

# *“French, the Language of the House”*

The History of the Warrenton Country School,  
Warrenton, Virginia



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## Acronym List

CP	College Preparatory
D.C.	District of Columbia
FCBC	Fauquier County Bicentennial Committee
G	General
Mlle	Mademoiselle
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
U.S.	United States
VDHR	Virginia Department of Historic Resources
WCS	Warrenton Country School
WTC	Warrenton Training Center

# I

## Introduction

This report aims to explore the history of the Warrenton Training Center (WTC) Warrenton Country School (WCS; DHR Inventory No. 030-5432) located in Warrenton, Fauquier County, Virginia, placing it within the larger context of women's education in the United States. Through various sources, this report will discuss the development of women's education in the United States, primarily focusing on academies and private institutions. Through this lens, the WCS will be placed within a context that allows the reader to appreciate the efforts it had on preparing young women for college, advancing women's access to education, and furthering societal engagement.

As will be discussed in the conclusion, the motivation for writing this report is the demolition of the remaining WCS buildings. The WCS is located on U.S. Army property at the WTC Station A. The WTC has certain operational requirements that are necessary to meet its current mission, which include maintaining a certain distance between operational buildings as well as public roadways and lands. Therefore, the WTC cannot use the former WCS facilities while maintaining current Army force protection requirements and stand-off distances.

Since demolition of the WCS would constitute an adverse effect under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed in 2017 between the WTC and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), which serves as the state's State Historic Preservation Officer. Stipulations outlined in the MOA directed that a report be drafted to discuss women's education and place the WCS within this context, as mentioned previously. The MOA also stipulated that interpretive signage and displays be completed prior to the demolition. These were completed in 2018 and include information discussing the history of the WCS, and its role in educational, architectural, and social history. These signs also discuss its surviving landscape features and provide information on the WCS's layout and architectural characteristics. The interpretive signs have been placed within the former WCS landscape at the WTC, and an interpretive display is available as a portable traveling exhibit to schools, libraries, museums, and other appropriate venues. These materials are provided in an appendix at the end of this report.

## II Early Education in the United States

During the early formative years of the United States, there was no one system for providing education to the youth, neither male nor female. Education at this time was typically provided in either women's personal homes, referred to as dames schools, or in district schools, which were defined by community involvement and operation (Church and Sedlak 1976:10). Education varied highly by region. At this point in time, and given that there was not a general educational system, education was focused on providing religious training and character formation (Eisenmann 1998:xii). This trend in sporadic access to education followed similar patterns experienced by colonial women. Prior to the American Revolution, most educated colonial women came from elite families and were taught at home. Many women hailing from non-elite families may have been taught to read, but their general education and access to it remained sporadic (McMahon 2009:482).

By the late eighteenth-century, the country recognized that the ideas and values of a Republic could be garnered by women's influence on the family. Women had played important and influential roles in connecting religious values to their families and within various communities. In addition to religious values, the idea of a Republic was strong in the minds of the nation's citizens. As part of this ideal, it was thought that women played a critical role in developing the next generation of citizens, a concept known as Republican motherhood. With this and many other crucial positions within the Early American Republic, more formal education for young women arrived; however, education remained sporadic and varied significantly between geographic regions, urban and rural settings, social class, race, and gender (Eisenmann 1998:xii).

It is also important to recognize what early Americans meant by "society" at this time. According to McMahon, the concept of a civil society was "a powerful organizing device for the young nation, broadly conceived to encompass a wide array of gatherings and interactions in which citizens came together. Society served as a cultural ideal that helped define visions of harmony and affinity for the republic. The state of civil society served as the ultimate test of any nation's achievement and civilization" (McMahon 2009:479). With this idea of a civil society in mind, early leaders sought to provide a general diffusion of knowledge into the population. In the decades following the American Revolution, hundreds of academic institutions, including common schools, academies, seminaries, and colleges, were created to provide this outreach (McMahon 2009:478).

Thomas Jefferson recognized the need and benefits of a wholly educated society. In 1779, he proposed a comprehensive plan to create an American school system for Virginia and then the entire nation. Details on this plan will be discussed in the next section, *III. Virginia and Fauquier County*.

The importance of an educated society was also relayed in the 1786 *Pennsylvania Gazette* by Doctor James Sproat, a trustee of the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia, who wrote on the importance of and strides in education occurring after the American Revolution,

“Great attention has been paid to the education of the American youth, since our memorable revolution; colleges, academies, and public schools have been erected in almost every state in the Union, and gentleman of abilities employed to instruct in every branch of literature (Sproat 1786).”

For American women, academies were the first form of institutionalized higher education. As mentioned previously, educational opportunities before the establishment of academies included instruction at the personal homes of teachers, or in district schools. Another option that was popular for a time in the colonial era was a venture school, which was for those that could afford it. Venture schools were mostly found in urban centers, were short-lived, and did not offer coursework that was very rigorous. Interestingly enough, students may have moved around, taking different courses at separate schools in any one session (Eisenmann 1998:4).

In contrast with preceding schools, academies were more institutionalized, formalized, and often consisted of multiple facilities. Academies typically had a board of trustees and a more outlined course of study that merited a diploma or certificate upon completion. Just as early education efforts were sporadic and variable, so too were the offerings of individual academies; however, most of them offered some forms of reading, grammar, arithmetic, composition, geography, and natural philosophy (Eisenman 1998:4; McMahon 2009:484). It seems that, according to McMahon, most female academies offered curriculum that emphasized both the useful and ornamental subjects. Useful knowledge in this instance included subjects like composition, grammar, geography, history, biography, and arithmetic, and the teaching of these reflected broader cultural concerns about how ideas were spread across society (McMahon 2009:485).

Ornamental subjects, on the other hand, included courses such as music, dancing, needlework, embroidery, drawing, and painting. These courses were offered to provide an emphasis on accomplishment in the students’ overall education; however, some argue that these subjects were not merely ornamental, but useful, since courses such as music and dancing could actually benefit one’s social status and navigation within social gatherings. This being said, most academies emphasized that ornamental subjects remain secondary to academic focus (McMahon 2009:486).

In Mary Kelley’s *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education and Public Life in America’s Republic*, it is described just how prolific academies were becoming. Between 1790 and 1830, 182 academies and at least 14 seminaries were established exclusively for women in the north and south. Between 1830 and 1860, another 158 schools would be created (Kelley 2006). In this regard, the mid-nineteenth century could be viewed as the golden age of the female academies in America (Winterer 2008:24).

Farnham suggests that while many academies were being established throughout the country in the nineteenth century, there were differences between Northern and Southern schools. The main difference was that the education in the North was seen as an avenue for providing self-sustainment before marriage or in the circumstance that a woman was widowed. The Southern view was for women to acquire an education for the purpose of teaching their children to be

productive members of society. Farnham writes that those receiving an education in southern academies did not necessarily expect to use it to earn a living after graduation (Farnham 1994).

Leading up to the Civil War, the quality of formal education for both white men and women advanced significantly; however, white women still justified their need for education through the ideas of educating the next generation of pupils. Black women, mostly southern slaves at this time, still had restricted opportunities for more formal education (Eisenmann 1998:xiii).

It was during the nineteenth century that an influential group of women took the ideals of Republican motherhood and asserted or demanded the need for women's education. Because women were seen as the community's moral leaders, they were also thought to be the ones to assume the role of educating children. This way, future generations would be well-equipped to enhance society and contribute high moral values and standards (Eisenmann 1998:xiii).

The growing need for women's education manifested through the efforts of several female educational leaders. Institution builders such as Sarah Pierce (Litchfield Female Academy), Emma Willard (Troy Female Seminary), Catharine Beecher (Hartford Female Seminary), Mary Lyon (Mount Holyoke Seminary), and Zilpah Polly Grant Banister (Ipswich Female Seminary) sought to further women's education by concentrating it into central learning centers like academies and seminaries (Eisenmann 1998:xiii). By attending academies, it was thought that women could redefine themselves as educators, writers, editors, and reformers (Kelley 2006).

However, early academies and seminaries had the sole purpose of educating the youth in academic training and ornamental education. Unfortunately, these early schools did not provide for the formal education of teachers. Before the expansion of common schools in the mid-1800's, teachers performed the duties whether or not they had the skills to do so. With the growth of common schools, beginning in Massachusetts and Connecticut, teachers were provided the experience and training that strengthened their academic skills. Institutions created by Willard, Lyon, and Beecher also sought to provide training to teachers, with a focus on preparing experienced Christian teachers (Eisenmann 1998:xiv).

Unfortunately, the same educational opportunities were not afforded to antebellum African American women. Throughout the nineteenth century, laws were passed declaring that the education of slaves was forbidden, with severe punishments for those that defied these laws. However, despite these laws, clandestine moonlight schools and other informal efforts taught a small percentage of African Americans to read (Eisenmann 1998:xiv).

