

Private Education- Part 2: Private Academies in Colonial North Carolina and Early Statehood ^[1]

Private Education

by Chris Myers and Jaquelin Drane Nash, 2006; Revised November 2022.

Additional research provided by William S. Powell and Robert D. Weaver.

See also: [Public Education](#); ^[2] [Bennett College](#) ^[3]; [Bingham School](#) ^[4]; [Caldwell School](#) ^[5]; [Clio's Nursery](#) ^[6]; [Davidson College](#) ^[7]; [Duke University](#) ^[8]; [Liberty Hall](#) ^[9]; [North Carolina Association of Independent Colleges and Universities](#) ^[10]; [Queen's College](#) ^[11]; [Saint Augustine's College](#) ^[12]; [Salem Academy and Salem College](#) ^[13]; [Wake Forest University](#) ^[14]; [Private Higher Education](#) ^[15]

[Private Education- Part 1: Introduction](#) ^[16]

[Private Education- Part 2: Private Academies in Colonial North Carolina and Early Statehood](#)

[Private Education- Part 3: Antebellum Growth, the Civil War, and the First Black Colleges](#) ^[17]

[Private Education- Part 4: Decline, Desegregation, and the Private School Boom](#) ^[18]

Part 2: Private Academies in Colonial North Carolina and Early Statehood

Prior to 1800, young children generally were taught at home by parents, tutors, or governesses. Neighboring children often traveled to share in instruction. A relatively small number of private schools were established during the [colonial period](#) ^[19]. In the absence of government funding, churches and communities coalesced to provide schooling for local white children. Eighteenth-century academies and other schools were organized and supported by a few individuals, particularly those associated with the [Anglican Church](#) ^[20]. In 1709 lay reader Charles Griffin established in [Pasquotank County](#) ^[21] the earliest known school in the colony. A few years later he moved to [Edenton](#) ^[22], leaving his first school in the hands of the Reverend James Adams, and ultimately joined the faculty of the [College of William and Mary](#) ^[23] in Williamsburg, Va. A school for both Indian and white children was run by Edward Mashborne at Sarum, a site now in [Gates County](#) ^[24]. These schools are the only ones known to have existed in North Carolina in the Proprietary period.

[Daniel Earl](#) ^[25] in 1763 was teaching Latin, Greek, English, and mathematics near Edenton. The schoolhouse he is believed to have used was still standing in 2006, though not on the original site. In 1764 the colonial Assembly provided for the building of a school on church property in New Bern intended to serve more than the local community. Financial support from the church as well as from a provincial tax made it available to a wider range of pupils. With [Thomas Thomlinson](#) ^[26], the son and grandson of teachers in England, as its first teacher, the [New Bern Academy](#) ^[27] opened in 1764. It continued until 1899, when it was incorporated into the public school system.

James Tate, a Presbyterian minister in [Wilmington](#) ^[28], established Tate's School as the first classical academy in the colony; it prepared young men for college until the [American Revolution](#) ^[29]. Other Presbyterian clergymen soon followed. Crowfield Academy opened in [Rowan County](#) ^[30], and [David Caldwell](#) ^[31] began a school in [Guilford County](#) ^[32] in 1767 that served as an academy, a college, and a theological seminary. Before Caldwell died in 1824, many of his "Log College" graduates entered the junior classes at Princeton and the [University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill](#) ^[33].

In 1771 the Assembly proposed that Queen's College be established in [Charlotte](#) ^[34] as the colony's first degree-granting school, but because of political and religious resentment it was not approved. Instead, an institution called Queen's Museum was organized and may have granted degrees; the approaching American Revolution halted all progress and efforts were transferred to Salisbury, where [Liberty Hall Academy](#) ^[9] replaced it. Following the Revolution, with royal opposition no longer a factor, higher private education began to make headway in North Carolina. Article 41 of the first state constitution, adopted in 1776, provided for schools and one or more universities. Between 1777 and 1789 the legislature chartered 18 academies, 12 of which were warned by their charters not to expect to become one of the universities anticipated in the constitution. After 1795, when the [University of North Carolina](#) ^[33] became the first such state-supported institution in the United States, private institutions of higher learning began to appear with the avowed purpose of preparing young men for the new university.

Keep reading >> [Part 3: Antebellum Growth, the Civil War, and the First Black Colleges](#) ^[17] 

References:

R. D. W. Connor, "Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina," *NCHR* 28 (January 1951).

Charles L. Coon, *North Carolina Schools and Academies, 1790-1840* (1915).

Calvin Criner, "Non-Public Schools in North Carolina," *Popular Government* 42 (Spring 1977).

Rebecca Webster Graves, "Nonpublic Schools Revisited: A Comparative Study of Nonpublic Education in North Carolina from 1975 to 1985" (Ph.D. diss., UNC-Greensboro, 1988).

Eugene D. Owens, "Secondary Education in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1934).

William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (1989).

Additional Resources:

The History of Education in North Carolina, NC Department of Administration:
<http://www.ncdnpe.org/documents/hhh144.pdf> ^[35]

New Bern Academy, C-61, NC Highway Historical Markers:<https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=C-61%20-%20NEW%20BERN%20ACADEMY> ^[36]

Subjects:

[Education](#) ^[37]

Authors:

[Macfie, John](#) ^[38]

[Myers, Chris](#) ^[39]

[Nash, Jaquelin Drane](#) ^[40]

[Powell, William S.](#) ^[41]

[Weaver, Robert D.](#) ^[42]

Origin - location:

[Edenton](#) ^[43]

[Gates County](#) ^[44]

[Wilmington](#) ^[45]

[Charlotte](#) ^[46]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[47]

1 January 2006 | Macfie, John; Myers, Chris; Nash, Jaquelin Drane; Powell, William S. ; Weaver, Robert D.

Source URL: <https://ncpedia.org/private-education-part-2-private>

Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/private-education-part-2-private> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/education-public> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/bennett-college> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/bingham-school> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/caldwell-school> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/clios-nursery> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/davidson-college> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/duke-university> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/liberty-hall> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-association-colleges> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/queens-college> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/saint-augustines-college> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/salem-academy-and-salem-college> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/wake-forest-university> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/education/privatehigher> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/education-private> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/private-education-part-3-antebellum> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/private-education-part-4-decline> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/colonial-period-overview> [20] <http://www.achome.org/> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/pasquotank> [22] <https://ncpedia.org/edenton> [23] <http://www.wm.edu/> [24] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/gates> [25] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/earl-daniel> [26] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/thomlinson-thomas> [27] <https://ncpedia.org/new-bern-academy> [28] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/wilmington> [29] <https://ncpedia.org/american-revolution> [30] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/rowan> [31] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/caldwell-david> [32] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/guilford> [33] <https://ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-chapel-hi> [34] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/charlotte> [35] <http://www.ncdnpe.org/documents/hhh144.pdf> [36] <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=C-61%20-%20NEW%20BERN%20ACADEMY> [37] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/education> [38] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/macfie-john> [39] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/myers-chris> [40] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/nash-jaquelin-dran> [41] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/powell-william-s-0> [42] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/weaver-robert-d> [43] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-56> [44] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-33> [45] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-39> [46] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-24> [47] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->