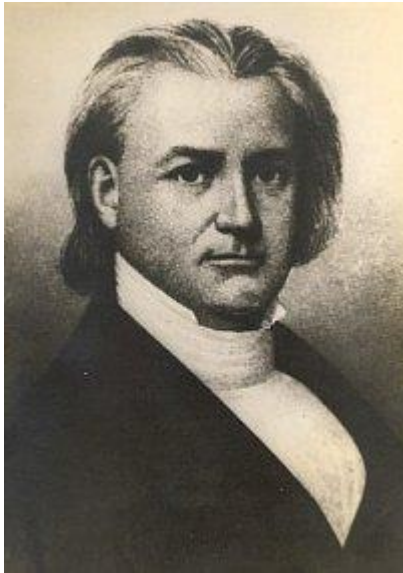


Governor Charles Manly's Law Office

A Chatham County Native Son

Charles Manly was born in Chatham County in 1795, son of Basil Manly and Elizabeth Maulsby. After graduating with honors from the University of North Carolina in 1814 at the age of 19, he was hired as a tutor for the children of John Haywood of Raleigh.



Charles Manly

Manly also read law with Haywood and was admitted to the bar in 1816. In 1817 he married Haywood's niece, Charity Hare Haywood, and settled in Raleigh.

Manly was elected reading clerk in the House of Commons in 1823 and was chief clerk for seventeen years. He also practiced law in Pittsboro, for soon after coming to the bar he was elected county attorney and must have traveled from Raleigh to discharge these duties, staying with his sister Louisa Thompson. Manly was elected Governor of North Carolina in 1848, serving one term.

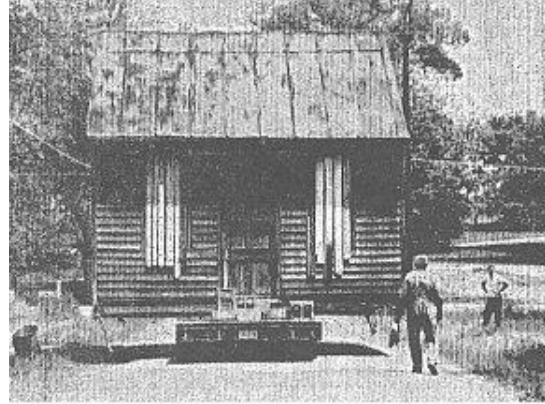
Manly was a devoted supporter of his *alma mater*, serving as secretary-treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina from 1821 until 1869, except for his years as governor. He died in 1871 and is buried in the City Cemetery in Raleigh.

More information about the Manly family is included in the description of the [Manly Family Cemetery](#) in our Cemetery Census.

Governor Manly's Law Office

In 1842 Charles Manly purchased land near what is now SunTrust Bank on Hillsboro Street in Pittsboro, hiring local craftsman George Ellington to build a one-room structure that tradition holds is the same building now standing north of the Masonic Lodge in Pittsboro. Manly called his office "Fort Snug," and it became a meeting place for area lawyers. He sold the property in 1857, and the building was eventually moved to the back of a lot on Salisbury Street owned by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Blair.

In 1965 the newly-formed historical society voted to accept the building from the owners, and to move and restore it as part of the county's bi-centennial celebration, using furnishings loaned by Harvey Gunter, former Pittsboro resident and a benefactor of the Manly office. The structure has since been maintained by CCHA and serves as a small, but fine example of a nineteenth century office.



Manly Law Office being moved to new location on Masonic Street. Chatham Record, May 1965

As with all old structures, the Manly Office requires periodic maintenance and repairs. It was repaired and repainted in 1995 under the direction of Wayne Kirts and in 2006 as an Eagle Scout project directed by Reid Montgomery. In 2007, with the aid of a generous grant by Harvey Gunter, the Office was fitted with period-appropriate green shutters. Painstakingly painted by Jane Pyle and Nancy Simons, and installed by Doug Cordaro and Carl Bigness—all CCHA volunteers—the shutters give the office a more finished look. Curtains made by Judith Peterson complement the exterior improvements.



Manly Law Office interior

In 2009, thanks to benefactor Harvey Gunter, the Manly Law Office roof was replaced with cedar shingles. This needed repair also restored the roof to a material more authentic to the period. In addition, repairs were made to rotting sills under both doors. Mr. Gunter also provided a bronze plaque for the front door recognizing Mr. and Mrs. Henry Blair's gift of the building.

The office received additional improvements in 2011, when the Chatham Seekers, a local chapter of the Questers, volunteered to fund and oversee extensive repairs to the windows in the structure. The windows were completely rebuilt and rehung by Al Poland from Raleigh. CCHA is grateful for the Quester's Chatham Seekers' efforts to make the office "snug" once again. In 2013 and 2014 the Questers funded the addition of a brick walkway and new iron handrails.



Roof being replaced with cedar shingles

The Questers again provided assistance to the Manly Law Office in May 2015, when, through a grant from their state association and funds they raised, the chimney was moved back close to the building and was stabilized with new foundation support.

The Manly Law Office is open for tours and by request to Museum@chathamhistory.org.

How you can help

- Volunteer to be a docent to open the law office and be present on First Sundays and for tours.
- Volunteer to sweep and dust periodically, or to prune the boxwood and keep the weeds off the sidewalk.
- Apply your research skills to the task of researching nineteenth-century detached law offices and make plans for a more authentic restoration.
- Donations to support the ongoing maintenance of the Manly Law Office and grounds are gratefully received.

To volunteer write to us at Volunteers@chathamhistory.org. Contributions can be made at the Chatham Historical Museum or by mail, sent to CCHA, PO Box 93, Pittsboro, NC 27312.



Jane Pyle, former curator, and Harvey Gunter, Manly Law Office benefactor, in front of moved office.



Moved and restored Office on Masonic Street