After the Civil War and throughout the late nineteenth century, educational opportunities expanded and opened up for women of all backgrounds. By this time, numerous academies had been established, and separate women's colleges and some coeducational universities opened collegiate education to women. By 1894, seven colleges, specifically for women, had opened their doors to provide academic and professional training. These schools were Vassar College, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe, Barnard, Smith College, and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, the latter having converted from a seminary to a college in 1893 (Eisenmann 1998:xv).



As mentioned previously, not all colleges provided for the coeducation of men and women. The transition to coeducation was often a reluctant process. It wasn't until the late 1860s and 1870s that state universities were beginning to serve a broader range of populations due to the federal Morrill Land-Grant Act, which created colleges from proceeds collected through federal land sales. Not all universities provided coeducational opportunities, but those that did still often placed women into separate departments.

By the twentieth century, various institutions, ranging from government agencies, businesses, and civic organizations expanded and underwent vast changes. School systems, in particular, took on a more formalized system that provided women greater access to education. By the 1920s, as Eisenmann notes, "women constituted 47 percent of all college students; in the elementary schools, female students matched their proportion of the general population, and in the high schools, they exceeded it" (Eisenmann 1998:xvii). However, barriers still persisted, especially when female students sought educational opportunities beyond the undergraduate level. With a desire to seek postgraduate studies or professional opportunities, women would consistently find that access to higher forms of education and professional employment remained restricted. Law and medical education, for example, often excluded women from formal training and educational opportunities (Eisenmann 1998:xvii).

Even with restrictions on postgraduate education and professional opportunities, women continued to shape themselves and strengthen the next generation by becoming teachers. Eisenmann details that "by 1880, 80 percent of schoolteachers were women, and large percentages of college and normal school graduates pursued teaching as a career" (Eisenmann 1998:xvii).

Before the twentieth century, common, or public, schooling, wasn't formalized or consistent, but it ultimately replaced the district system of education in the late nineteenth century. Common schooling found its first strides in New England in the late nineteenth century, but it was not until the twentieth century that the South and Midwest strengthened their local and state schooling systems; however, regional and racial differences caused difficulty in attempting to execute a more systematic educational system throughout the country (Eisenmann 1998:xvi). Of course, an exception to this was Virginia's establishment of a free public schooling system in 1870, which will be discussed in the next section.

Education in the United States and access to it has experienced a constant struggle for equality throughout the nation's history. With women's education, in particular, it has been a continuous effort to move to a place equal to their male counterparts. As Farnham writes, by the middle of the nineteenth century, as more academies and seminaries were offering collegiate-level coursework, they insisted that educational opportunities should be equal to that of men. Examples of this sentiment include: In 1856, the Richmond Female Institute insisted that women should have the same advantages for liberal education as men; the *Circular of Georgia Female College, 1842-1843* stated that the college founders sought to give as good of education as was afforded to men; in an 1856 catalog for the Holston Conference Female College, information was provided to parents stating that the school's purpose was to elevate the standards of female education; and schools, both north and south, began changing their names to reflect more egalitarianism (Farnham 1994).

### III Early Education in Virginia and Fauquier County

Education in Virginia generally follows the same trends and patterns exhibited throughout the history of the United States, although, as mentioned in the previous section, there were differences in the nature of education between northern and southern states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Prior to the American Revolution, it was previously thought that Virginia colonists were opposed to schooling; however, records show this to not be the case. In the seventeenth century, schools for boys and girls were established in Williamsburg, Norfolk, and Isle of Wight, among other places. The employment of tutors was still the preferred method of providing education, since distances between plantations and towns could be cumbersome (Blandin 1909:310).

The earliest record for the establishment of a higher grade school in Virginia exclusively for girls is Miss Whateley's Boarding School for Young Ladies in 1776. By 1798, a Swedish man named Haller established another all-girls academy in Richmond, named Haller's Academy. Blandin makes known that one of the most popular schools in the latter half of the eighteenth century was created by Mrs. Anne Maria Mead in Norfolk. This became a place for prominent Virginian girls as well as those from neighboring states (Blandin 1909:311-312).

At the time of the American Revolution, schooling remained mostly accessible to those of elite status and privilege. Education was mostly a private endeavor, with most responsibility for hiring teachers left to the parents or benefactors. Although the war didn't lessen the desire for learning in Virginia to a detrimental extent, the demand for teachers at this time did increase because the immigration of English tutors ceased during the conflict. Similarly, the concentration on education diminished when the war had its greatest concentration in Virginia. In fact, the number of "help wanted" signs increased during this time, showcasing the demand for teachers (Cometti 1978:36).

Early on, Thomas Jefferson recognized the importance of educating the early nation's youth. In 1779, he proposed a comprehensive plan to create an American school system for Virginia and then the entire nation. His plan called for the establishment of three-year schools within each local district, free and open to any white children between seven and ten years of age. Each county in Virginia would then establish a higher three-year school to receive the best graduating scholar from each of the district schools. Above this, Virginia would establish a college that would receive the top graduates from each of the county schools. In his plan, Jefferson thought it was important that students learn not only the traditional classical languages, philosophy, mathematics, and natural philosophy, but also modern languages, government, history, medicine, physics, and chemistry (Church and Sedlak 1976:4). Although it was a detailed effort at providing education to a broader audience, Jefferson's plan never came to pass.

During the nineteenth century, academies were becoming more common and were frequently advertised in Virginia papers (Woody 1929:299). In 1820, the Reverend Franklin G. Smith established the collegiate-level Lynchburg Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. Also around

1820, the Bishop John Early established the Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute. Many other schools were established in Virginia in the nineteenth century, including the Virginia Institute in Staunton, Virginia (1833-1908), the Mary Baldwin Seminary in Staunton, Virginia (1842-1908), the Hollins Institute in Roanoke County, Virginia (1842-1908), the Rawlings Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia (1857-1908), and the Martha Washington College in Abingdon, Virginia (1860-1908) (Blandin 1909:313-327). This list is not exhaustive by any means, but it helps illustrate the sentiment towards education during this time.

Similarly, public education gained advancements in the nineteenth century as well. A system of free statewide public schooling in Virginia was established in 1870 after ratification of a new constitution. Figure 1 provides an example of a one-room public school house near Marshall, VA. As mentioned before, access to education was typically restricted to elite white families prior to the Civil War. At that time, no public school systems in any state existed, although Thomas Jefferson and subsequent Virginia governors proposed statewide school systems decades before. Although public schooling did bring a free and formalized system of education to Virginia, the new constitution also introduced racial segregation that would not be addressed for decades to come (Julienne and Tarter 2016).



**Figure 1. No. 18, a one-room public school near Marshall, VA.**

In Fauquier County, like elsewhere in the United States, there remained the consistent responsibility for educating children. The ideals of home, church, and school were so important in the minds of the people that whole families would come together to meet the need of educating the children. This need was often met through the establishment of old field schools, which received their names from their locations (Fauquier County Bicentennial Committee [FCBC] 1959:88-89).

Old field schools were a community-based educational system where the heads of neighborhood households would convene and employ a teacher for their children. They were typically situated in a deserted agricultural field or abandoned vegetated area, hence the designation as an “old field school.” Sessions at an old field school would run from April to September, and its presence persisted until after the Civil War when it was ultimately replaced by the public school system (FCBC 1959:89).

It is unknown just how many old field schools, if any, are left standing in Fauquier County. In *Fauquier County, 1759 – 1959*, it is noted that memories and recollections are plenty, but “no exact location or site within the County can be authenticated, leaving only conjecture” as to the presence of any remaining old field schools. A possible example is listed, the one-room school near Atoka (Figure 2), but it has not been authenticated. The Atoka School is thought to possibly be an old field school based on its differences in structure and location with post-Civil War public schools (FCBC 1959:90).



**Figure 2. The school near Atoka, VA.**

In the years following the American Revolution, as Dr. Sproat expressed in his 1786 essay in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and his address to the Newark Academy in 1797, hundreds of academic institutions, seminaries, and colleges were established (Sproat 1786; 1797). Fauquier County was no different and adhered to this trend with the establishment of several private academies for boys such as the Warren Academy, the New Baltimore Academy, and the Upperville Academy, among others (FCBC 1959:90-95). Brief descriptions of these institutions are provided below.

The Warren Academy was established in 1787 by Hezekiah Balch, and taught classical subjects, such as Greek and Latin, along with mathematics. It was highly successful for many years

until it stopped operations around 1805. In 1819, it was re-established and taught students for decades until it was destroyed by a natural disaster in 1850 (FCBC 1959:90-93; Toler 2019).

The New Baltimore Academy was established in 1827 by a board of trustees, and offered instruction in the Greek and Latin languages, mathematics, and various levels of English.

The Upperville Academy (Figure 3) was established sometime in the mid-1800s, and offered a wide array of subjects, including “English, book-keeping, logic, rhetoric and elocution, history and statistics, Latin, Greek, Grecian and Roman Antiquities, mathematics, navigation, surveying, conic sections, chemistry, mechanics, optics, astronomy, and natural philosophy” (FCBC 1959:95).



