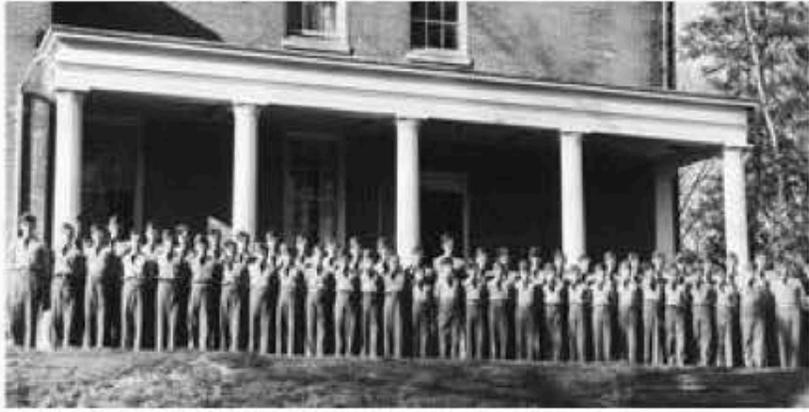


# Stratford's History

*The Stratford Military Academy* by Carole Dadino, Stratford Historian



A mansion built by Ephraim Tomlinson in 1884, sat on farmland located on Laurel Road, north of Big Timber Creek. The Mansion was transformed from a residence to a Maternity Hospital, shortly after WWI and was followed by the Stratford Military Academy in the early 1930's. The first classes were held in 1935. The Academy was under the direction of Colonel William T. Hade, offering grades primary through eighth. The top of the Academy letterhead stated "Offering a balanced program of home, school, work, military, and play activities to develop good character, good habits and to give the best educational training."



A uniform worn by Stratford Military Academy Cadets. Donated by Mark Dewland

The Military Academy was closed in the late 1970's. The site sat vacant until the Camden County YWCA bought it in 1984, for \$215,000. They ran social programs, a day care and pre-school on the site, with their administrative offices, in the Mansion.



The interior of the mansion has moldings, plaster cornices, and 2 fireplaces with marble mantels, remaining in good condition. The original banister and spindles of the front stairs remain. Fireplaces, that have been covered, remain in both second floor, front rooms.



The YWCA did take down a few of the non-essential buildings, and those requiring extensive repair or maintenance. These buildings included the Military Academy's mess hall located to the left of the mansion, near the creek, and the front building that sat to the right of mansion which housed the Academy's barber shop, candy store, and storage garage.



The YWCA ran into financial problems in 2006 and at the same time, the Stratford Classical Christian Academy, a local private school associated with the Stratford Orthodox Presbyterian Church, was seeking space for their expansion. The acreage gave this new school a 23-acre campus. They bought the site for \$1,3 million and made major restorations to some buildings, demolishing those not needed. They held classes from Preschool to 12th grade, until it closed in 2015.

The property has been purchased by a developer who plans to build A Senior Living facility. The future of the Mansion, the oldest building remaining in Stratford, is currently under negotiation