

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

MD. HISTORICAL TRUST
BOX 1704
ANN POLIS, MD. 21

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON: Seta's Cokesberry College Marker

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Lane enters east of old Pella Road (Md 7) about

CITY OR TOWN: Abingdon 0.1 mi south of Abingdon Road

STATE: MA CODE: COUNTY: Harford CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Site</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Both</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Some</u>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			No: <input type="checkbox"/>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Religious</u> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME: Abingdon Methodist Church

STREET AND NUMBER: Prospect and Johnson Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Abingdon STATE: MD CODE: 21009

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

STREET AND NUMBER: CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

CITY OR TOWN: HARFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE STATE: 40 S. MAIN CODE:

ACREAGE: BEL AIR MARYLAND

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	destroyed Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Site only.

Marker is a brick pedestal under
the scale model in brass about
24" x 9" of the Cokerbury Hall
main building.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Political <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Philosophy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Historic <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Science <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Invention <input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Art <input type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Communications <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>		
Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	Music <input type="checkbox"/>		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Religious education building stood on this site. Planned in 1784, classes began in this building in 1787. After eight years of rigorous schedule the building was burned in 1795, never to be rebuilt.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wright, C. Milton, Our Harford Heritage #335, 236-7.
 The Little Doctor Rev. Thomas Cole, founder, Cokesbury College
 The Christian Advocate, 13 April 1950. (Vertical file
 Harford County Library) 740 Rush Street Chicago
 Cokesbury College - Historical Story of Harford's Educational
 System, by C. Milton Wright - The Harford County Library
 Vertical file Harford County Library

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: _____

ORGANIZATION: JEAN S. EWING
Maryland Historical Soc. Box 1704 - 94 College Ave
Annapolis, Md. 21404 DATE: _____

STREET AND NUMBER: _____

CITY OR TOWN: _____ STATE: _____ CODE: _____

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

The town was also an educational and religious center, having been selected for the site of Cokesbury College, the first Methodist College in America. Two academies added to the educational prestige of the village. The Cokesbury Academy was under the jurisdiction of the college and

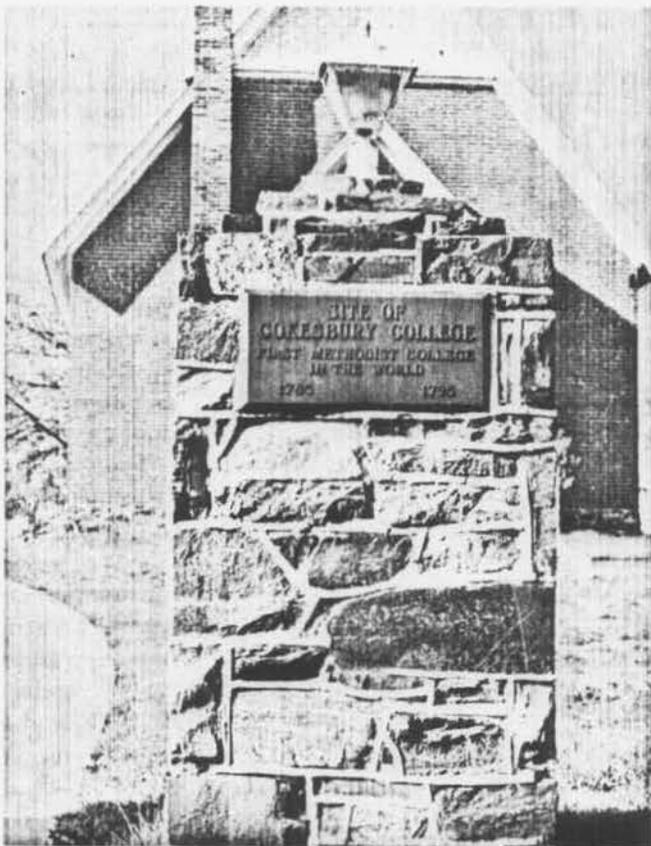


Photo by Dr. David C. Hodge

**SITE OF COKEBURY COLLEGE
1785-1795**

continued for several years after that institution came to a disastrous end. The Abingdon Academy was opened in 1828 and ten years later was consolidated with that of Cokesbury. This school stood on lot 27 almost opposite the present firehouse. The public school succeeded the academy about 1850 and was made a part of the present school system in 1871.

Abingdon also boasted of being the home of the first newspaper published in the county. In 1805 Daniel P. Ruff established the ABINGDON PATRIOT, a small four-page weekly publication, which served for a number of years as a local news and advertising media for lower Harford. This paper is said to have published several valuable historical pamphlets about 1806, but none seems to have been preserved.