**Figure 3. Upperville Academy.**

In addition to these, there was also the Bethel Military Academy and Stuyvesant School for Boys (Figure 4). The Bethel Academy was established shortly after the Civil War by Maj. Albert Galatin Smith, and was located in the community of Bethel, north of Warrenton. In 1869, the academy merged with the Evergreen Academy and subsequently adopted a military approach to instruction. With this new format, the academy was renamed to Bethel Military Academy. In addition to military exercises and drills, coursework included political science, law, elocution, English, French, German, natural science, bookkeeping, mathematics, and medicine. The Bethel Military Academy was prosperous for many years and attracted much attention from outside the county. It was not until 1890 that the academy witnessed a serious decline in both enrollment and the health of its administrator, although there was a small resurgence in the 1893-1894 session. By 1911, the Bethel Military Academy was unable to carry on and closed its doors (Brown 2009:129-131).



**Figure 4. The Stuyvesent School for Boys.**

Female academies were also established in Fauquier County. In addition to the Warrenton Country School, another prominent female school in Fauquier County was the Fauquier Female Institute (Figures 5 and 6). The Fauquier Female Institute was created in 1858, when the Fauquier Seminary purchased 7.5 acres of land to build a school for girls. There were typically between 30 and 40 students at any given time, and students came from Warrenton and all over the country. Coursework included botany, chemistry, algebra, geometry, Latin, French, Greek, natural philosophy, spelling, reading, penmanship, geography, history, composition, English grammar, and arithmetic. The Fauquier Female Institute operated until around 1923, when it was advertised for rent. At the time of its closing, there was a significant shift in the view of public schooling. As Trumbo describes,

“the development and improvements in the public high school system made it no longer socially unacceptable to send one’s daughter to the “free school,” as some of an older generation contemptuously referred to the public schools” (Trumbo, n.d.).



**Figure 5. Illustration of the Fauquier Female Institute.**



**Figure 6. Students from the Fauquier Female Institute in a parade.**

During the twentieth century, the golden age of female academies had come and gone, with most academies closing their doors by the middle of the century. The growth and development of public school had seemingly erased the need for more expensive private education. Brown, in *250 Years in Fauquier County: A Virginia Story*, describes the trends facing academies in the twentieth century,

“The academies had come into existence very largely to meet a demand that was being expressed at that time. But even if they had diversified their offerings to the extent they could offer the type of training that was needed, they could only reach the rich, the ones who could afford the price. All evidence points to the definite trend in education at the time: the academies were destined to follow the same course the Latin Grammar Schools had been forced to take at the time the academies came into existence” (Brown 2009:131).

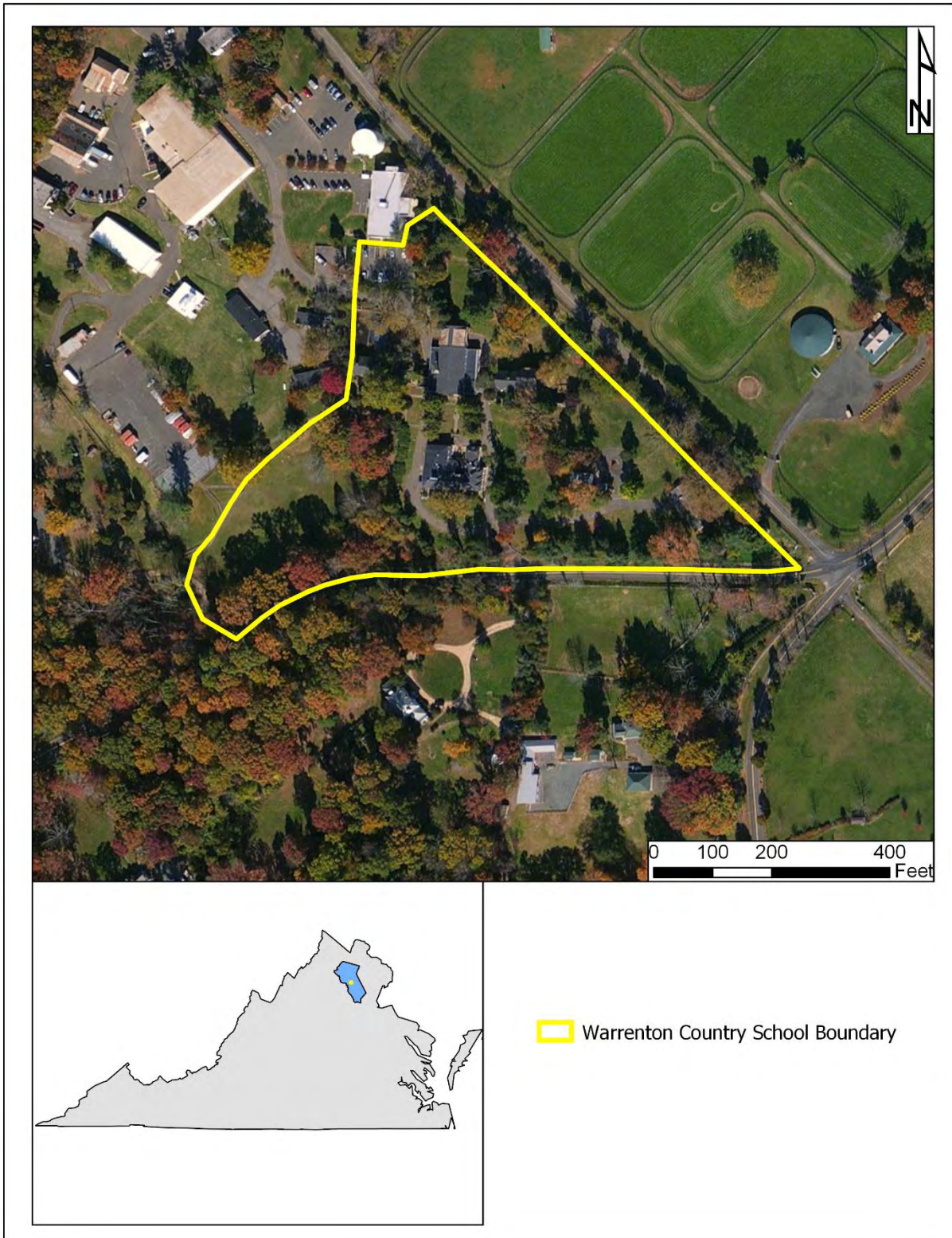
## IV Warrenton Country School

### *Overview and Location*

The WCS was founded in 1912 in the town of Warrenton, Fauquier County, Virginia, by “Mademoiselle” (Mlle) Lea Bouligny (1865 – 1954), the school’s headmistress until the year before it closed in 1950. Such was her association with the WCS that it was commonly referred to as “Mlle Bouligny’s School” (Milner 1995:3). During its time, the WCS gained renown as an exclusive day and boarding school for girls, where students could pursue college preparatory or Liberal Arts-related general courses, while ensconced in an atmosphere of culture and privilege. An early Washington Post advertisement for the private school noted its plan “to teach girls how to study, to bring them nearer to nature, to make them fluent in French and to inculcate habits of order and economy” (Milner 2007a:8-2). In addition to academic enrichment, the students were exposed to skills that would help them make a good marriage, run a household, and meet the social needs of their class; all characteristic of girls’ boarding schools of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Milner 1995:6).

The WCS was located on around 20 acres at the northwest corner of Springs Road and Shipmadilly Lane, just west of the downtown portion of Warrenton (Figures 7 and 8). The location was highly desirable, being situated in the bucolic setting of Virginia hunt country, yet close to Washington, D.C. The area was long known as an ideal location for the wealthy and their leisure pursuits of horse riding, racing, and fox hunting, a tradition dating back to George Washington and Lord Fairfax (Milner 2007:8-11). Equestrian activities and fox hunting would have a tremendous influence on the school, and become an integral part of its extracurricular program, an intentional result of its location.





**Figure 7. Location of the WCS within Fauquier County.**



**Figure 8. Overview of the WCS campus, circa 1930s.**

### *Formation and Development*

The WCS was founded and developed in Warrenton by Mlle Bouligny in the period from 1910 to 1915, with a number of expansions in the years to come. The original plan was to enroll approximately 40 boarding students, and a smaller number of day (non-boarding) students from the surrounding community (Toler 2015:58). WCS would be the second private girls' boarding school in the area; the Fauquier Female Institute was founded in Warrenton in 1858.

Mlle Bouligny traveled extensively from 1905 through 1914, while beginning plans to develop a new school for girls in Warrenton (Toler 2015:56). While still living in Washington D.C. and operating a school there, in 1907 she purchased 13.14 acres on Springs Road from William H. Gaines, who had received the property in a land-swap from Mrs. Mary Astley Cooper in 1904 (Toler 2015:57-58). At some point she built a “cottage” and tennis courts on the property. Some authors suggest that at the time of purchase, a club house and tennis courts were already on the property, and that Mlle Bouligny leased these facilities back to the country club in 1909 and 1910 and built her own cottage west of the main building (Toler 2015:56). Other authors suggest that it was Mlle Bouligny herself who built the cottage and tennis courts and leased these to the town of Warrenton as its first country club (Milner 1995:3). Most likely, Mlle Bouligny's cottage was the first school building, and was leased to Warrenton as a clubhouse until Mlle Bouligny and her students moved in to start the WCS circa 1912. Mlle Bouligny taught from her home (Figure 9), which in addition to her private living areas included classrooms, boarding rooms, and a small communal dining room. Mlle Bouligny taught in this building until 1914, when she began to expand the school, building the first separate classroom and dormitory buildings (Milner 2007b:2-2).





