

## Charles Manly Artifacts Donated to Chatham Historical Museum

The dining table from the Ingleside plantation of Governor Charles Manly, passed down through his family for generations, has been donated to the collection of the Chatham County Historical Association thanks to the generosity of the families of Finley L. Williamson, III and Louise Gay Williamson. Mr. Bob Grimsley, Manly's great-great-great grandson, arranged the donation, saying, "Just thinking about this table finding its way to Pittsboro, in honor of one of the County's son's, just feels like the right thing to do. Our state has such a rich and proud history, I'm glad we can help preserve a small piece of it."

The table will be on display in the Chatham Historical Museum, when conditions allow the Museum to reopen. The Williamson family also donated two letters: one to the Manly's daughter Ida, signed by Charles Manly, and a second to Ida's husband-to-be, J.H. Baker, signed by Mrs. Manly.

Charles Manly was born in Chatham County in 1795, son of Basil Manly and Elizabeth Maultsby. 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.



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.

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 to serve as his law office. 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 its current location north of the Masonic Lodge in Pittsboro by the Chatham County Historical Association. The structure has since been maintained by CCHA and serves as a small, but fine example of a nineteenth century office.

CCHA is grateful to the Williamson family for their generous donation in honor of their ancestor and Chatham's only governor to date.