

**PLEASE BECOME A MEMBER
OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ONE
ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE, INC.**

The Friends of the One Room School House, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization formed to establish a partnership between the Calvert Retired School Personnel Association and others who are interested in preserving Port Republic School #7.

Membership includes a newsletter plus information on activities with updates on coming events.

Make your *tax-deductible* check payable to "Friends of the One Room School House, Inc." and mail to Post Office Box 431, Port Republic, MD 20676-0431.

- ___ Individual or Family \$20.00
- ___ Benefactor \$50.00
- ___ Sustaining \$100.00
- ___ Additional Contribution \$ _____

Name(s) _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip Code _____

Port Republic School #7 is located on the grounds of Christ Church on Broomes Island Road (Rt. 264) in Port Republic, Calvert County, MD, .2 miles west of MD Rt. 2/4.

For further information, please call 410-586-1418.



**ATTENDING A
ONE-ROOM SCHOOL...**

The teacher, usually a woman, taught all subjects to children in grades 1 through 7 with a range of 22 to 34 students in attendance. Parents supported the teacher and taught their children to obey her, often reinforcing at home discipline that had already occurred at school.

Teachers boarded with families, walked to school with the children or rode a horse, and often carried the day's water. They built the fire in the stove, cleaned the school, and planned and taught the lessons.

Children were taught in small groups of the same grade or ability level. Much of the instruction was oral, allowing children to hear the lessons repeated. At the front of the room, with toes touching the raised teacher's platform, small groups read, answered questions, and were taught the "3 R's" (reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic). Teachers also taught science, geography, history, and additional subjects such as philosophy, Latin, and physiology. Older children helped younger ones. Schools were equipped with a minimum of teaching materials and supplies, requiring great imagination and creativity from both teachers and students.

**EXPERIENCING A
ONE-ROOM SCHOOL TODAY...**

Today, the county's public school curriculum includes a day at Port Republic School #7 for all fourth graders. Children come to experience a typical day in a school such as one attended by their great-grandparents and to learn about life in rural Calvert County before electricity, indoor plumbing, cars, and buses. Groups from parochial, independent, and home schools, as well as Scout troops, also take part in this living history program.



**AN EDUCATIONAL JEWEL
PORT REPUBLIC
SCHOOL #7**



*Located on the grounds of Christ Church at
3100 Broomes Island Road, Port Republic, Maryland*

**THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL
STILL TEACHES**

Built around 1870 and in continuous use until 1932, this historic one-room school house is in Calvert County, Maryland. Today it serves as a living museum, evidence of the time period when church and school provided moral and social fabric while farm products and the Bay's bounty sustained life.



www.CalvertOneRoomSchool.org
410-586-1418

SAVING PORT REPUBLIC'S ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

As their bicentennial project in 1976, the Calvert Retired Teachers Association took the lead and worked with other local groups to make the memory of this one-room school come to life. The teachers selected Port Republic School #7 because it was already situated on an accessible site and was judged suitable for restoration.



It took teachers' vision to see the potential hidden in the remaining shell. After the school closed in 1932, it stood without doors or windows, smothered in vines and undergrowth, prey to termites, damaged by moisture, inhabited by honeybees, and nearly invisible in the woods owned by Christ Episcopal Church.

Organizations, individuals, and fundraising activities by the retired teachers generated the monies to begin the pay-as-you-go restoration process. No money was sought or received from any government agency. Volunteers cleared the woods, removed insect infestations, painted, and re-roofed the building. Windows and a door were installed.



The empty building truly came alive after it was furnished. Donations included old school desks, textbooks, slates, pictures, water bucket and dipper, school bells, wall maps, pot bellied stove, lunch pails, and other memorabilia.

EARLY HISTORY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CALVERT COUNTY

Today, we take our right to a "free public education" for granted. It was not always so.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MARYLAND BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

The land for the colony of Maryland was given by the King of England to the Calvert family in 1632, and the first English settlers arrived in 1634. Calvert County was established in 1654. Shortly thereafter, in 1671, elected officials first took up the question of educating children. During the following two centuries there were a number of attempts to establish public schools in Maryland, but most eventually failed due to lack of funds.

With no formal schooling available, children whose parents were literate might learn rudimentary reading and writing skills. Some wealthy families engaged a schoolmaster or tutor for their children, then often sent them to Europe for higher education. African-American children, both slave and free, were seldom taught to read and write.

FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

The development of a strong, centrally-administered education system in Maryland began taking shape in 1864, during the Civil War. The Maryland State Board of Education was created. For the first time, each county's schools were placed under a county school board appointed by the governor. The state school board had the power to establish school districts, set standards for teachers, and hold annual inspections of every school. A state normal school was also provided for teacher training.

From near the end of the Civil War until well into the 20th century, one-room schools were situated around Calvert County so that students would need to walk no more than three miles to attend school. Maryland law, at that time, dictated separate schools for African-American and white students, so there were often two schools near each other. In 1957, the lone remaining one-room school in Calvert County—Chaney—was closed.



Port Republic School #7's teacher and students, circa 1915.

PORT REPUBLIC SCHOOL #7

Port Republic School #7 was built on its present site about 1870 and remained in continuous use until it was closed in 1932. This one-room school served to educate white children in grades 1 through 7 in the same classroom, usually with only one teacher providing instruction in all subjects.

Attendance rose and fell with the requirements of the farm—primarily the tending of the tobacco crop. In winter, attendance was at its highest, and young students had to sit along the edge of the teacher's platform and even in the aisles. It was not until 1911 that school attendance became compulsory.

In 1932 the old school was closed and forgotten until 1976. During that period, it served as a home for tenant farmers and then stood totally abandoned before ownership of the land and property transferred from Thomas and Leta Williams to Christ Episcopal Church Parish in 1957.

Christ Church is one of the original parishes of Maryland, dating to 1672, when it was a log church. It is Calvert County's oldest continuously worshipping congregation.



SUMMARY OF CALVERT COUNTY SCHOOL STATISTICS FOR 1899

	1899*
Number of School Houses	47
Maximum # of Rooms	50
# Male Teachers/Principals	6
# Female Teachers/Principals/Assts.	44
TOTAL	50
# Different Pupils for the Year	
Males—White	560
Males—African-American	591
Females—White	507
Females—African-American	589
TOTALS	2,247
# Pupils Above Sixth Grade	19
# Pupils Taking	
Bookkeeping	12
Algebra	52
Physiology	228
Geometry	25
Philosophy	33
Latin	7

Disbursements	
White Schools	\$14,215
African-American Schools	\$4,994

**Data Source for Statistics, above: Thirty-Third Annual Report of the State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending July 31st, 1899.*



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