**Figure 9. Front entrance to Mlle Bouligny’s house.**

Mlle Bouligny began to accumulate additional property adjacent to the school, buying 0.84 acre and 4.81 acre tracts from W.M. Beacon in 1918, and 2.44 acres from W.M. Martin in 1923, at the intersection of Springs Road and Shipmadilly Lane (Toler 2015:57-58). Her last property acquisition was when she purchased 100 acres from William Webber in 1929. This property was on the east side of Springs Road, around one mile from the school, at what is now the Hilman Farm. Known as “The Dell,” this property was used for horseback riding and other recreational activities. Mlle Bouligny constructed an unusual, rustic-looking stucco and log house at The Dell (Milner 2007a:8-5; Shepard 2009:8-61).

The first buildings constructed exclusively for the school include the Senior and Junior dormitories, both one and one half story stucco buildings along an east/west axis built in 1914 (Milner 2007a:7-1). The National Register nomination for the WCS states that the gymnasium, with classroom wings and classrooms in the half-story, was also built at this time (Milner 2007a:8-1). The National Register nomination later states that the one and one half story gymnasium was built circa 1926 through 1928, and that the flanking Junior and Senior dormitories, although not mentioned in the work order for the gymnasium, appear contemporary (i.e. constructed in the late 1920s, not in 1914). It is possible that the building episode in 1914 included construction of two earlier dormitories for the students, and that these earlier buildings were either incorporated into the later gymnasium and classroom wings, or demolished and rebuilt. What is clear is that extensive additions were made to three sides of the original “cottage” school building at this time, creating additional dormitory rooms and the school’s dining room (Milner 2007a:7-16). These five buildings, including the original school building, the gymnasium, the Senior and Junior dormitories, and the Fitch House, made up the core of the WCS.

The majority of the construction work at the WCS was performed by William F. Hanback and his son, William J. Hanback, master craftsmen who performed work at other private schools in Virginia such as the Hill School and Foxcroft School in Middleburg (Milner 2007a:8-3). Although their early business records are lost, it is likely that the Hanbacks built the original buildings at the WCS (Figure 10; Milner 2007a:8-3). The Hanbacks constructed additional school buildings on the campus from 1926 through 1928, including the pergola, an art building, horse stables, a laundry, a garage, and two frame staff residences. Other features of the campus that were constructed around this time include an infirmary, a Senior's Cottage, a nursery and greenhouse, small gardens, a skating rink, an outdoor theater and stage, and a riding rink (Toler 2015:58). Little could be wanting from the physical features of the WCS.



**Figure 10. Entrance to the WCS.**

In 1926, Mlle Bouligny sold the 2.44 acre tract she had purchased from W.M. Martin to Edna and T. Lindsey Fitch. Edna Fitch was Mlle Bouligny's niece, who was hired in 1914 as Associate Headmistress due to increasing enrollment (Milner 2007a:8-3). The Hanbacks built the Tudor Revival-style dwelling on this tract, for the price of \$13,500 (Milner 2007a:8-3; Toler 2015:58). The house was familiarly known as the Fitch House, after its residents. Local lore suggests that the house was designed by one of Mlle Bouligny's nephews (Milner 2007a:7-12).

The architecture and landscape design of the WCS have been extensively described in the National Register nominations for the school (Milner 2007a), the Spring Valley Rural Historic District (Shepard 2009), a historic landscape study of the WCS (Milner 2007b), and a conditions assessment of the former school buildings (Milner 2008). Accordingly, only an overview of these features will be provided in this report. Interested readers are encouraged to consult the sources mentioned above.

Architectural styles at the WCS represent a mixture of Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and French Eclectic forms, sometimes all appearing on one building. Unifying characteristics of most buildings include English basements defined in grapevine-jointed stones, pebble dash stuccoed walls above a water table, overhanging roofs, and massive exterior chimneys (Milner 2007a:8-2; Toler 2015:58). These rustic textures and forms of the Craftsman style are juxtaposed with more classical elements such as Palladian windows and colonnades and contribute to the overall feeling that the campus is an “elite” place (Figure 11; Milner 2007a:8-5). The architectural styles are typical of the “Country Place/Country Life” movement so well reflected by the mansion house at nearby “View Tree Manor,” the estate of Mlle Bouligny’s sister and brother-in-law, Jeanne and Oscar Crosby. It is likely that View Tree Manor was an inspiration to Mlle Bouligny in designing her school.



**Figure 11. The original WCS building.**

By 1930 the WCS campus had developed to the point that a formal landscaping plan was needed to unite the buildings with the grounds. Mlle Bouligny hired landscape architect Bradford Williams. Williams attended Harvard University where he received a Masters Degree in landscape architecture in 1924 from a program that was fairly new at that school, having starting in 1900. Williams had apprenticed with the Olmsted brothers and Fletcher Steele in Boston for two years, but was most familiar with residential work (Milner 2007a:8-6). Williams later became the long-time administrator of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The time at which Mlle Bouligny elected to transform her campus landscape was at the very end of the previously-mentioned Country Place or Country Life Movement, which emphasized locations that captured the advantage of healthy fresh air and the aesthetic value of the outdoors, while maintaining ties to city life. The movement spanned the roughly 50 year period from 1880 to 1930. The movement starts in reaction to the great wealth represented by the rise of

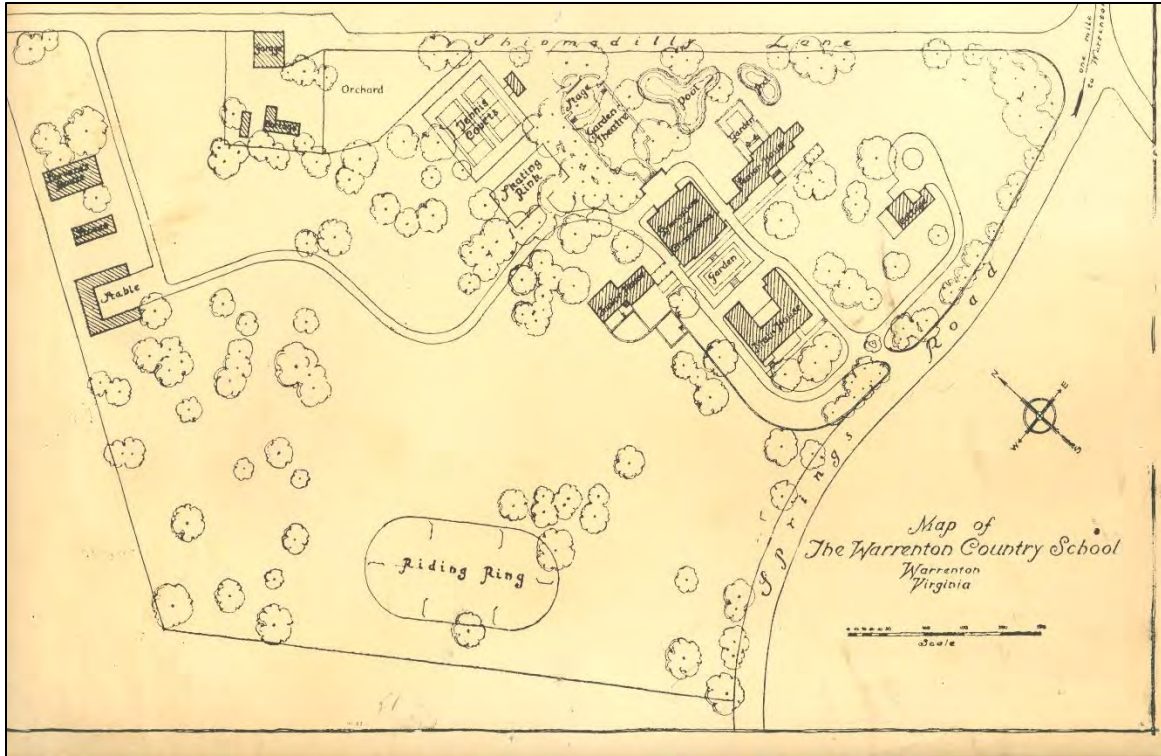
industrialists, where income in the southern U.S. shifted from agricultural plantations to business interests. Wealthy citizens in the U.S. were looking for ways to express their wealth and elite social status, in ways that combined a sense of history with a progressive modern aesthetic (Milner 2007a:8-6). This desire was reflected most apparently through architecture and landscape design styles, producing many opulent mansions and gardens (Milner 2007a:8-6). Often these homes were located on large lots with grand vistas. The estates were typically located on the outskirts of cities, as were the WCS and View Tree Manor, allowing the owners to connect with the rural traditions of the area, like horse riding and fox hunting, while maintaining easy access to metropolitan areas through innovations in transportation like trolleys and modern roads. The WCS brochure touts this advantage, noting that the school is only an hour from Washington, D.C., but removed from the distractions of city living (WCS Brochure n.d.:3). However, the size of the estates began to constrict with the introduction of the income tax in 1913, and the movement effectively ended by the onset of the Depression in 1930. Although styles began to change to the modern movement, the WCS remained tied to older, more traditional cultural themes.

