



MUSEUM

THE ESTHER THOMAS ATKINSON
OF HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

AUGUST 2009

Former Trustee and Historical Virginia Figure Turns 200 This Year

Angie Way

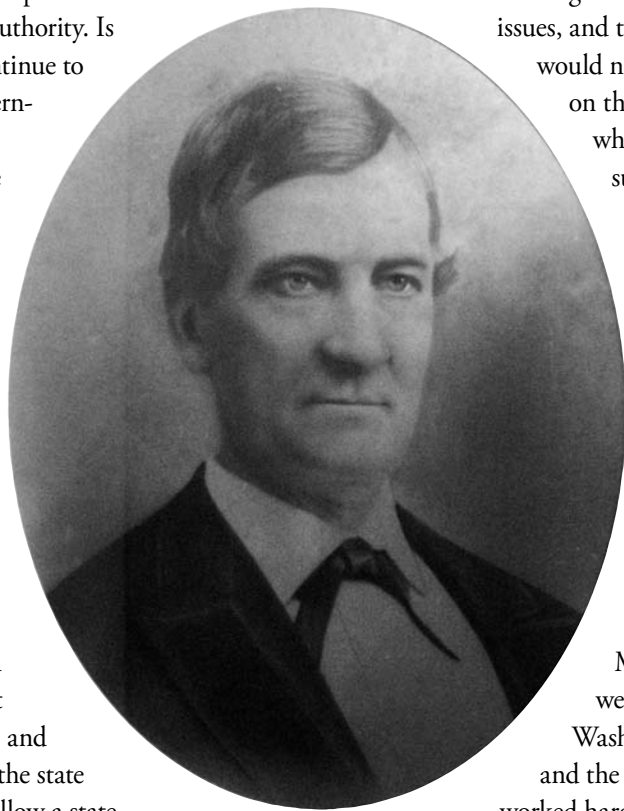
WILLIAM L. OWEN of Halifax had at least two sons attend Hampden-Sydney College, and he served as a Trustee of our College from 1876 until his death in 1881. His election as Trustee was likely influenced by his importance to Virginia during the harsh years after the Civil War and Reconstruction. During that time he was part of the major actions of the government and citizens to bring Virginia back into the Union, an effort which found him alongside, and sometimes caught between, many erstwhile advocates of the New South and Southern traditionalists.

He was a merchant by occupation and spent time after the Civil War in the state legislature, representing Halifax County. In a letter to John Bennett dated May 19, 1865, Owen sums up the economic state of himself and Virginia: "I shall lose largely by the war tho' I made no investments in Confederate securities and at no time had any confidence in Confederate money. But the failure of the Confederacy carries with it all of our Banks and probably most of the State and County securities..."¹

He was elected to the legislature in 1865, and two years later was selected to represent Halifax at the Constitutional Convention for Reconstitution from winter 1867 to spring 1868. Owen voted as a Conservative throughout the convention with only one exception: he voted with the Radicals against a "roll call on the adoption of a minority report of the Committee on the Franchise...[which failed to enfranchise Blacks]."² According to the minutes of the debate, he disagreed with some proposed provisions, especially funding sources in the form of taxes from exempt businesses.³ The convention was factious, and members argued extensively over issues the Federal Government required them to address in the Reconstruction Constitution. Owen felt the pressure acutely and wrote in April 1868 to a family member: "How a wise and rational government could have contrived—

and can still continue [these policies] ... is to me the greatest wonder and astonishment of my life. I have been through all the trials until now intensely National in my feelings. At great peril to my reputation amongst my own people and kindred...and fully I plead for the Union and upheld its authority. Is it human nature to continue to live and cherish a Government so cruel?"⁴ After considerable debate the convention passed the Underwood Constitution, named for a dominating force at the proceedings, Judge John C. Underwood.

Portions of the proposed constitution were controversial to Virginians, especially those provisions dealing with the disenfranchisement of former Confederates and suffrage. Politicians in the state urged compromise to allow a state-wide vote on the constitution. In order to determine the form and action of the compromise, "invitations for a conference to some of the prominent men of the state" were sent by conservative leaders. The meeting was held on December 31, 1868, in Richmond, with its main action being the formation of a committee "to go to Washington and make known to Congress the willingness of the members...to seek to obtain the best possible terms in regard to a constitution."⁵ William L. Owen was a member of that committee, which became known in Virginia history as the "Committee of Nine."



