	14	12	26	6	14	12	26	22.71	27.91	476	625	1101
1890	15	13	28	5.6	15	13	28	24.39	26.36	442	575	1017
1891	15	13	28	5.6	15	13	28	25.71	28.14	666	776	1442

TABLE IV

DATA ON SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY 1871-1891

Year Ending	Names and address of Superintendents of Schools	Salary	No. of visits	No. of Institutes held	No. of days employed
1871	J. Mason Evans - Churchview Virginia	\$125	22		100
1872	" " " " "	\$125	36		60
1873	" " " " "	\$125	40	1	70
1874	" " " " "	\$350	41	1	100
1875	" " " " "	\$338.41	60		90
1876	" " " " "				
1877	" " " " "				
1878	" " " " "	\$400	43		90
1879	" " " " "	\$100			
1880	" " " " "	\$400	59	2	135
1881	" " " " "	\$194	34	1	40
1882	" " " " "	\$200	40	1	20
1883	" " " " "				
1884	R. T. Bland - Saluda Virginia	\$200	47	2	30

(cont'd)

TABLE IV (cont'd)

Year Ending	Names and address of Superintendents of Schools	Salary	No. of visits	No. of Institutes held	No. of days employed
1885	R. T. Bland - Saluda Virginia	\$200	30	1	50
1886	" " " " "	\$200	36	1	60
1887	" " " " "	\$200	40	1	50
1888	" " " " "	\$200	30	1	40
1889	John W. Ryland - Churchview Virginia	\$200	30	1	40
1890	W. S. Christian - Urbanna Virginia	\$200	54	1	25
1891	" " " " "	\$200	54	1	27

purpose of the meeting and urged all teachers to discard all embarrassment and false modesty, and throw their whole mind into the work, as one of the best means of improvement and efficiency." 1

From the report of 1873 there seems to have been a general decrease in public school attendance, sixty-five counties showed a loss. In Middlesex there was a loss of eighty-eight children. The county superintendents were asked to explain this condition and from their replies Superintendent Ruffner made this compiled report in the December Educational Journal, 1873:

1. "During the first two years children were registered and counted in as many as three schools, an error which has been corrected this year.
2. "Number of schools decreased in order to give teachers more pay - some children were unable to get to a school.
3. "Some schools which had been overrun were limited.
4. "The second year schools had been put in sparse neighborhoods, to be put the third year in the more thickly populated areas.
5. Private schools increased.
"Just as we expected and who is to blame."
6. "Failure in crops.
7. "Contagious and epidemic diseases.

1. Educational Journal of Virginia, September, 1873, p. 488.

8. "Less effort to promote the desire and appreciation of education among the people. School officers contented themselves with attention to routine duties, and left the spirit of education to propagate itself without nursing."

In the October Virginia Journal an interesting suggestion was given Superintendents entitled, "How to Choose a Teacher":

"Look for common sense, it is better than Greek;

"Look for patience, it is better than "Grit";

"Look for knowledge, and a desire to increase it;

"Look for modesty, Look for Christianity.

"P. S. Do not look for an angel."

Table III (Progress from 1871-1891) shows that the interest and attendance at public schools was at its height in 1873. The reported number of children in schools in 1872 was eight hundred, ninety-one. Some inaccuracies in reporting school attendance accounts for the fact that eight hundred and fifty-three children were enrolled in 1873. In 1873 the enrollment was higher than it was again until 1884.

The decrease in enrollment from eight hundred and eighteen children in 1878 to three hundred and ninety-seven children in 1879 was accounted for in the Superintendent's report: "Much dissatisfaction with division of school funds,¹ thus causing a suspension of many schools."

1. Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1879.