Bradford Williams' designs for the WCS landscape were dictated somewhat by the layout of the buildings, although their plan was well suited for the preferred Neo-classical landscape style proposed for the school. Based on the work of landscape architect Charles Gillette, who worked in Virginia and may have known Williams, styles of this era included axial orientations, multi-level terraces, elegant and detailed garden objects, and seasonal plantings, all of which were created at the WCS. Such designs rely on "line-of-sight" geometric spatial organization, based on axis of symmetry (Milner 2007a:8-7). The buildings were already aligned along the compass points with a major and a minor axis. Williams' design used the spaces created by the buildings to soften the lines by creating "outdoor rooms" defined by retaining walls, hedges, trees, and decorative objects such as the pergola at terminus of the axis (Toler 2015:58). The landscape design reflected the schools twin ideals of culture and nature with formal and natural spaces, all part of a "formal education" that features a strong academic curriculum with rugged outdoor pursuits and guidance on how to appreciate nature (Figure 12; Milner 2007a:8-5; 8-12).

The school's architecture and the landscape designs had other benefits besides those enjoyed by the students and staff. The buildings and grounds reminded the parents of perspective students of the wealth, class, and status reflected by their own estates, and impressed those considering enrolling their daughters. According to one student, the WCS looked more like a country club than a school (Odgers 2003:90). It was hoped that the school's aesthetics would reflect the quality of the education experience.

The WCS was identified as being eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District in 2007. The school's period of significance is noted as 1914 to circa 1935, although it remained open until 1950. The school is eligible under National Register Criteria A for its association with education and recreation, which have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our Nation's history, and under Criteria C, for its architecture and outdoor landscaping.



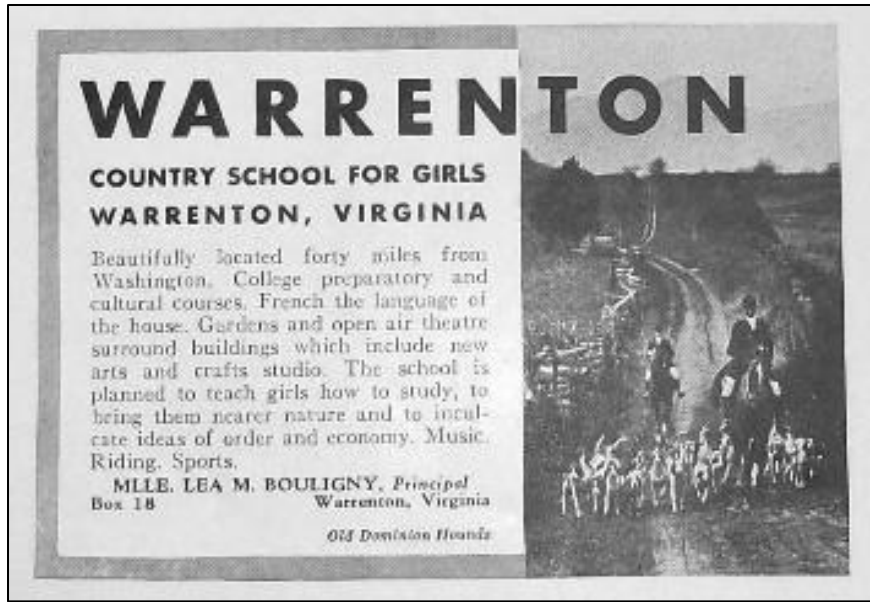


**Figure 12. Layout of the WCS, circa 1930s.**

### *Goals of the WCS*

WCS considered itself as “a community unto itself, where students and staff lived, worked, and played together while learning the give and take of democratic living” (WCS Brochure n.d.:3). It was the goal of the WCS to educate students in “an atmosphere of friendliness, simplicity, and social graciousness” (WCS Brochure n.d.:3). In addition to developing academic skills, the goals of the WCS were to provide instruction on proper etiquette, social and hosting skills, music, drama, and the fine arts (Figure 13). Of particular emphasis was instruction in the French language, with fluency the ultimate goal (Milner 2008:ES-3). The realization of this goal will be discussed later in the report.

The principle of “sound self-government” was practiced at the WCS, within a framework based on good citizenship (WCS Brochure n.d.:12-13). Being “on citizenship” (i.e., on the list of girls practicing good citizenship) was the goal of almost every student. Being on citizenship required approval from the officers of the student government, the Guidance Committee, and the faculty. Points awarded for citizenship were based on integrity, cooperation, self-discipline, a sense of responsibility, respect for authority, kindness, and neatness (WCS Brochure n.d.:12-13). Girls on citizenship enjoyed certain privileges, such as extra weekends away from campus. Failure to follow the rules, or failure to live up to a prior good record, could result in removal from the citizenship list.



**Figure 13. Advertisement for the WCS.**

Guidance was available to the students, both for traditional academic assistance, and for personal matters. During the last period of the day, teachers were in their classrooms for conferences, but were available at any time to assist students. Individual tutoring was also available, although an overreliance on this service was discouraged. Student discussion groups also took place, led by experienced faculty members.

Guidance of a personal nature may not have always been at the student's initiation, for the goal of the WCS for the students was to "encourage socially-desirable qualities, while curbing those less desirable" and to "tactfully correct minor faults that, unchecked, might grow into major ones" (WCS Brochure n.d.:8). Thusly, the staff directed, in inconspicuous, and sometimes not so inconspicuous, ways, the student's development as a person (WCS Brochure n.d.:8).

In the beginning the school accepted girls as young as third grade and up, but later changed to include a junior and senior class, and a "lower school" made up of freshman and sophomore students (Toler 2015:58).

Application and admission to the WCS in 1950 required the prospective student to submit a copy of her transcript from other schools. "Only girls who are capable of maintaining Warrenton academic standards, and who will be congenial to other students will be accepted" (WCS Brochure n.d.:13). Tuition was payable in two installments. In 1950, tuition for was \$1,400 per year, including room and board. Day students in grades seven through nine paid \$400 per year, while their older classmates in grades 10 through 12 paid \$450 (WCS Brochure n.d.:16). Charges for additional services included \$35 per year for books and supplies, \$200 per year for (daily) horseback riding, and private tutoring at the rate of \$2 per hour. Riding and other sports were conducted under the best supervision available, but the WCS assumed no responsibility in the event of injury or other mishap (WCS Brochure n.d.:16-17).

A "Head of Household" was assigned to each dormitory. The Head of Household was in charge of the sleeping and common rooms and rooming assignments, and provided chaperonage



for off-campus activities. A Guidance Committee, including the Head of Household, concerned the relationship of the girl to the school.

The girls could choose the type and color of their room's curtains. Radios were permitted. Each student brought her own bed linens, towels, blankets, comforters, and laundry bags (WCS Brochure n.d.:17).

Parents supplied their daughters with an allowance deposited in the school bank. Amounts suggested by the school were \$6.00 for students in 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades, \$8.00 for 10<sup>th</sup> grade, \$10.00 for 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and \$12.00 for seniors. These amounts were considered "ample" for each grade (WCS Brochure n.d.:17). Allowances were doled out at the Friday assembly before the trip into Warrenton (Odgers 2003:93).

From its inception, it was the philosophy of Mlle Bouigny to firmly integrate the school into the Warrenton social scene and, when possible, become an integral part of it. This was accomplished through engagement with the local community, with the WCS becoming an active member (Toler 2015:58). Mostly the school became rooted by sponsoring seasonal fox hunts and horse shows, such as the Warrenton Horse Show and Thanksgiving Hunt breakfast.

There is no evidence that any foreign exchange program was ever in place at the WCS, or that any underprivileged students received scholarships or financial aid to attend. For the most part, students at WCS were exposed to others from their own social and economic class. This was hardly uncommon for boarding schools at the time, so it is unlikely that the experience of attending the WCS did anything other than reinforce the student's already-established understanding of their social identity regarding class, ethnicity, and racial and economic segregation, both de facto and de jure.

### *French, the Language of the House*

As previously mentioned, WCS had a strict code of behavior, often enforced by public reprimand. One major area rife for infraction was the requirement that students speak French, although there is conflicting information regarding exactly what specific time of the day this requirement was enforced. According to one source, French was to be spoken from morning until 2:00 in the afternoon, and then from 6:00 pm until lights out (Toler 2015:52). Other sources suggest that French was not required to be spoken in class (Odgers 2003:90). Regardless, the requirement to speak French may have been less successful than hoped for. Although they tried, most of the students did not have any exposure to French and had little to no vocabulary or understanding of the language, let alone any idea of proper pronunciation. There was rarely any faculty around to correct mistakes (Scovell 1998).