The group traveled to Washington and met for about two weeks with committees of the United States Congress and President-elect Ulysses S. Grant. Their message was simple: Virginians were willing to compromise on suffrage in return for amending the disenfranchisement issues, and they hoped that Grant would not "demand a vote on the constitution as a whole, [but instead] submit the more controversial clauses for a separate vote."⁶

"...Grant, who, without committing himself to [the committee's] policy, agreed that the disfranchisement, test oath, and township clauses would have harmful effects."⁷

Many other entities were also present in Washington at the time, and the Committee of Nine worked hard to support the idea that the members were the voice of the majority of Virginians.⁸ The level of their success is clear, as more consideration and more advocates followed them to Washington. The *Richmond Whig* newspaper proclaimed, "We do not doubt that the committee which went to Washington did service there in creating a better feeling among members of Congress."⁹

The final sign that the Committee of Nine had some success was the adoption of the Underwood Constitution in an 1869 referendum, with some of the more controversial portions voted on

William L. Owen, Hampden-Sydney College Trustee, defended giving the vote to newly-freed African Americans in the constitutional aftermath of the Civil War.

IN THIS ISSUE

William Owen turns 200

A 19th-century trustee was a delegate to the Virginia Reconstitution convention . . . PAGE 1

Museum news

Front Gallery renovations complete; museum studies course offered . . . PAGE 2

Trustee portraits donated to College

A descendant gives contemporary portraits of two of the many Watkins men who have been trustees of the College. . . PAGE 2

More on the Wauchope house

The College historian supplies new information about the fate of the Wauchopes' boarding house on campus. . . PAGE 4

Coming Exhibits

Graffiti-inscribed berthing unit canvases from the troopship *General Nelson M. Walker* bear witness to anxiety and longings of men on their way to Vietnam; architectural relics show what might have been built at Hampden-Sydney . . . PAGE 4

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WILLIAM OWEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

separately. With this hurdle surmounted, the state finished the remaining requirements and was readmitted to the Union on January 26, 1870.

Archibald Alexander Owen 1877, a son of W. E. Owen, married a daughter of Hampden-Sydney College President John M. P. Atkinson 1835. Decades later the couple's grandson, Dr. John A. Owen '45, sought to learn more about his esteemed ancestor and delivered some of what he found in a speech dedicating the Hon. W. L. Owen Scholarship at Hampden-Sydney College. In his conclusion he admitted to a bit of "ancestor worship," saying, "in musing over what the Committee of Nine achieved, I feel a glow of family pride in what W. L. Owen stood for and what he accomplished . . . he venerated the Union [and] rather than weeping over the Lost Cause, he wanted to rebuild a new Virginia."¹⁰

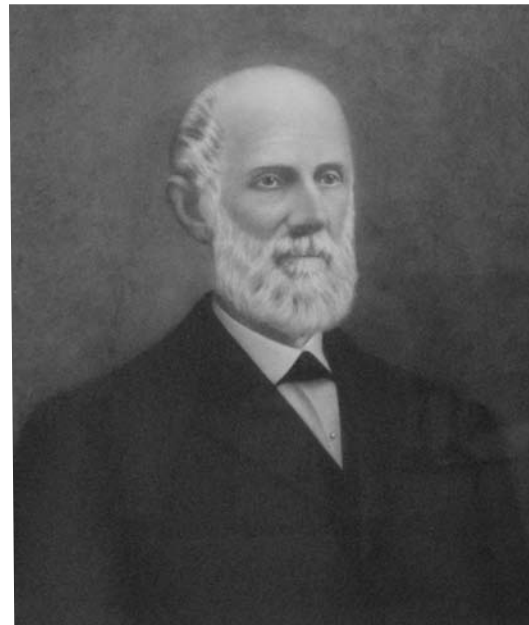
1. William L. Owen to John Bennett, 19 May 1865, in Gerald Tate Gilliam, *The Southsider, Local History and Genealogy of Southside Virginia. A Unionist in Halifax County, Virginia*, Volume XIX (4 Number, 2000), 86.
2. Richard L. Hume, "The Membership of the Virginia Constitutional Convention, 1867-1868," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (Oct. 1978), 480.
3. Hamilton James Eckenrode, *The Political History of Virginia During Reconstruction* (Baltimore, 1904), 93.
4. William L. Owen to Family Member, "Cousin Irv.," 22 April 1868, The Virginia Historical Society Archives.
5. Eckenrode, III.
6. Richard Lowe, *Republicans and Reconstruction in Virginia, 1856-70* (Charlottesville and London, 1991), 164.
7. Jack P. Maddex, Jr., *The Virginia Conservatives: 1867-1879* (Chapel Hill, 1970), 71.
8. Eckenrode, III-113.
9. *Ibid.*, 115, fn. 27.
10. Dr. John A. Owen '45, "The W. L. Owen Scholarship," undated speech provided to the Atkinson Museum, 11 April 2009.

