

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JUL 5 1979  
DATE ENTERED SEP 6 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** *Middle, East and West Halls*

HISTORIC

Washington College: Middle Hall, East Hall, West Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Hill Dormitories - Washington College

**2 LOCATION** *Washington Ave.*

STREET & NUMBER

West side of Washington Avenue (Maryland Route 213)  
on the South side of College Lane

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Maryland

24

Kent

029

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

Dormitories

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Visitors and Governors of Washington College, Attention: Dr. Joseph H. McLain,  
President or George E. Hayward

STREET & NUMBER

Washington Avenue

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

Maryland

21620

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kent County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Clerks Office

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Chestertown

Maryland

21620

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Middle, East, and West Halls stand on the crest of a low hill (the terrace) at the center of the Washington College campus. The slope to the south (front) is landscaped with large trees and a flight of steps lined with shrubs leading up to the entrance of Middle Hall.

Middle Hall, built in 1844, is the largest of the three brick structures--57'2" X 45'3". It is three stories tall and five bays wide by four deep; it sits on a raised basement of coursed granite blocks. The brick walls are laid in all stretcher bond. It has a hip roof covered with standing seam metal. Early drawings and photographs show that the building had a large cupola at the peak of the roof, removed some time after 1936. Four large, original chimneys have also been removed.

The south facade contains the main entrance in the central bay. A flight of wooden steps leads up to an entrance porch; both have brick foundations. The porch has two chamfered square columns on either side at the front and a pilaster on either side of the entrance. Iron pipe railings replace wooden railings visible in photographs taken in 1936. The porch has a flat roof.

The entrance has a six-panel door with sidelights and a diamond-pattern transom. The surround is flat with roundels in the corners. Above the entrance is a three-part window with 6/6 sash flanked by narrow 2/2 sash. The other windows have 6/6 sash; all have flat arches and stone sills. There are two basement windows on either side of the entrance; these are shorter than the sash above, and several of them are boarded up. The central basement bay on the rear contains a modern door.

The building has a flat board cornice containing small, horizontal windows above the bays below. There is a strip of molding on the cornice below the windows.

The rear facade has a "scar" in the brickwork where an entrance porch, door, and steps were removed in 1956. A window replaces the door.

East and West Halls were built in 1854 flanking Middle Hall. They are smaller, but similar stylistically to Middle Hall. Both are 36'1" x 50'4", three stories tall and three bays wide. East Hall is six bays deep while West Hall is only five. They are also laid in all stretcher bond on a raised basement of coursed granite block. The hip roofs on these buildings have a very shallow pitch, unlike that on Middle Hall. They have bracketed cornices.

The south facades both have a central doorway with entrance porch. The porches have two chamfered square columns and two pilasters, otherwise they resemble that on Middle Hall. (All three buildings have painted board signs on the fascia of the porch giving the names of the buildings.) Each entrance has a six-panel door, sidelights, and transom. The windows on the first and second stories have 6/6 sash, flat arches, and sandstone sills. The third story windows on East Hall have arches and sills like the others, but the sash have only 3/3 lights. Both buildings have basement windows with stone lintels and 6/6 sash shorter than those above, although several windows on the sides extend above the basement and have brick lintels and 9/6 sash on East Hall and 6/6 on West Hall. There is a door in the second basement bay from the front on the east facade of East Hall.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> _PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> _LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> _1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> _1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> _AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> _LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> _1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> _SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> _1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> _ART	<input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> _1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1844, 1854

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Eliza Reynolds

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1723, the Maryland General Assembly authorized each county to purchase land for schools. In 1728 the Visitors of Kent County purchased 100 acres from Simon Wilmer and his wife, Darcus, for 50 pounds.<sup>1</sup> Visitors appointed for Kent County were the Reverend Richard Sewell, the Reverend Alexander Williamson, James Harris, Esq., Colonel Edward Scot, Mr. Gideon Pearce, Mr. Lambert Wickes, and Mr. James Smith. The Kent County School began in 1730, and one of its early headmasters was Charles Peale, father of noted artist Charles Wilson Peale.

Kent County School prospered, having attracted boarding students from some distances. In 1782 the Reverend Dr. William Smith, former Provost of the College of Philadelphia, was named principal of Kent County School. Under his leadership, the Visitors petitioned the General Assembly for a corporate charter to establish "...a college or place of universal learning with the usual privileges..."<sup>2</sup>

Washington College, chartered on May 24, 1782, is Maryland's oldest college. It is the only private college on Maryland's Eastern Shore and holds the distinction of having been named after George Washington with his expressed consent. Washington contributed the sum of 50 guineas to the original endowment, later served as a Visitor and Governor (trustee), and was granted an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1789.

