

# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The following information was extracted from the *Charles County Historic Sites Survey*

## EARLY LIFE IN CHARLES COUNTY . . .

### Settlement Period between founding and the year 1800

Maryland was first settled by the Europeans in 1634 when Cecilius Calvert arrived at the site of a former Native American village. Named as St. Mary's City by the new settlers, this village became Maryland's first capital, as well as a refuge for those seeking religious freedom in Maryland. As the population of St. Mary's City radiated outward, settlement soon took place along the shores of the Wicomico River, the Port Tobacco River, Nanjemoy Creek and Mattawoman Creek. As the settled area continued to grow, it became increasingly difficult for these early residents to commute to the courthouse at St. Mary's City in order to transact business. To address this, the Governor's Council officially established Charles County on April 13, 1658.

With settlement of the area, and with the growing popularity of tobacco as a staple crop throughout the region, the population of the County continued to expand. In 1660 the population was estimated to be **900**. By 1665 it was estimated to be **1,500**, rising to **1,884** by the year 1675. When a serious depression in tobacco prices occurred in the 1680s, along with a rapid decline in soil quality created by the intensive cultivation of the crop, many small-scale planters abandoned their farms to move to areas with improved agricultural opportunities. Slavery was introduced into Charles County during this period as a solution to the labor shortage. By 1712, there were 724 slaves residing in Charles County, making up 18 percent of the county's total population. This percentage rose to 48 percent by 1782, indicating a complete reliance on slave labor by this time. The growth of the slave population continued throughout the first half of the 19th century, accounting for nearly 65 percent of the county's total population by 1850.

CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATE	CHANGE IN POPULATION SINCE 4/01/02
130,396	+2.5%



*Charles County's oldest surviving tobacco barn is found near Springhill, near the 18th century home of the Hanson family. Built circa 1780, this site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and protected under a historic preservation easement.*

## HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

Conducted by Cathy Currey Hardy, the County's Historic Preservation Planner, Charles County's Historic Sites Survey is aimed at updating and expanding the existing data on historic resources in Charles County. The information gathered contributes to an understanding of both individual sites and the County's overall architectural heritage and will ultimately be used as the basis of a comprehensive historic preservation program.



The third of five planned phases of the survey is now complete. Recently completed Phase III covered election districts four and five in the southeastern section of Charles County. This area of the county is defined by its extensive border with both the Potomac and Wicomico Rivers, and also includes the highest

concentration of active farmland in the County. This portion of the survey resulted in the documentation of 95 historic sites, including numerous dwellings, commercial buildings, schools, churches and cemeteries ranging in date from the mid-1700s to the early 1940s. These 95 sites contained, in aggregate, over **200** historic resources.

Phase IV of the survey is currently underway and focuses on Election Districts 2, 3 and 10, including Nanjemoy and Marbury, in the western section of the County. The last phase, Phase V, will be undertaken upon the completion of Phase IV, and will finalize the work that has been completed to date, while also integrating the data into current long range planning efforts. The comprehensive survey is due to be completed by the year 2005.

Like other Southern Maryland counties, the exclusive cultivation of tobacco governed the physical development and population of the county throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The county's landowners remained isolated on individual farmsteads that comprised small villages. Instead of the development of significant urban centers that were necessary for the shipping of crops such as corn and wheat, tobacco was shipped out of individual property owners' wharves. A network of crude roads to "roll" large barrels of tobacco to the river landings, where it would be shipped, was built. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, small crossroads communities consisting of maybe a tavern, a stable and several houses, sprang up at the intersections of these major routes. The population of the county rose and fell along with the production of the tobacco, reaching a high of **20,613** in 1790.

## 2003 PERMIT ISSUANCES (First Quarter)

**COMMERCIAL:** Between January 1, 2003 and March 31, 2003, the county approved 389,538 new square feet of commercial/ industrial space. Included in this total is 311,000 square feet for the County's new North Point High School. This new comprehensive school is being built on the Board of Education's campus site located just south of MD 228, between Davis and Mill Hill Roads. The site will eventually accommodate not only the new high school, but also an elementary school, a middle school and several other community buildings.

All of the new commercial space was located inside of the development district, except for a total of 1,634 square feet located in the Fourth (4th) Election District.

**RESIDENTIAL:** The Charles County Permits Office issued the following building permits for the period January 1, 2003 through March 31, 2003:

Detached residential dwellings	180
Attached residential dwellings	52
Total New Residential	232

Of the 232 residential permits issued by the County permits office, 61% (141 permits) were located inside of the county's Development District.

The Town of Indian Head issued two permits for residential detached dwellings during the first quarter of 2003. The Town of La Plata issued permits for 24 new detached structures and 3 new apartments. In addition, one permit for the replacement of a detached structure was issued by the Town.

Last year, the County Permits Office issued a total of 271 permits for new residential structures during the first quarter. This represents a 14% decrease in the number of permits issued during the first quarter of this year when compared with the same period last year.

### DID YOU KNOW???

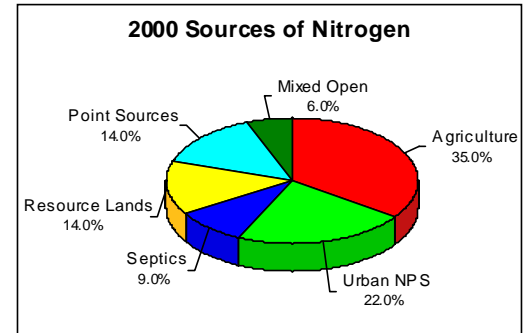
#### Maryland Tributary Strategies Nutrient Reduction Goals ...New goals set to support fish, shellfish, crabs, SAV grasses ...

In an effort to achieve water quality conditions that support living resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, the Chesapeake Bay Program partners recently agreed to steep cuts in the amount of nutrient pollution flowing into the Bay and its rivers. The new goals commit Bay watershed states and the District of Columbia to reduce nutrient pollution by more than twice as much as has been accomplished since coordinated Bay restoration efforts began nearly twenty years ago.

The new goals for the 64,000-square-mile Bay watershed have been refined into specific nutrient caps for the river basins in Maryland. The majority of Charles County lies within the Lower Potomac River basin. The following graphs show the Lower Potomac River basin must achieve an additional 38%, or 1.1 million pound reduction in nitrogen, and an additional 44%, or .08 million pound reduction in phosphorus to restore living resources.

For more information, please visit  
<[www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/tribstrat](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/tribstrat)>

## LOWER POTOMAC RIVER BASIN



Data are from Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model V4.3. April 1, 2003.

### Vision Statement

Charles County is a place where ...

- \* Private initiative is rewarded and businesses grow and prosper, while the preservation of our heritage is paramount,
- \* Government services have reached the highest level of excellence, and
- \* The quality of life is felt by its citizens to be the best in the region and its government is recognized as a leader in support of these expectations.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long and short term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility.

This information is provided by the Charles County Government, Department of Planning and Growth Management, Planning Division, Post Office Box 2150, La Plata, Maryland 20646, home page address [www.govt.co.charles.md.us/MaryL.Grant](http://www.govt.co.charles.md.us/MaryL.Grant), Editor