The Civil War in Charles County, Maryland

Less than one hour south of Washington D.C., the CHARLES COUNTY region is rich in Civil War history.

The plantation system still flourished in 1861, and southern sympathies were strong.

Camp Stanton was established in October 1861 for the purpose of recruiting and training African American men for the Union Army and was strategically located in the heart of Maryland’s slaveholding region. African Americans were enlisted to form the 2nd, 9th, 15th, and 30th Colored Infantry as part of the United States Colored Infantry.

Camp Stanton played a pivotal role in the quest for freedom for men in the lower Chesapeake Bay. There is a historical marker near the town of Benedict and the site is listed on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

Visit the African American Heritage Society of Charles County to learn about more than 300 years of the life contributions of African Americans to Southern Maryland’s history, including collections of oral history narratives.

The Port Tobacco Historic District was founded as a port in 1684 and designated as the county’s seat of government in 1727, the town comprised of more than 80 homes, commercial structures, and public buildings by the third quarter of the 18th century.

During the Civil War, Port Tobacco was well known for the pro-southern activities and sympathies of its citizens. In 1864, Mosby’s Rangers captured 20 Union soldiers during a surprise raid at the courthouse. Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth, was traced to this location in 1865. Federal troops were garrisoned at the courthouse and it was the field headquarters for the search of the fugitive.

After assassinating President Abraham Lincoln in April 1865, John Wilkes Booth and his accomplice David Herold stayed at Dr. Samuel A. Mudd’s House. Dr. Mudd let Herold rest in his house for several hours. Dr. Mudd was later tried and imprisoned. He and his family have always maintained his innocence.

Samuel Cox, whose sympathy in the southern cause was well known, hid both Booth and Herold on his Rich Hill farm after the fugitives were sent there upon being discovered in nearby Zekiah Swamp by a neighbor’s servant. Cox then proceeded to arrange for their safe passage to Virginia.

Booth and Herold remained hidden in a pine thicket until April 21, 1865, when Thomas A. Jones—foster brother of Cox and former Chief Signal Agent for the Confederacy—led them to the Potomac River near Dent’s Meadow near Pope’s Creek. Jones placed the men in a small boat and gave them a proper course to carry them across the river to Mathias Point, VA.

The Civil War in Charles County, Maryland

The Civil War A Southern Divide

A Travel Guide to the Civil War People & Places

CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

For additional information about any of Charles County’s Civil War sites, special events, or the “Maryland Civil War Trails,” contact the Charles County Tourism Office, 1 1765 St. Linus Dr, Waldorf, MD 20601, 301-274-3733 or visit www.charlescountyparks.com.

Crain Memorial Welcome Center
Open DAILY, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
12480 Crain Highway, Newburg
Email: WelcomeCenter@CharlesCounty.org

When traveling, be sure to drink alcohol and observe other unpleasant things. Ask for a copy of the many statewide publications including maps, attractions, travel guides, calendars of events, and more. The Welcome Center is filled with a variety of information on hunting and fishing, camping and hiking, cultural and historical attractions, as well as information on the civil war and other historical events. The travel counselors will assist you with itineraries, meet and greet motor coaches, and make county and state hotel reservations.

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov
www.visitmaryland.org

CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT OFFICE OF TOURISM
Equal Opportunity Provider

Please note that the information contained in this guide is subject to change and may not reflect the most current information available at the time it was researched. We encourage you to contact local businesses directly for the most current information. While every effort has been made to provide accurate information, the Charles County Tourism Office is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness of the information provided in this guide. We encourage you to verify any information prior to your visit.

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov

Links are also on our website.

The War of 1812 – The British first occupied Benedict in June 1814 before retreating following a skirmish with American volunteers. Over 4,500 British forces landed at Benedict on August 19-20, 1814. From there the invaders marched to Washington, D.C., where they burned the Navy Yard, the Capitol, and the White House. You can find special Internet publications on the Civil War and the War of 1812 at the Crain Memorial Welcome Center in Nantucket.

Waterfront Dining
Feast on crabs and other succulent seafood at three popular waterfront restaurants near Civil War historic locations. These locations are also dock and drive boating locations.

Captain Billy’s Crab House, 11495 Pope’s Creek Rd, www.captbillys.com, 301-932-4253
Gilligan’s Pier Seawall & Steakhouse, 17355 Pope’s Creek Rd, www.gilliganspier.com, 301-299-4934
Rover’s Edge, 7123 Benedict Ave, Benedict, MD 20616, 301-274-2628
Ray’s Inn, 18170 Devoto Place, Benedict, MD 20616, 301-274-3733

Accessible Location
Any easy drive from major attractions in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia, Charles County is an excellent destination for day trips, overnight stays, group tours, meetings, and reunions.

Distance from:
Washington, D.C. – less than 20 miles • Baltimore, MD – 60 miles • Richmond, VA – 75 miles • Harrisburg, PA – 150 miles

Accommodations
Unpack for a few days in one of our group-friendly hotels, and enjoy day trips to historic sites, attractions, and national monuments. We offer a number of unique settings and opportunities.

Stay & Play
During your stay visit some of Charles County’s attractions:

Regency Furniture Stadium, 11765 St. Linus Dr, Waldorf, MD, www.somdbaseball.com, 301-838-3788
This award-winning sports complex in the Maryland Blue Crabs offers a full range of family friendly festivities and attractions. Step by to watch a game, enjoy a game you can even walk in the pin pavilion, and relax around the bumper boats.
Port Tobacco Players, 500 Charles St, La Plata, MD, www.ptpplayers.com, 301-262-6819
The Port Tobacco Players are dedicated to providing quality theater to Southern Maryland. Visit the main stage in La Plata or catch them on one of their off-site productions.

Indian Head Rail Trail
www.CharlesCountyParks.com, 301-932-3470
Located just 18 miles south of our Nation’s Capital, this multi-use trail provides walkers, cyclists, and equestrian enthusiasts with a 13 mile paved path offering views of mature forests, natural wetlands, and farmlands.

The ultimate recreation sports complex with an NHL-sized ice rink, 20’ x 85’ multi-sport court, rock climbing wall, eight locker rooms, four party rooms, state-of-the-art fitness and lighting systems, and year-round fun.

Charles County Skatepark, 105 St. Charles Pl, Prince Frederick, MD, www.charlescountyarks.com, 301-932-3470
Designed and built by the legendary Wally Hollyday of California Skateparks, features various bowl areas and exceptional street course with benches, ledges, rails, hills, gaps, pyramids, quarter pipes.

The content of this document is sponsored by the Charles County Office of Tourism, and comes from a variety of public and private information sources. Although every effort was made to provide complete and accurate information, the information should be verified before it is used in any way.

Get Connected!
Keyword: “Charles County Government”
Links are also on our website.