Under its founding President, William Smith, the college began construction of its first building in 1783. Named "Common Building" and completed in 1789, it was destroyed by fire on January 11, 1827. Common Building was composed of three connected units extending 160 feet and reaching a four-story height of 53 feet. It cost \$28,000 to build, \$20,000 of which came from a lottery sanctioned by the State General Assembly in 1784.<sup>3</sup> Until the building was erected, it is assumed that classes were held in various town buildings. The contractor for Common Building was a Philadelphian named Robert Allison. The structure itself was one of the largest collegiate buildings of that era.

Middle Hall (1844) and East and West Halls (1854) hold a special place in the history of Washington College in that they are the oldest surviving campus buildings and serve as monuments to the original Common Building, whose site they occupy.

Middle Hall, as it came to be called is the largest of three buildings. It was an idea long before it was built. In 1833, under President Richard Williamson Ringgold, a native of Kent County and alumnus of Princeton, the Visitors and Governors of Kent County resolved to build a college building on the parcel of land occupied until six years earlier by Common Building. A committee of three was appointed to secure estimates and plans for a suitable building to be built at a cost of not more than

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See note at the end of #8, Significance Statement.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY two acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Chestertown

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 4,0,7 7,9,0 4,3 4,1 2,2,0  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                    
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet #6.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George E. Hayward, Vice President for Development

ORGANIZATION

Washington College

DATE

June 1, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Washington and Campus Avenues

TELEPHONE

(301) 778-2800 x 276

CITY OR TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Maryland 21620

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE XX

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

6-27-79

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

John Carl Shull  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9-6-79

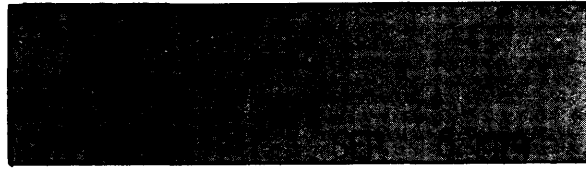
ATTEST: Anna Jane Saxe  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 9-6-79

Regional Coordinator

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Washington College  
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PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The north (rear) facades of these two structures have doors opening onto fire escapes. These are flanked by windows, which are blocked up on the first floor of West Hall. There is no opening in the central basement bay on this facade of West Hall. In the same location on East Hall is a 3/6 window.

The interiors of all three buildings were renovated in 1956. Still used as dormitories, they have metal stairs and some new partitions. Trim survives around unaltered doors and windows.

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Washington College  
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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

\$6,000.<sup>4</sup> The committee urged the acceptance of plans put together with the help of Mr. Burchinall, a builder from Chestertown. The plans called for:

A two-story house, sixty feet by forty, a cellar under the whole house to be eight feet high in the clear, four feet of it below and four feet above the ground. The first story to be twelve feet high in the clear, to have an entry or passage through the center of the building twelve feet wide, and two rooms of equal size on each side of the entry, the adjoining rooms to be connected by a large folding or sliding doors, and a fireplace in each room. The second story to be ten feet in the clear and in all respects the same as in the first story. A stairway from the cellar to the garrett. In the first and second stories the stairway to be in the entry.<sup>5</sup>

After nearly ten years of debate, further investigations, financial stress, and a few resignations of members, the Visitors and Governors finally agreed in 1844 to follow the Burchinall plans and to begin construction on the building. Mr. Eliza Reynolds of Baltimore was selected as the general contractor.

On May 4, 1844, ceremonies were held to mark the laying of the cornerstone in Middle Hall and the festivities on "College Hill" were reported in the Kent (County) News. A zinc box containing a copy of the Charter of the College, the names of faculty and the Visitors and Governors, various newspapers of the day and national coins, was placed in the corner stone. The inscription on the cornerstone on the southeast corner reads as follows:

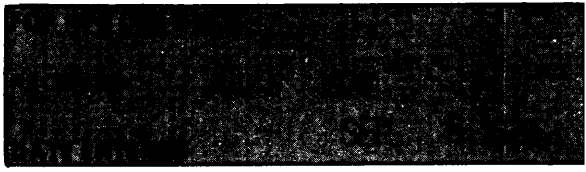
Founded 1783  
Destroyed by Fire 1827  
Rebuilt in 1844

During construction of Middle Hall, the building plans underwent many revisions at the request of the Visitors and Governors. For example, Mr. Reynolds was asked to construct a roof over the large cupola atop the building and to erect a lightning rod with a gold point. Reynolds was also asked to install blinds in the attic windows before being given his final payment after construction was completed. Benjamin F. Green, Vice Principal and Professor of Washington College, designed and oversaw the landscaping of the terrace on which Middle Hall, East, and West Halls stand. The first classes were held in Middle Hall in fall, 1845.