Watkins Trustee Portraits Given to College

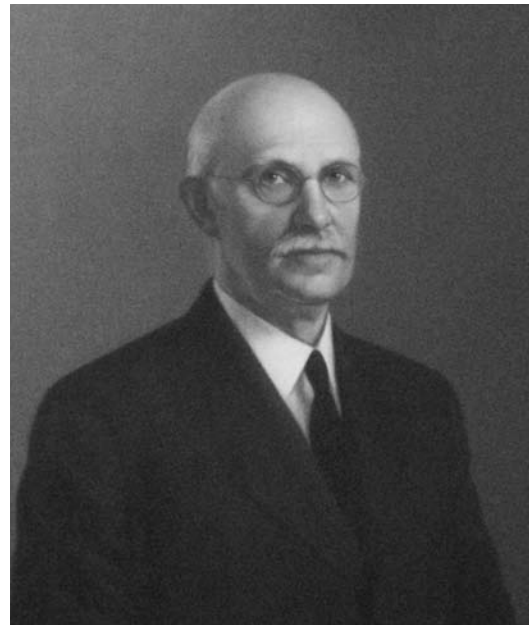
William F. Watkins Jr. '48

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This spring two portraits (below) were accepted by the Hampden-Sydney College Collection and Fine Arts Committee. The portraits of Judge Francis Nathaniel Watkins 1831 and Judge Asa Dickerson Watkins 1878 were previously displayed in the Prince Edward County Courthouse. The two join the portrait of charter trustee Francis Watkin, already part of the Hampden-Sydney College portrait collection. Their descendant here outlines the long and fruitful relationship between the Watkins family and Hampden-Sydney College.*

HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE has long enjoyed close contact with the citizens of Southside Virginia and especially those of Prince Edward County. Among those, the Watkins



Trustee Francis Nathaniel Watkins 1831



Trustee Asa Dickerson Watkins 1878

in-law, Francis Watkins of Poplar Hill, and Paul Carrington of Charlotte County. Watkins was active in the business and political life of Prince Edward County, serving as Deputy Clerk and later Clerk of the County Court. He served on the Board from 1775 until 1815 with such distinguished Virginians as Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, and James Madison of Orange County, later President of the United States. While a member of the Board, he periodically served as its Chairman and for a period of time as Treasurer of the College.

Henry E. Watkins, son of Francis Watkins, married Agnes Venable, granddaughter of Nathaniel Venable and Paul Carrington. He became a Trustee of Hampden-Sydney College, serving from 1807 to 1831 and again from 1836 to 1853. Henry was a captain in the army during the War of 1812. He served as Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince Edward from 1810 to 1813, as a member of the House of Delegates from 1813 to 1833, and a member of the Virginia Senate from 1833 to 1834. He was a friend of Thomas Jefferson, and they shared a common interest in



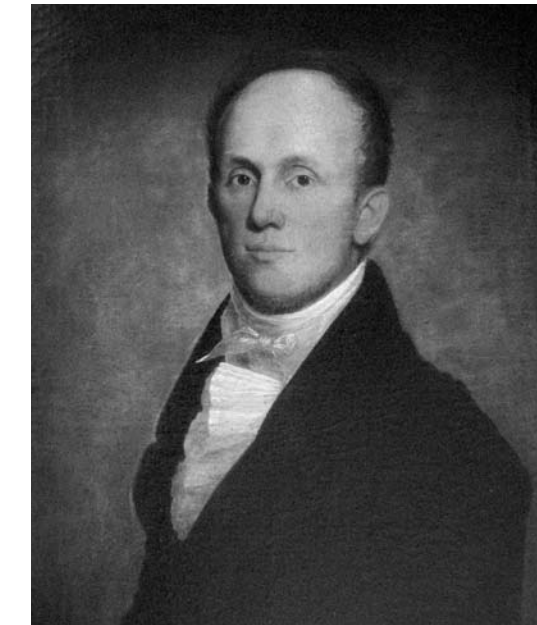
William F. Watkins, Jr. '48



William N. Watkins '79

agricultural matters. Mr. Jefferson appointed him to the committee of the selection of a site for the proposed University of Virginia.