Black Horse

Situated about four miles northwest of Jarrettsville is the crossroads hamlet of Black Horse. This small village has had an eventful history. It was located on or near the large expanse of land originally called "The



Photo by Dr. David C. Hodge

ORIGINAL SIGN AT BLACK HORSE TAVERN

COKESBURY COLLEGE

In searching old records one often finds the story—long-buried and laid away—of some dead institution whose name is scarcely known to men today. Such is the case of Cokesbury College which was founded with great zeal and high hopes by eminent men of religion, flourished for a short time, and passed into oblivion.

John Wesley appointed the Rev. Thomas Coke to be Superintendent of Methodism in the United States. Soon after Coke's arrival in America, he met Bishop Francis Asbury, the pioneer bishop of Dover, Delaware, and it was agreed that there should be established a college for higher education under the control of the church.

The new school, which was to be modeled after Mr. Wesley's famous Kingswood School in England, was planned with great ardor by Dr. Asbury and Dr. Coke. At a conference of the church in 1783, it was decided that the college should be located in Harford County, and that its name should be "Cokesbury," compounded from the names of the two bishops.

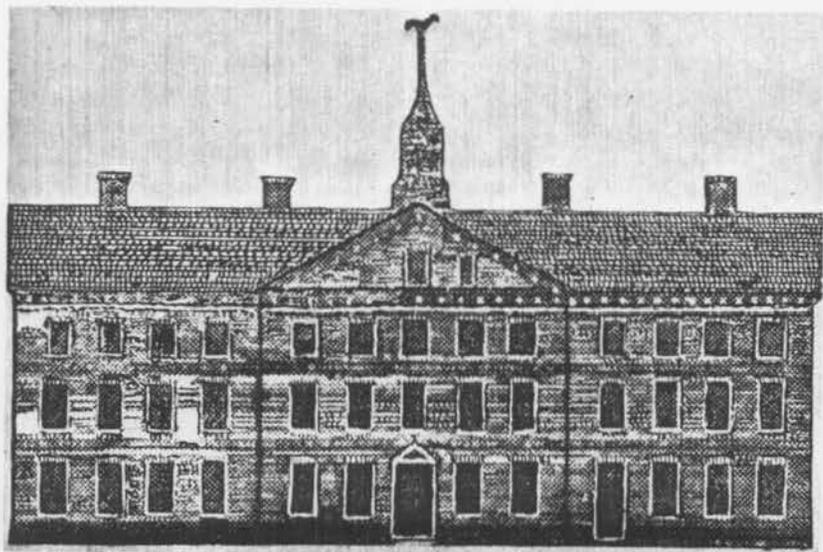
Site Chosen at Abingdon

Within a short time, the site was chosen—a high knoll, a beautiful spot in the town of Abingdon, overlooking Bush River and Chesapeake Bay. Speaking of the site on his second visit, Dr. Coke said, "The place delights me more and more, the waterfront forms one of the most beautiful views in the United States."

The first ground was purchased from John Paca on July 3, 1784, for 60 pounds sterling, and a deed was made to Richard Dallam, Thomas Kell, and others, "for the use of the people called Methodists, to expound God's Holy Word and for no other purpose." A subsequent deed in 1787, from Richard Dallam and Aquila Paca, devisees of John Paca deceased, transferred "such parts of lots 39 and 40 in Abingdon as have not already been made over by John Paca in trust for a preaching house, together with the large edifice already built for a college."

The building, which had already been erected before this second deed, was said to have been in "dimensions and style of architecture fully equal, if not superior, to anything of the kind in the country." It was of brick, 108 feet in length and 40 feet in width, three stories high, and stood on the center of the six acre tract, with almost equal slope on each side.

On the first floor was a large hall, 40 feet square, from each corner of which a winding stairway led to the story above. On each side of the hall were two classrooms, each 20 x 25 feet. The remaining space was probably used for a president's office and quarters for the assistant masters. The



Courtesy of Equitable Trust Co., Aberdeen

COKESBURY COLLEGE, 1785-1795

rooms on the second and third floors were the same, except that two rooms occupied the place of the large hall, and others were fitted up as dormitory quarters.

The premises were enclosed by a substantial fence, and a pool 6 feet square was provided for bathing. One pupil was permitted to bathe at a time and only for one minute with a master being always present. Bathing in Bush River was strictly prohibited.