In 1854, ten years after Middle Hall opened, construction began on East Hall and West Hall. Crowding of boarding students in the four attic rooms of Middle Hall (then called the Nursery, the Apple Orchard, the Grogg and St. Peters), and an

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

anticipated enrollment increase encouraged the Board of Visitors and Governors to seek plans and cost estimates for a new building or buildings. Again Elijah Reynolds, architect for Middle Hall, was called from Baltimore. He appeared before the Board on March 16, 1854, with several plans of buildings and estimates of cost.

Mr. Reynolds was asked to prepare plans for two buildings, one to be located to the east and one to the west of the existing building. Contractors were asked to bid on the Reynolds plans and Mr. Ringgold of Millington, low bidder, was awarded the construction contract. Ringgold suggested some changes for the front of the buildings and these were accepted, but were the only deviations allowed from the Reynolds plans.

In an effort to conserve construction funds, a committee was sent to Locust Point, near Baltimore, to see Mr. H.F. Smith who had developed a brick-making machine.<sup>6</sup> Smith's machine made five bricks at a time and was powered by a horse. The committee returned and urged the Board to sign an agreement with Smith for use of his machine.

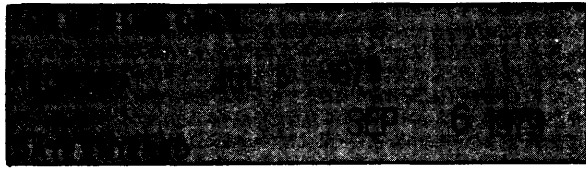
An operator was provided by Mr. Smith and other arrangements were made to help insure that the brick-making process ran smoothly. Evidently problems occurred in the process, forcing the Board to arrange to purchase Baltimore brick for the fronts of East and West Halls, and later, for the north ends of the buildings and for the east side of East Hall.

The new halls had lecture rooms on the second floors and living quarters on the third floors. Two MacGregor furnaces were purchased from the Baltimore firm of Robbins and Bibb to heat the buildings, but they proved unsatisfactory and the company took them back. The new buildings also provided much needed library space. In 1856 Dr. Francis Waters, the principal of the college, and his family occupied a portion of the East building. A faculty member and his family lived in the West buildings. Years later the north end room in West Hall was considered the gymnasium and contained weight lifting equipment. None of the three buildings contained any plumbing facilities until 1890, when limited plumbing was installed.

It is interesting to note that no record can be found of a celebration of special ceremony being held when East Hall and West Hall were completed in 1854. They were the last buildings to be built until 1897, when Normal Hall or Ladies Hall, a building to accommodate thirty female boarding students, was opened.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET # 4.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Washington College  
Kent County

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

SPECIAL CREDIT

Mr. Frederick W. Dumschott, an alumnus of Washington College, Class of 1927, and Vice President Emeritus, is hereby given special credit, recognition, and thanks for his well prepared "History of Washington College," currently being written and edited and from which came much of the material presented in this paper.



<sup>1</sup>Land Records: Liber 3, Folio 601, Kent County Courthouse.

<sup>2</sup>Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland, 1782, Chapter VIII.

<sup>3</sup>Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser, August 3, 1784.

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the Board of Visitors and Governors of Washington College, August 9, 1833.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., February 12, 1834.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., April 29, 1854.



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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Kent County  
Maryland

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SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Washington College is Maryland's oldest college. It is the only private college on the Maryland Eastern Shore. It was chartered in 1782 and named after George Washington with his consent.

Middle, East, and West Halls are the oldest buildings on the college campus today. They sit on the site of the first building at the college, the Common Building, burned in 1827. The site is a prominent one, at the top of a ridge at the north end of a large open space fronting on Washington Avenue.

The buildings themselves are typical of college dormitories built in the mid-19th century--they are of brick on high foundations with small frame entrance porches. (Reference Stevens Hall, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, built in the 1860s.) The exteriors of the buildings are unaltered except for the missing cupola on Middle Hall, the replacement of the wooden railings with metal ones on all three buildings, and the removal of the shutters on all three.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Washington College  
Kent County  
Maryland

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of Washington Avenue (Maryland Route 213) and College Lane, following College Lane west about 376 feet, then moving south about 232 feet to a point, then east about 376 feet to a point on the west side of Washington Avenue, then following said street north about 232 feet to the point of beginning, containing approximately two acres.