As former student Hope Wallach relates (Toler 2015:49-50), during the noon assembly, each student had to stand before the entire school and confess their misdemeanors in French, a language of which they knew not one word. Not surprisingly, one common infraction was speaking English in class. After two weeks of such sins, Ms. Wallach and five other "miscreants" were brought before the Honor Committee where they were branded as "dishonorable girls" for not speaking French on numerable occasions. Soon after this encounter they learned at least one word of French; when later asked about their behavior, they always replied "Parfait!" (Perfect!).

Another student who described the entire academic program at WCS as “third rate” said the school’s atmosphere was decidedly “un-Gallic” (Scovell 1998). It would appear that, for many students, French was just a lot of words with few actually learning the language.

### *Students*

As its reputation grew, WCS attracted students from all over the U.S., as well as a few foreign countries (Toler 2015:59). In addition to girls from Virginia, the class of 1948 contained students from Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, and South Carolina (Milner 1995:4). Many of the students were “debutant scholars” from the surrounding counties, the District of Columbia, and even New York (Shepard 2009:8-59), and many were the children of the diplomatic corps (Milner 2008:ES-3).

By the time of its closure the school had the capacity to accept an anticipated 75 boarders (Figure 14; WCS Brochure n.d.:4). During its operation, most of the students at WCS were boarders, who were not always enamored of the day school students. According to Hope Wallace, who was an 8<sup>th</sup> grade day school student in the mid-1930s, the school was an “ordeal” for the day students and that there were big differences between the two groups. At the time there were around 60 boarding students from around the country, with whom the day students “didn’t fit in” (Toler 2015:48). She also noted that the boarders were jealous of the day students, because they could leave at the end of the day and return to their homes. The day students also caused scheduling difficulties for the staff.



**Figure 14. Last graduates of the WCS.**

### *Headmistress Mlle Bouligny*

Mlle Lea Bouligny (Figure 15) was born in New Orleans in 1865, to an old, elite family of Spanish, Italian, and French decent. The family traced their roots to the Spaniard Don Fransisco de Bouligny, who sailed to New Orleans from Spain in the early 1700s. Bouligny is the French version of the original Italian name “Boulinigni” changed when the family moved from Italy to France before settling in Spain (Milner 1995:3). Her early education was at Miss Meta Huger’s school in New Orleans, where she studied under professors who taught at Tulane University. Her major area of study was French (Toler 2015:56). Mlle Bouligny attempted to enroll in the University of New Orleans but was unsuccessful, possibly due to her gender (Milner 1995:3). She moved to New York and taught French at the Buffalo Seminary in Buffalo from 1890 to 1895. She accompanied her sister and brother-in law when they moved to Washington, D.C., and became the principal of the Chevy Chase School for Girls in Chevy Chase Maryland from 1895 to 1905. Mlle Bouligny became familiar with Warrenton in the early 1900s when her sister and brother-in law moved to View Tree Manor.



**Figure 15. Mlle Bouligny and Mrs. Edna Fitch.**

Mlle Bouligny was devoted to her students at the WCS, who affectionately called her “Tante Lea” (WCS Yearbook 1941). A story told about Mlle Bouligny by former student Pamela Healey Odgers, who was British, is possibly apocryphal but involves the two large amphora that once flanked the school’s outdoor theater. According to the student, Mlle Bouligny purchased the amphora on a visit to Italy. She kept her returning ship waiting until the jars were safely loaded on board, with one foot on the dock and the other foot on the gangplank (Odgers 2003:90). Odgers goes on to describe her as “an aristocratic-looking lady from New Orleans, who spoke perfect French. To Americans, she represented culture, and this is what some middle-class Americans wanted for their daughters” (Odgers 2003:90). A plaque in the school’s gymnasium associated Mlle Bouligny with “the traditions of American Education which she exemplified.”



## *Staff*

Mlle Bouligny's niece Edna Marie Rhodes Fitch (1893 – 1968) served as the Assistant Headmistress during most of the school's operation, from 1926 through 1949 (Figure 15). Her husband, T. Lindsey Fitch, was a gas and electrical engineer (Toler 2015:58). Before working at the school, Edna Fitch served with the Red Cross in France during World War I.

In 1930, the WCS employed 11 teachers in residence, including four from France and one from Switzerland (Figure 16; Toler 2015:59). The staff also included one nurse and seven "servants," most of whom were described as being in their 70s (Milner 2007:8-5).



**Figure 16. Staff in the last years of the WCS.**

## *Curriculum*

Most of the information on the school's curriculum below is drawn from a brochure produced during the final year of the school, circa 1949 – 1950, by Thomas Grier, who leased the school from Mlle Bouligny. Although Mlle Bouligny was no longer actively involved in the school, the brochure very probably reflects the curriculum in effect during her tenure.

The WCS curriculum offered courses of study that were divided into college preparatory (CP) and general (G) levels of study. Classes were small and could be sub-divided. Girls in grades 7 through 12 could take any of the course levels, although most were preparing to attend a four-year college and were working towards a "College Preparatory Diploma" (WCS Brochure n.d.:6). The WCS did not, however, provide a rigid program of courses for graduation in either the CP or G programs, with the exception that all students were required to take English. A student was free to obtain the credits required by the college she wished to enter, with the College Preparatory Diploma awarded upon that curricula versus any fixed basis of coursework. Such a diploma was valuable; upon graduation, qualified students could be certified for admission without examination to all colleges except those that required College Entrance Board examinations.

In addition to English, classes were offered at the CP and G level in art, history, mathematics, science, and current events. English classes were the same for both groups until the 11<sup>th</sup> grade where CP students took English classes required by their college of choice, whereas the G students attended their choice of English class. For art, G classes involved creative art, including drawing, while the CP class focused on art history. History classes were the same for both G and CP students in all grades, and included social studies, ancient and medieval history, and modern U.S. and European history. In grades 7 and 8 both G and CP students were taught algebra and plane geometry. In grades 9 through 12 the G students were taught general mathematics, while the CP students were presumably taught some higher form of mathematics, although the WCS brochure is unclear on this point. Science classes included biology in 11<sup>th</sup> grade for both the G and CP students, whereas in 12<sup>th</sup> grade the CP students took chemistry (Figure 17), while the G students had their choice of either chemistry or general science classes. Both levels participated in an informal current events discussion once per week.



**Figure 17. WCS students in chemistry class.**

Music and applied art classes were popular, although both were considered G courses that did not provide credits to the College Preparatory Diploma. As depicted in a photograph in the brochure (WCS Brochure n.d.:24), classes in music included actual piano lessons as well as theory and appreciation. Other classes included fine arts, drama, and foreign language instruction. Even the trees on the property were labeled for the ‘horticultural edification’ of the students (Milner 2007:8-13).

### *Physical Education*

Physical education at WCS did not take a backseat to the students’ academic endeavors, and was an important and integral aspect of the students’ experience. All students were expected to participate in some form of physical exercise at least five days a week, unless excused by a doctor. Those with “bad posture” were required to undergo corrective exercises (WCS Brochure n.d.:12).

Although numerous athletic opportunities were available, foremost among all were those related to equestrian sports. The reason was multifold, but had much to do with the school’s

location in the heart of Virginia horse country. The equestrian culture was also part of the genteel social background of many of the student's families, or to those parents who aspired to such backgrounds for their daughters. The school's association with the Virginia hunt country was part of its appeal; Mlle Boulogny encouraged all students to become accomplished horseback riders. A riding rink was maintained in The Dell, and a variety of trails were located nearby. Paddocks were located on campus for the school's horses, and those owned by the students. Many of the day students, living in "horse country," already had their own horses and were active equestrians who loved the sport and helped the boarders to learn (Toler 2015:58-59). Although many boarding students already knew how to ride, others learned at the school.

Horseback riding (Figure 18) was directed by experienced instructors, who taught both riding and jumping. All horses at the school were "hunters," and some were thoroughbreds. Advanced riders were permitted to participate in local hunt meets, and the students participated in horse shows both at WCS and in Warrenton and Upperville, competing amongst themselves and sometimes with the boys from the Stuyvesant School (Toler 2015:58). Many horse-related activities at WCS were extracurricular in nature and are described later in this report.



**Figure 18. Horseback riding at the WCS.**

In addition to riding, various other sporting activities were available to the students. The school featured a full-sized basketball court in the gymnasium, outdoor tennis courts, a soccer field, an archery range, and an outdoor ice skating rink located in The Dell. The students also played volleyball, possibly in the gymnasium as well as outdoors. Two small ponds were located on the property and were used for boating. One physical activity noticeably absent was swimming. Mlle Boulogny may not have had the resources to construct an indoor pool, while the cool to cold temperatures of most of the school year would have precluded the use of an outdoor pool.