Judge Francis Nathaniel Watkins 1831, a son of Henry E. Watkins, served on the Board of Hampden-Sydney from 1844 until 1853 and again from 1866 until his death in 1885. While on the Boards of Hampden-Sydney and Union Theological Seminary, he also served some time as Treasurer of both those institutions. He was a judge and one of the founders of the Farmville Female Seminary Association, now Longwood



Trustee Henry E. Watkins

News Briefs from the Atkinson Museum



Angela J. Way,
Director-Curator,
Atkinson Museum
of Hampden-Sydney
College

Front gallery renovation complete

The renovation of the front gallery was completed this spring, thanks to a gift from the Lula P. Cole and S. Mason Cole Trust.

The renovation work included closing the gallery windows from the interior, making for smooth and continuous exhibition walls; removing the small front office, walls, door, and lights; creating a larger office with curatorial workspace at the back of the gallery; and enhancing track lighting at the front of the gallery. The final change to the gallery was the removal of the front green wall, to open up the gallery space for free flow of exhibits and patrons. The very popular photograph collage once hung there was relocated to the front of the room near the entrance.

Samuel Mason Cole, Jr., was a 1950 graduate of Hampden-Sydney College. He and his wife were long-time supporters of Hampden-Sydney College and the Museum and participated in fund-raising efforts to build the 1993-94 back

gallery expansion.

The recent work was overseen by the College's department of Building & Grounds and contracted to area carpenters and electricians.

Students Participate in Fall History Research Class at the Museum

As part of the Museum's on-going mission to complement the educational mission of the College, two Hampden-Sydney College students will participate in a special research class taught by Associate Professor of History Caroline Emmons. Senior Jamin P. Riley and Junior Nathan Ryalls will work together on a research project with curator Angie Way while meeting weekly with Professor Emmons. Their project will require historical research of items in the College collection and the use of curatorial practices in cataloging and organizing the items.

Professor Mary Prevo is assisting with the class organization and providing consultation. The

students will generate a final presentation of a publication or exhibition based on their work. The class is scheduled for the fall 2009 semester.

Personalized Bricks A Lasting Tribute

REMEMBER! You can purchase inscribed memorial bricks to be placed along the Museum's front walk. They are an ideal way to recognize graduates, loved ones, beloved teachers, or classmates—even (as one of our students did) to propose.

To request a brick order form, call the Museum at (434) 223-6134, or download one from www.hsc.edu/museum/brick.html



MUSEUM ADVISORY BOARD

Mr. Frank B. Atkinson, Ashland, VA
Mr. S. Edward Ayres '66, Yorktown, VA
Dr. Caroline Emmons, Richmond, VA
Ms. Robin Gabriel, Charlottesville, VA
Ms. Anita H. Garland, Hampden-Sydney, VA
Mr. J. Sheppard Haw III '78, Richmond, VA
Mr. Daniel M. Hawks '61, Williamsburg, VA
Ms. Barbara Henley, Hampden-Sydney, VA
Ms. Elizabeth LeSueur, Richmond, VA
Mrs. Elna Ann Mayo, Hampden-Sydney, VA
Dr. C. Wayne Tucker, Petersburg, VA
Mr. William F. Watkins, Jr. '48, Farmville, VA
Dr. Paul S. Baker, *ex officio*, Hampden-Sydney, VA
Mr. W. Glenn Culley, *ex officio*, Farmville, VA
Dr. Richard C. McClintock, *ex officio*, Hampden-Sydney, VA
Ms. Angela J. Way, *ex officio*, Farmville, VA

Mr. Raymond B. Wallace, Jr. '60, *emeritus*
Mr. W. Robert Eason '40, *emeritus*

Artifact Donation

Thank you for helping us preserve the rich history of Hampden-Sydney College and build on Mrs. P.T.'s legacy. To make donations, please contact Angie Way at (434) 223-6134 or away@hsc.edu.

Of particular interest are alumni memorabilia and souvenirs of their years at school (including ephemera like dance cards, notes, club paraphernalia, photographs, and the like).

All artifact donations to the Museum are subject to review by the Acquisitions Committee, which decides upon the appropriateness of the items for the Museum's mission and collecting policies. Items without a direct connection to the College are unlikely to be accepted. Any item not accepted will be returned to the donor.