This table also shows the gradual increase in enrollment from five hundred and ninety-seven in 1871 to one thousand, four hundred and forty-two in 1891.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The educational philosophy, held by the educational and most influential people of Middlesex County, from the time of the very early settlement until just prior to the War Between the States, was that education was largely a private concern. The study of the provisions made for the education of the youth from 1669-1776 - as in England, each man saw to the education of his children. In the earlier years the tutorial system was more practicable. Toward the close of the Colonial period the "ministers" met the demand for Greek, Latin and higher mathematics. That the system or ideal followed by these men met the needs of those who received its benefits is proven by their cultural level and their masterly use of the English language.

From a very early time in the history of the county influential men remembered the children of the poor and the orphans and bequeathed lands and other property to be used

to support free schools where they were to receive schooling. This duty was first accepted by the church wardens who attended to other matters of charity in the Parish.

Education in Colonial Middlesex followed the same course that is taken in England out of towns: " every¹ man according to his ability instructing his children." They were bound by tradition but a new philosophy was slowly developing until finally the idea of free public education for all penetrated the minds of the people of Middlesex. A long succession of years and the influence of many prominent men of the county was necessary before the people were willing to be taxed for the support of public schools. The more prominent people of the county, though willing to be taxed and favoring free education, were slow to give up their private schools.²

The acts of the State Legislature reflect the trends of thought of their day. Those affecting the schools of Middlesex have been traced to show the gradual evolution of the school system.

In 1610 the means most acceptable to the ruling class in Virginia of providing for education was not through taxation, but funds derived from fines, escheats, penalties,

1. Quoted on p. 10.
2. See Appendix A.

etc. Consequently, the Legislature established what was known as the Literary Fund. In 1811 the Legislature passed an act providing for the administration of the fund. This gave us our "pauper system" of education because only the children of the indigent received any benefits.

The act of 1818 was an attempt to strengthen the law of 1818. The reports of the School Commissioners reveal interesting data. The children of the poor were placed in private schools and the tuition was paid by the Commissioners. The treasurer of the county was ordered, at the first meeting of the School Commissioners in 1818, to buy free text books for the use of the children. From time to time they report that the progress of the poor children was as great as those in more fortunate circumstances. That this system was not satisfactory is shown by statements in the reports of the Commissioners. The funds were inadequate but it was a step toward free education for all. That some of the people were interested in further legislation for school support is evidenced by petitions drawn up and presented to the Legislature.

In their Petition of January 9, 1846 the people of the county voice the opinion that the system of education then in use was inadequate to the needs of the community. It was not until 1867 that the Act of Assembly made constitutional provision for a state of free public education.

By 1845 much agitation had arisen for a state wide

free school system. However, the Legislature was not ready to make it compulsory for counties to establish free schools for all classes. Public sentiment in favor of a school system where benefits would be free to all was beginning to crystallize.

In the report of Superintendent Evans, 1871, he states that at first there was much adverse sentiment to the public school system which provided for the education of negro children as well as white children. In 1872, however, he reported that sentiment was generally favorable.

History does not reveal the secondary education suffered during the early years. That the family schools, private schools and later the free schools fulfilled their purpose is witnessed by the number who began their education in Middlesex and later became eminent in their chosen field of endeavor.¹

This study is of interest for it shows the long struggle of the people of Middlesex to provide educational opportunities for their children.

APPENDIX A

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Although there were no large academies in Middlesex, there were many family schools and private schools. As often as not the school was held in a little one room building in the yard near the "big house." These schools were originally provided by the father for the education of his children.

There were many such schools in Middlesex but no records were kept. If so, they were later destroyed for nowhere did the writer find published material or records concerning the private schools in Middlesex County. Only fragmentary bits of information which have been contributed by elderly people of the county who either attended these schools or were in some way closely connected with them has been used to establish the history of these schools. In only a few instances could dates be established.

Mrs. Sallie Perkins Harwood and Mrs. Fannie Perkins Woodward recall the school their father (E. T. Perkins) established in 1879.

