

## Tonight's Program

### *Back to School: Education in Loudoun's Past*

#### **Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records**

- Eric Larson-Literary Fund: *Primitive Beginnings to Free Education in Virginia*
- Lori Kimball-An Overview of *Pre-Civil War Schools and Academies and the Literary Fund Schools*
- Shannon Fuller-Margaret Mercer: *Education and Abolitionist*

#### **Thomas Balch Library**

- Laura Christiansen- *Commenting on the Old School – Student and Teacher Experiences in Early Loudoun Schools*

#### **Edwin Washington Project**

- Larry Roeder

#### **Questions & Answers**





## Literary Fund: Primitive Beginnings to Free Education in Virginia

### Early Education in Virginia: Colonial Period 1619-1776

#### Top Tier

Upper Class Gentleman  
Clergy  
Plantation owners

#### Second Tier

Merchants  
Tradesman  
Skilled Labors

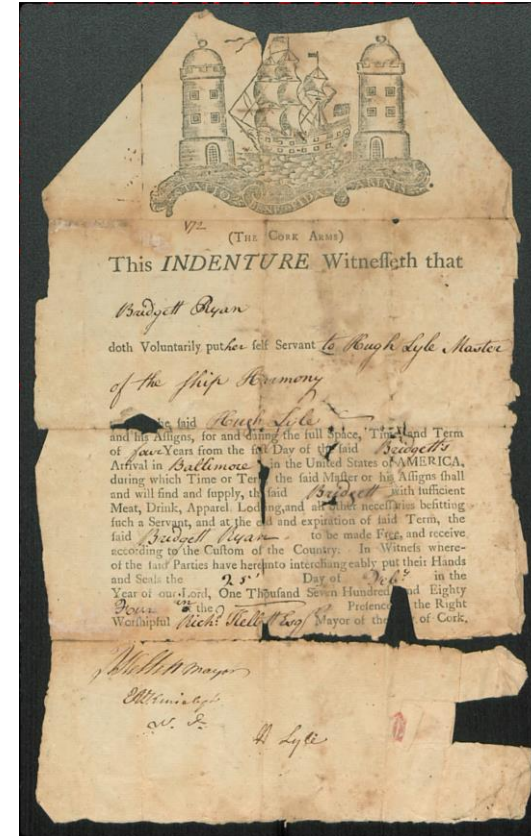
#### Third Tier

Lower Class Labors  
Poor Whites  
Free Blacks  
Enslaved

### Types of Education Institutions in Virginia

Apprenticeship/Indentureship  
Free Endowed Schools  
Sunday Schools  
Tutorial Education  
Academies  
Common Schools

“... that the general laws providing for the training of the children were in the nature of apprenticeship regulations, containing provisions for the training of the children in reading, writing, the catechism, and in the art of some trade, these laws referring exclusively to orphans and poor children of the colony...”



Bridgett Ryan indentured Papers, 1784  
Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records



Clerk of the Circuit Court, Gary M. Clemens  
Historic Records & Deed Research Division



## Literary Fund: Primitive Beginnings to Free Education in Virginia

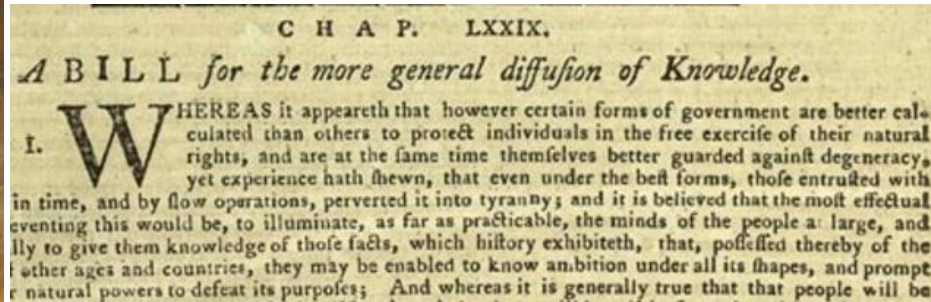
### “More General Diffusion of Knowledge” 1779



Governor Thomas Jefferson

“For establishing schools at which the children of all the citizens of this Commonwealth may receive a primary grade of education at the common expense..”

The Bill for the “More General Diffusion of Knowledge”



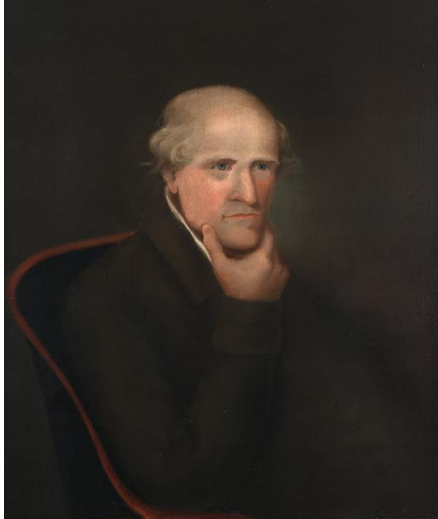
The first free education system for Virginia was proposed by Governor Thomas Jefferson in 1779. The Bill for the “More General Diffusion of Knowledge” was to provide schools, curriculum, teachers, and the training of new teachers. Since Jefferson’s bill required increased taxes to finance public education, his act failed to attract enough support to bring it to a vote.





