

# The story of Port Tobacco is fascinating!

It includes Native Americans, missionaries, colonists, revolutionaries, assassins, spies, slaves, merchants, farmers, an arsonist, and everyone in between!

Settled in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Port Tobacco grew to become one of Maryland's largest international seaports in the years before the American Revolution. The town served as the seat of Charles County from 1727–1895, but its history began with the precolonial Native American Villages of Potopaco to the current residents of the town.

Explore the history and legends of historic Port Tobacco Village on your own or take a guided tour through the Port Tobacco Courthouse, Stagg Hall and Burch House.

Bring the whole family for a journey back in time to learn more about the history of this once bustling port along the Port Tobacco River.

For more information – visit, call or email:  
[www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com)

301-392-3418 • [HistoricDistrict@CharlesCountyMD.gov](mailto:HistoricDistrict@CharlesCountyMD.gov)

For details on special events, contact:  
**Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco**

301-934-4313 • [PortTobaccoCourthouse.com](http://PortTobaccoCourthouse.com)  
Facebook: SocietyForTheRestorationofPortTobacco



Charles County Government  
Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism  
8190 Port Tobacco Road, Port Tobacco MD 20677  
Maryland Relay Service: 7-1-1



 ExploreCharlesCounty

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# Port Tobacco

## A Maryland Mosaic



Stagg Hall

 **PORT  
TOBACCO**  
**HISTORIC VILLAGE**

Historic Stagg Hall Located at:  
8450 Commerce Street • Port Tobacco, MD  
Open Wednesday through Sunday Tours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Monday by prearranged appointment • Free

# A Brief History

In 1634, a small English settlement began here and by 1639 was named Chandler's Town. It became the first county seat of the County of Charles in 1658, and by the early 1700's the name changed to Charles Town. Not until the early 1800's was the name officially changed to Port Tobacco.



Port Tobacco Courthouse

By the mid 1600's the town became a major shipping center for deep water ships and a Port-of-Entry, becoming center of commerce. Shipping was a vital industry and thrived well into the late 1700's with a decline during the Revolutionary War due partially to the river silting preventing the ocean-going ships from docking at the harbor. However, flat-bottom barges were used for passengers and cargo to the docks as the ships anchored in the Potomac River. After the War of 1812, shipping commerce had a comeback.

Mount Carmel Monastery, the first Women's Religious Order in the United States was founded at Chandler's Hope in Port Tobacco in 1790.

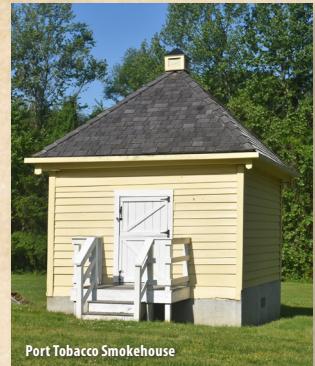
During the Civil War, Union forces occupied much of Charles County and Port Tobacco, which were sympathetic to the Confederate movement. Meetings of the Lincoln kidnapping conspirators were held at a hotel in town – a town with two female Confederate spies.



Port Tobacco Historic Village Cemetery

Once the railroad came to the new village of La Plata, there began a time-consuming movement to have the county seat moved there. Merchants began to leave Port Tobacco, and in 1891 and again in 1892 a vote to move the county seat was defeated. With the "mysterious burning" of the Courthouse, (the records were found outside the building) followed by the decision to move the county seat to La Plata, Port Tobacco literally decayed and became a ghost town.

In 1948, the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco was formed. Pictures and historical information were sought and found to establish what had been there. In 1973, the Courthouse and Museum were dedicated.



Port Tobacco Smokehouse