In order to develop a spirit of competition, the students were divided into two teams, the "Green Team" and the "Purple Team," reflecting the school's colors. The two teams competed against each other in all intermural sports, and the rivalry between the two groups was described as "high" (WCS Brochure n.d.:12). The teams also competed for academic standing, although individual achievements were also awarded. To become a team "praefect" (team captain) was a coveted honor.

The WCS athletes had opportunity to compete with other schools. The basketball and soccer teams played against the Holton Arms School in Bethesda, Maryland; the Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Virginia, Saint Margaret's School in Tappahannock, Virginia; and the Oldfields School in Glencoe, Maryland. Every December the WCS basketball team played the Warrenton High School's varsity girls team (Figure 19). The students also competed with the Stuyvesant School in equestrian events (Toler 2015:59).



**Figure 19. WCS students playing basketball.**

### *Apparel*

The school's uniform included a calf-length lavender skirt and jacket, topped by an ankle-length purple cape (Toler 2015:58). The uniform was reflected in the school's logo, known as "Le Capuchon" (hood or cap, in English) which shows a seated young woman wearing a hooded cape.

The WCS policy regarding apparel was succinct: "Simplicity in clothes is desired, and there should not be too many of them" (WCS Brochure n.d.:16). During the day the girls wore sweaters and skirts. For dinner, a simple dress or suit was acceptable. Each girl was expected to have one evening dress, and suits or other street clothes were worn on Saturday visits to town. Socks were permitted. A uniform tunic was worn for all sporting events, and blue jeans were appropriate for riding. Horse shows, however, required jodhpurs or breeches and riding boots.

Dress for Sunday church consisted of calf-length lavender or purple and white uniforms and hats, with nearly ankle-length purple capes (Ferguson 2003:1).

### *The School Year*

The school year for 1949 – 1950, as described in the WCS brochure, started on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The students were given five days off for Thanksgiving, from November 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, and a break for the Christmas holidays from December 21<sup>st</sup> through January 4<sup>th</sup>. Mid-term examinations were conducted February 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup>, with spring break taking place from March 17<sup>th</sup> to April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Commencement took place on June the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding the Thanksgiving holiday, it has been noted that not all of the girls were allowed to go home; some remained at the school to act as hostesses for the visiting riders participating in the Thanksgiving fox hunt.

### *A Typical School Week*

Classes were taught from Monday through Friday. A typical school day started at 7:00am when the girls awoke and dressed. Breakfast was at 7:30am, followed by a short assembly and four periods of class or study that lasted until lunch at noon. Two more periods were conducted from 12:30 to 3:30pm, including a 10 minute recess and a period for conference or study. All staff tried to be in their offices during this conference period, but were also available for help or advice at any time. Athletic activities were conducted from 3:30 to 5:00pm, followed by one hour of free time for relaxation. Dinner was served from 6:00 until 6:45pm, after which was a 45 minute period for school organizations and other activities. The time from 7:30 to 9:00pm was devoted to study hall, with bedtime at 9:30, except for seniors who could stay up slightly later. According to one student, two assemblies occurred each day, one at noon for boarders and day students, and one in the evening for boarders only (Toler 2015:48). According to former student Pamela Healy Odgers, during her time at WCS the entire school walked into Warrenton on Friday evenings and were allowed to attend the movies (Odgers 2003:90), provided they were “worth-while”(WCS Brochure n.d.:12).

Saturday mornings were unscheduled; the afternoons were devoted to sports or other activities chosen by the students. After an early dinner the girls took chaperoned trips into Warrenton for shopping or movies.

On Sunday mornings the girls were “shepherded” by faculty members, two by two, down to the Saint James Episcopal Church on Culpeper Street Extended (History of Saint James). Although the WCS was non-sectarian, each student was required to attend the church of her parent’s choice. It would appear that, as a matter of convenience as much as preference, the church of choice was Saint James.

Young men from the Stuyvesant School attended the same church, although they were regulated to the front of the church, while the WCS girls sat in the back. This segregation produced what has been described as “mutual observation” between the two groups (History of Saint James). At the end of the service, the young men were required to remain in their seats for a full 10 minutes after the WCS girls had departed (Ferguson 2003:1).

After Sunday church services the students returned to the school, in which it is reported that young men from the town would drive their cars through the school grounds, often with the enthusiastic support of some of the girls (Saint James Church n.d.). In an effort to discourage such activities, Mlle Boulogny installed “speed bumps” across the school roads (Saint James Church n.d.). It is likely that this effort was misguided, seeing that a slower car speed might in fact enable more interaction between the two groups, rather than less. Sunday evenings ended with study hall from 7:30 to 9:00pm (Toler 2015:52).

In addition to scheduled vacations, each student received one weekend of “privilege” (i.e., time off) each semester. Additional weekend privileges could be obtained by maintaining good academic and behavioral standards.



### *Extracurricular Activities*

Between academic classwork, studying, and sports, it seems unlikely that the WCS students would have time for additional activities. Yet extracurricular activities played nearly as large a role in student life as other endeavors. The two major student organizations were the Athletic Association and the Student Government. The Athletic Association supported the athletic program under the guidance of the athletic director, and was responsible for the scheduling of the school's extra and intermural sporting events.

The Student Government was responsible for ensuring that the school rules entrusted to the students were followed. A Student Council was composed of an elected representative from each class, and met once a week. The Student Council provided proctors for study halls during the day and dormitory corridors at bedtime. It also served as a "clearinghouse" for student ideas and suggestions, and oversaw and assigned student privileges as well as demerits (WCS Brochure n.d.:12).

Numerous clubs were available for the students. The Dramatic Club produced three one-act plays per year (Figure 20). In addition to actors, the students were scene painters, and costume and set designers. The plays were open to the public who were presumably charged for admittance, since the plays often benefited a specific charity. "Old Lady 31" and "Antic Spring" were performed, as was an end-of-term, springtime regular, "Enchanted April," performed by the senior class (Toler 2015:59). The girls could also participate in musical and dramatic activities in Warrenton, and attend such presentations at nearby schools (WCS Brochure n.d.:11).



**Figure 20. WCS students performing at the Garden Theater.**

Students with a more literary bent could work on the school paper, school magazine, and yearbook "Le Capuchon," prepared mostly by the senior class. They could also assist the school librarian. Other clubs included a camera club, a riding club, and foreign language clubs. In May the students participated in a May Day celebration that included a May Queen and her court (Figure 21). A pageant was performed by the students, including a Maypole dance (Toler 2015:59). Students could also use some of their free time to hone their sewing skills (Figure 22).



**Figure 21. 1943 May Court posing for a photograph.**

At Christmas time the students put on a choral concert. The concert started in the darkened gymnasium. The girls, dressed in their summer uniforms, entered the gymnasium by height, carrying a lighted candle and singing a French carol. The students gave small presents to the maids and their children (Odgers 2003:94).

A wealth of diverse, off-campus activities were available to WCS students. They were exposed to international culture through chaperoned trips to Washington, D.C., where they visited art galleries and museums and attended plays. They also went to University of Virginia football games in Charlottesville.

Of course, the students took excursions to local hunt gatherings and horse shows. In April the girls attended the Virginia Gold Cup races. WCS occasionally hosted the elaborate breakfast for the Warrenton Hunt, which took place around Thanksgiving. Breakfast was served at the school after the early morning hunt meet and church service. The students served as hostesses at meals associated with the hunts, providing an opportunity for the students to practice their social skills (Milner 1995:4).

In April of 1941 the school held a horse show to benefit the British war effort. Seventy three horses were entered in 13 classes, 10 of which were open to outside exhibitors (Toler 2015:59). In May of 1944 another horse show took place at the school. With the U.S. now in the war, the beneficiary was the American Red Cross. The show raised \$125.00 (Toler 2015:59).

Students at WCS had one singular advantage not found at other girls' boarding schools in the area, which was that Mlle Bouligny's brother-in-law was the prominent businessman and Secretary of the Treasury, Oscar T. Crosby. His estate at nearby View Tree Manor was a gathering place for diplomats and the District of Columbia's social elite. Older students made visits to his home where they were exposed to politics and international affairs (Milner 2007:8-11).

Oscar Terry Crosby was born in 1861. He met his wife Jeanne when he boarded with her family in New Orleans in the 1880s (Milner 1995:3). He moved with his wife to Warrenton around

1906, and bought the 335 acre tract known as View Tree Estate on the high ground west of town. He began construction on the Manor House shortly thereafter (Milner 2007:8-12). Crosby was the founder of the Potomac Electric Power Company, and became the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under President Woodrow Wilson. Crosby died in 1947; in 1951 his property and the WCS school grounds were purchased by the federal government.



