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 cation. In these schools many of our most excellent citizens received all the scholastic training which they ever possessed, and in them was laid the foundation of much ripe scholarship. Many were of excellent character, and their teachers men of acquirements. I may be permitted to refer particularly to a school taught by a Mr. Sullivan, in St. Michael's and to the school in Oxford Neck, under a Mr. Emmons. When these schools were under enlightened supervision, as was the case of the last mentioned school, great pains was taken to secure good teachers, and to introduce approved methods of instruction. The patrons of the Oxford Neck school, after employing a very competent teacher, at their own expense, sent him to Philadelphia to study the system then in vogue, and after his return supplied him with the necessary apparatus for teaching according to this system. These private schools, upon the establishment of a local system, merged into public free schools, and many, or all of them continued to receive private support in addition to the public donation.

The first authentic record we have of the establishment of a school to be supported, or aided by the public funds, is in the "Proprietary Act" of October 26th, 1723, by which the Reverend Henry Nicholls, Colonel Mathew Tilghman Ward, Robert Ungle, Esq., Mr. Robert Goldsborough, Mr. William Clayton, Mr. John Oldham, and Mr. Thomas Bozman were appointed visitors of a school "to be erected at the most convenient place as near the centre of the County as may be." Provision was made for the support of this and similar schools in all the other Counties of the State, and it would appear that funds, at the time of the passage of the act, had already accumulated in the treasury of the State, which were ordered to be divided. A course of study was prescribed, and many details of the management of the school. This school had able and competent teachers, the name of one of whom has reached us, that of Mr. George Rule, who yet has decendants in this County, and heirs of his honorable reputation, if not of his name. The precise location of this school I have not yet been able to discover, but a gentleman, versed in our local history, Mr. J. B. Kerr, informs me that it was where the waters of Miles River and Third Haven most nearly approach each other, namely, upon the land of Mr. James Ridgeway. How long this school continued in operation is not known, but in the year 1782, by an act of Assembly, power was given to the visitors to sell the land, the house having previously been burned down, and to transfer the proceeds to Washington College, Kent County.

I should not omit in this brief survey of schools, to mention that Talbot County claims to have had the first absolutely free school within the State. In or about the year