## Literary Fund: Primitive Beginnings to Free Education in Virginia

### Literary Fund: Primitive Beginnings to Free Education in Virginia



Governor John Tyler Sr

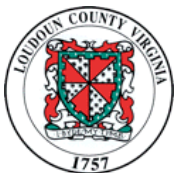


Virginia State House Richmond

“... the education of the Poor,” in which is made a “solemn protest” against any future legislature’s misapplying the Literary Fund to any other purpose than that of the education of the.”

Literary Fund Act 1818

In 1810, Governor John Tyler Sr. lobbied the Virginia General Assembly to establish a fund to provide free primary education in Virginia. The passage of the Literary Fund Act by the Virginia General Assembly established funding but left it up to the individual counties to opt into the system. Initially the Literary Fund was created to provide poor white boys and girls who were unable to pay for private schooling the opportunity to gain a primary education.



Clerk of the Circuit Court, Gary M. Clemens  
Historic Records & Deed Research Division

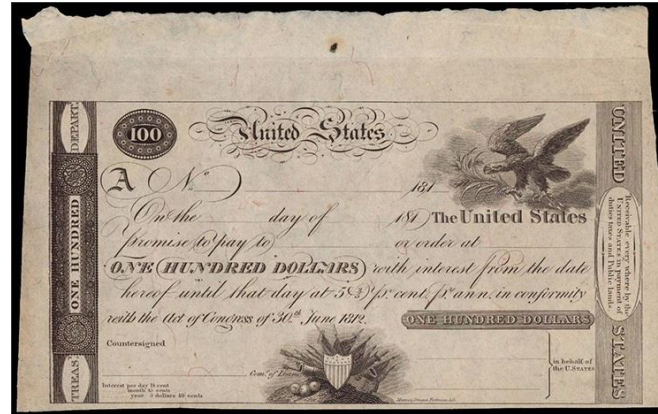


## Literary Fund: Primitive Beginnings to Free Education in Virginia

### Building the Literary Fund



Charles Fenton Mercer



U.S. Treasury Note to fund the War of 1812.

*“Be it enacted; that all escheats, confiscations, fines, penalties and forfeitures, and all rights in personal property accruing to the Commonwealth, as derelict, and having no rightful proprietor, be, and the same are hereby appropriated to the encouragement of learning. That the aforesaid fund shall be appropriated to the sole benefit of a school or schools, to be kept in each and every county within this Commonwealth”.*

Literary Fund Act 1810

From the beginning, the Literary Fund was underfunded due to a lack of a taxable funding source. In 1811, the Literary Fund had only a \$12,904.60 balance. In 1816 Loudoun’s representative Charles Fenton Mercer proposed that all money borrowed by the Federal Government from Virginia to help financed the War of 1812 should be paid back into the Literary Fund. With this new source of funding, the Literary Fund balance increased from nearly \$13,000 to \$1,067,504 million dollars.



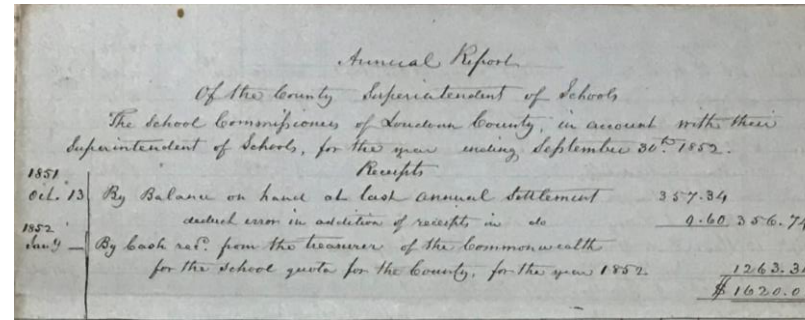
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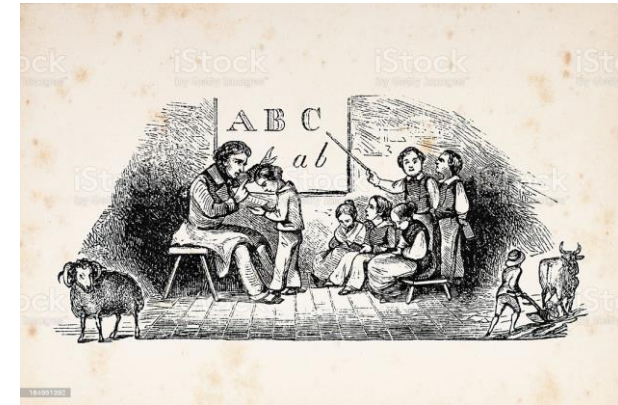


# Literary Fund: Primitive Beginnings to Free Education in Virginia

## The Literary Fund in Loudoun



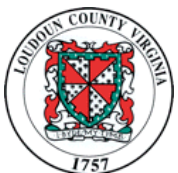
Annual School Report, 1851



By 1818, the County of Loudoun had set up free schools under the guidelines of the Literary Fund. The fund defined how school districts were set up, the appointment of trustees with a president to manage the county's Literary Fund, and court appointment of commissioners for each school district. Loudoun County had twenty-four individual school districts with its own teachers and school(s). These early school records provide little or no information on where the school(s) were located in each district.