**Figure 22. Students conversing and sewing.**

### *Social Life*

The WCS brochure notes that the girls' interaction with boys from the Stuyvesant School "adds to the social life" (WCS Brochure n.d.:11). The Stuyvesant School for Boys was founded by Edwin B. King in 1912 on Winchester Street in Warrenton. The school had an original enrollment of 60 students, offering pre-college courses in a non-military environment. Stuyvesant

boys were invited to the WCS for dances (as were boys from other preparatory schools) and WCS girls were invited to the Stuyvesant School homecoming dances in November (Saint James Church n.d.). The girls also attended a Christmas play, a Saint Valentine's Day dance, and other special events at the Stuyvesant School (Toler 2015:59). At one time at least the two schools had a coed glee club, as evidenced by a photograph in the WCS Brochure (n.d.:22). The WCS girls attended dances and concerts at other nearby boys schools such as Woodberry Forest near Orange, and the Massanutten Military Academy at Woodstock, Virginia.

Boys were not always welcome at the WCS. Hope Wallach, a student at WCS in the late 1930s, remembered when Mlle Boulogny did not allow boys to attend the annual spring dance at the WCS, requiring the girls to dance with each other (Toler 2015:59). That policy was eventually overturned.

Young men were permitted to call on WCS girls, and were received "as they would be in the girl's own home" (WCS Brochure n.d.:11), but only on Saturdays and Sundays, as the girls' schedule was much too full on week days, as discussed previously.

According to Hope Wallach, Mlle Boulogny defined the "weekend" as the period from Sunday morning, with church, to Monday morning, so as to limit the girls' Saturday contact (i.e. "mischief") with local boys, especially those from the Stuyvesant School (Toler 2015:50). However, another student reports, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, that the school gardener raked in "a healthy harvest of brass buttons [from boys' preparatory school blazers] and the occasional empty pint bottle from the under the shrubbery surrounding the school" (Ferguson 2003:1).

### *Closing*

After years of serving the students at the WCS, Mlle Boulogny decided to retire in 1949. To the community's sadness, she announced that the school would be closing and put up for sale; however, it was instead leased to Thomas Grier later that year. Although he had commitments at another female boarding school in Pennsylvania, Mr. Grier described how he was up for the task and planned for the continuation of schooling at the WCS. Unfortunately, Mr. Grier only held on to the WCS for the 1949-1950 session. At the end of 1950, he closed the school and returned to his previous boarding school in Pennsylvania. Soon after, Mlle Boulogny put the property up for sale once more. In 1952, the property was purchased by the Department of Defense for \$200,000, with the school, its eleven buildings, and Mrs. Fitch's house to become part of Station A of the WTC (Toler 2015:53-54).

## V Conclusion

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the WCS has been demolished due to WTC's inability to use and maintain the former WCS facilities in accordance with Army force protection standards and stand-off distances.

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, demolition of the WCS constitutes an adverse effect. In 2017, an MOA was signed between the WTC and the VDHR, which serves as the state's SHPO. The MOA included stipulations for mitigating the demolition's adverse effect, which included the writing of this report. The MOA also stipulated that interpretive signage and displays be completed prior to the demolition. These were completed in 2018 and include information discussing the history of the WCS, and its role in the educational, architectural, and social history. They also discuss its surviving landscape features and provide information on the WCS's layout and architectural characteristics. The interpretive signs have been placed within the WCS landscape at the WTC, and an interpretive display is available as a portable traveling exhibit to schools, libraries, museums, and other appropriate venues.

The purpose of this report was to inform the reader and general public about the history of education in Virginia, and to provide context for understanding and appreciating the role played by the WCS in the Warrenton community. While the WCS will no longer be in its original setting, the memory of this twentieth century female academy will live on through histories such as this.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS**

## WARRENTON COUNTRY SCHOOL LANDSCAPE

DELIBERATE SPACES FOR NATURAL & CULTURAL CONTEMPLATION

The school landscape, designed by Bradford Williams between 1930 and ca. 1935, emphasized the importance of nature to health and well-being. It comprised Neoclassical and Colonial Revival design principles typical of the Country Place Era.

Williams used the topography and natural materials to create outdoor rooms, an intimate garden for contemplation, a sculpture garden and outdoor theatre. In the wooded area, he added two ponds and a small waterfall which balanced the symmetry and axial relationships of the buildings with the natural landscape.



**WARRENTON COUNTRY SCHOOL**

- A-1 Administration (Building of Form) 1932
- A-2 Fitness Center (Gymnasium) 1932
- A-3 Science (Science) 1934
- A-4 Junior (Gymnasium) 1934
- A-5 Art (Art Building) 1935
- A-6 Art (Art Building) 1935

1- Sunken Garden facing south ca. 1949. Source: Warrenton Country School Brochure, Warrenton Training Center Archives

2- West end of Dogwood Alley ca. 1935. Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

3- Upper Lily Pond ca. 1935. Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

**WARRENTON TRAINING CENTER**





**WARRENTON COUNTRY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**  
 "BEAUTIFULLY SITUATED IN THE MOUNTAINS OF VIRGINIA,  
 FRENCH. THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOUSE."  
 -THE WASHINGTON POST, "WARRENTON COUNTRY SCHOOL," 2 AUGUST 1915, CLASSIFIED SECTION

During the period of the school's prominence, in the early twentieth century, many sought the kind of education that allowed their daughters academic enrichment and exposure to skills necessary for running a household and meeting the social needs of their class. Mlle. Bouigny's school offered a curriculum with an emphasis on music, arts, drama and foreign languages, as well as extracurricular activities such as skating, tennis and horseback riding.

Debutante scholars from surrounding counties, Washington, D.C. and New York attended the prestigious 16.5 acre school where young women prepared for college.



**WARRENTON COUNTRY SCHOOL**

- A.1 Administration Building, 1912
- A.2 Classroom Building, 1914
- A.3 Boyer Dormitory, 1914
- A.4 Junior Dormitory, 1914
- A.5 Athletic Hallmaster's House, 1920
- A.10 Art Building, 1935

**How much did Warrenton Country School cost to attend?**

**EXPENSES ca. 1949**  
 Tuition, Board & Room: \$1400/year  
 Tuition for Day Students: \$450/year  
 Books & Supplies: \$35/year  
 Private Tutoring: \$2/hour  
 Horseback Riding Daily: \$200/year

Source: Warrenton Country School Brochure, Warrenton Training Center Archives



1- View of the Inimate Garden from the A-2 facility northwest ca. 1949.  
 Source: Warrenton Country School Brochure, Warrenton Training Center Archives



2- Inimate Garden facing southeast ca. 1935. Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

WARRENTON TRAINING CENTER





**WARRENTON COUNTRY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**  
**WARRENTON, VIRGINIA**

Mademoiselle Lea M. Boulogny founded the Warrenton Country School, an all girls boarding school, between 1910 and 1915. The school was located on the northwest corner of Springs Road and Shephard's Lane, the site of Warrenton's first country club.

The sweeping drive of the entrance, with its grand stone pillars and decorative ironwork gateway, symbolized an elite school for daughters of the wealthy. The school provided the young women a well-rounded academic and social curriculum.

The Warrenton Country School campus was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places due to its significance to the history of education for women in Virginia, its architectural design, and its planned landscaping.

On her seventieth birthday in 1949, Lea Boulogny turned the Warrenton Country School over to Thomas Greer. Shortly thereafter, the Warrenton Country School was purchased by the Department of Defense. The Department of the Army demolished the remaining Warrenton Country School buildings in 2017, due to force protection and anti-terrorism standards.

**1** View of Alice Hutchinson's House (A-3) facing southwest, near entrance  
 Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

**2** View of Alice Hutchinson's House (A-3) facing southwest, near entrance  
 Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

**3** View of Stone House (A-2) from the western entry drive facing southeast ca. 1930  
 Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

**4** View of Stone House (A-2) from the western entry drive facing southeast ca. 1930  
 Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

**5** Aerial view, 1930. Source: Warrenton Lifestyle Magazine, August 2015  
 "Warrenton Country School 1915-1920," photo courtesy of Mrs. Gina Timberlake pg. 58

**6** Entry Gates ca. 1935. Source: Warrenton Training Center Archives

**ARCHITECTURE**

The school buildings included characteristics of the Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and French Eclectic styles, which made the campus an important architectural asset in the rural historic district. The principal buildings featured English lapports defined in gipsy-jerred stone, pibble-dashed stucco walls above the water table, overhanging eaves, and massive exterior chimneys.

The design of the buildings incorporated the rustic textures and proportions of the Craftsman style, whose exemplary Classical elements, such as Palladian windows and colonnades. The main campus buildings, tightly angled with the points of the compass, were softened by a dramatic landscape comprised of diverse "outdoor rooms" delineated by retaining walls, hedges, lines of trees, and buildings.

The size of structural clay tiles on the masonry buildings throughout the campus suggested the popularity of the freepord building material in the early 1900s. Clay structural tiles were being deemed the ultra-enduring building material for the protection of young women attending Miss Boulogny's prestigious educational institution.

Chicago brick manufacturers produced the fire resistant individual-age clay tiles in response to the devastating fires that occurred in Chicago and Boston. During those fires, bricks melted and showed greater fire resistance. The tiles were designed with a hollow, semi-circular shape consisting of kneaded clay pressed into vitreous black form, which were fired in kilns to hard, semi-porous or porous grades.

**WARRENTON TRAINING CENTER**

Photo Location