The cornerstone was laid on June 5, 1785, before a large crowd of people from the surrounding country and perhaps representing most of the Methodist churches of the Eastern Seaboard. Bishop Asbury was the speaker of the occasion and set forth in appropriate terms the importance of religious education and its advantages to the future generations.

College Organized

Of the fifteen trustees selected for the new school, five were from Baltimore, one from Annapolis, two from the Eastern Shore, and five were traveling preachers. It is significant that not one was a resident of Harford County.

As soon as the building was under roof, the preparatory school was opened with 15 pupils and was taught by Freeman Marsh, a Quaker of middle age, "a good Latin scholar and excellent disciplinarian."

Bishop Asbury was named the first president, but it seems that at least the first principal and possibly other teachers were selected by Dr. Coke. The first headmaster, the Rev. M. Heath, an Englishman who was master of the grammar school at Kidderminster, England, was sent over by Dr. Coke in 1787.

A regulation, probably laid down by Mr. Wesley, specified that assistants to the master must be single men. In the college proper, Patrick McCloskey, a well-educated Irishman, was the first to serve in that capacity, while Mr. Marsh continued to act as teacher of the preparatory department.

The inauguration of Mr. Heath in December, 1787, was a grand affair, lasting three days. Bishop Asbury preached a sermon on each of three successive days, using the following texts: "Trust in the Lord and Do Good," "O Man of God, There is Death in the Pot," and "They Shall Not Labor in Vain."

Curriculum Extremely Classical

John Wesley took great interest in the new college and wrote a letter to Mr. Heath early in 1788 in which he laid down in minute detail the new curriculum, largely based on that of Kingswood School. The day started with classes at 7 A.M. and the last class was 4 P.M. The course of study, which covered material for eight classes, included fundamentals for children, as well as more difficult courses in mathematics, English, literature, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Wesley wrote, "I pray you not to adopt any of the modern innovations. Do not throw away the accents in Greek or the vowels in Hebrew."

We find, however, that the teachers failed to carry out Mr. Wesley's explicit directions and within a year other studies, such as logic, history, geography, natural philosophy, astronomy, French, and German were added. How a college of this size could offer such a varied curriculum, or how the small number of instructors could teach that many subjects effectively, is a marvel to present-day educators.

Rules Most Rigid

From the beginning, the iron-clad rules were, according to an eminent minister, "of the sternest and most ample boy-killing character." All students were required to rise at 5 A.M. and be in bed by 9 P.M., summer and winter, and each must study seven hours a day.

There were intervals of "recreation," which were spent in the practical study of architecture, in the workshop, or in agriculture which consisted of cultivating the large plot of ground laid out for a garden. A person

skilled in gardening was appointed to overlook the students in recreation, and each was at liberty to indulge in his own particular interest to cultivate any plant from a tulip to a cabbage. All were prohibited from participating in anything which had the semblance of play, this admonition reading, "Let this rule be observed with the strictest nicety, for those who play when they are young will play when they are old."

College Encounters Difficulties

President Heath served less than a year, being accused by one of his assistants of inefficiency in teaching Latin. McCloskey and Marsh also left in 1788. The new faculty consisted of Dr. Jacob Hall of Abingdon who served as president and the Rev. John Hargrove, the Rev. Joseph Toy, and Charles Tart, assistants. Dr. Hall and Mr. Toy had family connections in Harford County. The former married Mary Wilmot and a son, William W. Hall, at one time owned and lived on the "Dairy Farm" near Belcamp. Mr. Toy married the daughter of Richard Dallam II.

Despite the fact that the college had a difficult time in procuring efficient teachers and was always in financial straits, it continued to grow and flourish. An enrollment of 70 pupils, exclusive of those in the preparatory school, was reported in 1792. Tuition rates were set at that time at \$16.88 per pupil, with an extra \$60 a year for a boarding student.

By 1794 the debt had reached \$6,000. Hoping to improve its financial condition, the General Conference applied for an Act of Incorporation which materially changed the control of the school from that of the church to a board called "The Trustees and Governors of Cokesbury College." By this act the institution lost its denominational character and became free to all.

On December 4, 1795, came the great catastrophe. A fire—thought to be of incendiary origin—burned the building to the ground. The fame of this school spread far and wide in the short time of its existence, and many of its bricks were sought and carried away as relics of an institution that played its small part in the educational history of Harford County.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1723-1870

While public schools in Maryland were not put on a firm basis until authorized by the State Constitution of 1867, some very feeble attempts were made to organize them with at least partial public financial support at a very early date.



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Monument, Cokesbury College Site