“Each county was to be divided into districts from three to seven miles square, at the most convenient point of which a school was to be erected. Whenever the inhabitants of such a district would contribute three fifths of a sum necessary to provide a schoolhouse... The county school commissioners were authorized to give one hundred dollars out of the Literary Fund quota toward the salary of a teacher...”

Literary Fund Act 1829



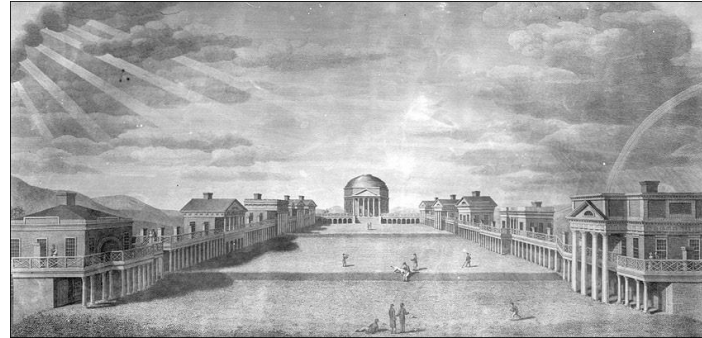


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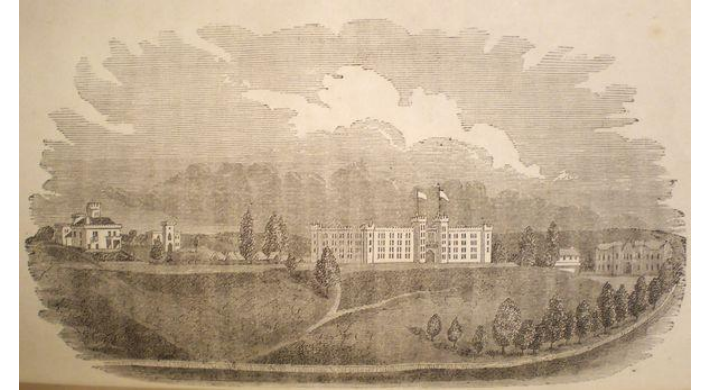
### Literary Fund 1830-1861



The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind



University of Virginia



Virginia Military Institute

In the 1830s, the Literary Fund began to fund programs other than primary public education. In 1830 the Literary Fund assisted in funding the General Assembly's passage of *An Act Concerning the Public Library*. In 1838, the Literary Fund provide funding for *An Act to Provide for the Establishment of the Virginia Asylum for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb and of the Blind*. The Literary Fund money also provided financial assistant University of Virginia and Virginia Military Institute. In 1861, the Ordinance of Secession appropriated most of the Literary Fund to finance Virginia's war effort, which ended primary education in Virginia for the duration of the war.





# Literary Fund Today



Frederick Douglass High School, 1945

WHEREAS, the County School Board of Loudoun County desires to anticipate the payment of the following Literary Fund Loans with interest thereon as of March 1, 1944:

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Arcola	\$13,600.00
Douglass Colored County Training (Leesburg Colored)	32,775.00
Douglass High (Leesburg No. 1)	1,925.00
Hillsboro	2,250.00
Leesburg	24,150.00
Lincoln	11,440.00
Lincoln	9,200.00
Lovettsville	7,700.00
Purcellville	4,900.00
Total--	\$107,940.00

A RESOLUTION CONSENTING TO PROCEEDINGS BY THE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, FOR BORROWING MONEY AND ISSUING \$107,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION SCHOOL REPUNDING BONDS OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, FOR PAYMENT OF EXISTING LITERARY FUND LOANS

Leesburg, Virginia,  
November 22, 1943.



Douglass Colored County Training School (Leesburg Training School)

*“The Literary Fund is a permanent and perpetual school fund established in the Constitution of Virginia. Revenues to the Literary Fund are derived primarily from criminal fines, fees, and forfeitures, unclaimed and escheated property, unclaimed lottery winnings and repayments of prior Literary Fund loans. The Literary Fund provides low-interest loans for school construction, grants under the interest rate subsidy program, debt service for technology funding, and support for the state’s share of teacher retirement required by the Standards of Quality”. Virginia Department of Education*