Classes were held in the room above the office, a small two story building near the dwelling house. Piano lessons were offered and were taught in the parlor of the

dwelling house. At first there were eight boarders and four day scholars, but after a few years there were more applicants than Mr. Perkins could accommodate. Scholars came from a distance. There were Miss Kate Smith from Oak Grove, Westmoreland County, and Miss Rosabell Rogers from Lancaster County. Miss Emma Wiles taught in 1879-80. Other teachers were: Miss Charlotte Muse, Miss Alice Perciful, Miss Fannie Myrick and Miss Godwin.

The academy was in session six months each year and the tuition and board was one hundred dollars a term.

Other family schools are listed below:

The Spring Dale Academy

A family school was conducted by Mrs. Walter Shackleford at her home for a number of years. She was the only teacher and there were never more than fifteen children in attendance. The subjects taught included all of the elementary studies.

"Oakenham"

A private school was conducted at "Oakenham" - home of the Fauntleroy's near Saluda, Virginia.

"Farley Park"

The Reverend Thomas Evans conducted a school for girls at his home, "Farley Park" near Warner, Virginia.

"Woodgrove"

A private school was conducted at "Woodgrove" the home of Mr. and Mrs. Beverley Segar, near Warner, Virginia.

"Locust Grove"

A private school was conducted by Mr. Robert Henry McKann at his home for his children and some others in the neighborhood in 1879.

There was a school established in 1886 known as the "Burton School." It was located in Urbanna, Virginia. This was a preparatory school. Emphasis was placed upon languages, music and art, thus giving the young ladies the accomplishments necessary for entry into the social life of the times. The tuition for this school was five dollars a month with an extra fee for music.

Mrs. S. S. Mountain taught the negroes in her community just after the War Between the States. On Sunday afternoons negroes of all ages met in a vacant building near her home where Dr. Mason Evans, Mr. R. D. Hilliard, Mrs. Mountain and Mrs. Healy, then a very small girl, taught the negroes reading, spelling, singing and religion. Mrs. Healy taught the younger negro children their letters. Later, Mrs. Mountain taught the negroes in the little field school at Royal Oakes.

APPENDIX B

OUTSTANDING MEN OF THE EARLY PERIOD

Richard Corbin of "Buckingham House" was Receiver General for the Crown.

John Grymes of "Brandon on the Rappahannock" and his son Philip Grymes were also Receiver Generals.

Richard Corbin of "Corbin Hall" was President of the King's Council. Richard Corbin, as a member of the King's Council caused to be issued to George Washington his commission in military service for the colony. The commission was that of major.

Ralph Wormeley, founder of "Rosegill", was President of the King's Council, Secretary of State. His home was the summer capitol of Virginia while Sir Henry Chicheley and Lord Howard of Effingham were Governors of Virginia.

Edmund Berkley and James Montague represented Middlesex in the Constitutional Convention of 1776.

Robert Beverley was the first historian in the colony and was one of the Knights of the Golden Horse Shoe.

Judge Robert Latane Montague, Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia.

APPENDIX C

A DESCRIPTION OF URBANNA, MIDDLESEX COUNTY - 1840

"Urbanna, the county seat, is a seaport located about eighteen miles above the mouth of the Rappahannock, near the entrance of Urbanna Creek into that stream, and eighty-four miles northeasterly from Richmond. It was established a town by law the same year with Norfolk, 1705. It is a small village containing several stores and about a dozen dwellings. This village was the residence of the celebrated botanist and physician, John Mitchell, who emigrated to this country from England in the early part of the last century and distinguished himself by his philosophical and medical essays and historical writings."

1. Historical Collections of Virginia Relating to Its History and Antiquities, p. 115.

APPENDIX D

STATE SUPERINTENDENTS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN
VIRGINIA - 1870-1890

William H. Ruffner	March 5, 1870 - March 5, 1882
R. R. Farr	March 15, 1882 - March 15, 1886
John L. Buchannon	March 15, 1886 - January 1, 1890

Table No. IV. gives information on Superintendents
of Schools in the County.

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