In-kind donations are tax-deductible if the donor furnishes an independent appraisal of the items. By law, the Museum cannot appraise items.

University.

Judge Asa Dickerson Watkins 1878 was elected to the Board of the College in 1896 and served until 1931. He was Commonwealth's Attorney from 1891 to 1935, served both in the Virginia House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate, and was a member of the board of the Farmville Female Seminary Association.

William F. Watkins, Jr. '48, a grandson of Asa D. Watkins, received his law degree from the University of Virginia, practiced law in Prince Edward County from 1950 until 1999, and also served as mayor of Farmville from 1958 to 1964 and as Commonwealth's Attorney from 1964 to 1991.

William Norman Watkins '79 graduated Phi Beta Kappa and received his law degree from the College of William and Mary. He practices law in Richmond in the firm of Sands, Marks and Miller.

Supporting the Museum

The Museum's operating budget comes principally from gifts from its friends, augmented by income from its small endowment.

As a result individual gifts of annual support are extremely important to the continued health and progress of the Museum, both as a guardian of Hampden-Sydney's heritage and as a memorial to Mrs. P. T. Atkinson, who founded it.

Gifts may be mailed in the enclosed envelope or submitted online at www.hsc.edu/development/give.html. You may specify that your gift is to be used by the Museum. All gifts to the College are tax-deductible.

The MISSION of the Esther Thomas Atkinson Museum is to promote an awareness and understanding of the history of Hampden-Sydney College as it relates to its role in the history of Virginia and the United States, while serving to support and enhance the College's mission to form good men and good citizens in an atmosphere of sound learning.

More on the Wauchope house

William E. Thompson, College historian and pastor

I appreciated very much Wayne Tucker's "Museum" article about the Wauchope family and their boarding house trials! I can clarify some of the rest of the story of the house itself. Your August 2007 exchanges with George Bass and Wayne's article focus on the family that was there in the early 1890s. For several years now I have been zealously researching and writing the history of the College Presbyterian Church, and I can pick up the story of that house from different parts of my own manuscript. I'm not sure how long these struggling Wauchopes managed to keep their boarding house afloat, but certainly College Church bought the house from them in 1907 and retained its ownership until 1920.

In the 1880s the College Church minister was housed in the church manse, which was then the "Kinderton" house in Worsham (it burned in 1975). Some of the ministers of that era frankly wanted to be in the Hampden-Sydney village, but the church officers felt that moving their pastor's residence to "The Hill" would seem to be favoring the academic community over the church's rural constituency, so it was kept at Worsham.

The Wauchope house itself could not have been moved before the mid 1880s, when the College got permission from the Church to open the Atkinson Avenue right of way through

the church cemetery, which allowed collegiate and private residential development in that eastern direction toward the seminary house that was already down that way (the house we know as Estcourt). In 1895 this Wauchope house was known to be available for sale, when the new church pastor, James Murray, came and expressed a desire to move to the campus, but again the church officers rejected such a transfer of its manse.

But when William J. King came as the new pastor in 1907, expressing the same wish, the house was again available (perhaps from the same family?) and it was sold to the church. The church added indoor plumbing to the house during the King family's residence there, which concluded in 1917. The next pastor was Edgar G. Gammon, who served the church as pastor and the college as its YMCA secretary (or chaplain).

Soon after this family's arrival, complete electric service came to the village, and President J.D. Eggleston and Treasurer & Business

Manager P. T. Atkinson arranged for wiring to be installed in the manse (*i.e.*, the Wauchope house) and the church; we can certainly imagine that this was largely exposed wiring and switches. The Gammons lived there somewhat reluctantly for two years without agitating about another residence, in large part because World War I was going on and it was a time of sacrifice and simplicity. However, very soon after the war was over, Dr. Gammon began agitating in early 1919 for a better manse with a more prominent location. A legal arrangement was finally approved between the Church and the College on 2 May 1920, whereby

the Church gave the house to the College in exchange for a lot on College Road just north of the Church, where the present manse was then built and occupied in November of that year.

I'm not sure when the original Wauchope house was demolished, but the present ranch model Wauchope House was constructed in 1967.

No picture of the Wauchope house has been found, but Dr. Thompson describes it in his history of College Church: The existing manse was a large frame house which had originally been in Worsham, but had been moved to Hampden-Sydney.... It appears that neither the house's original construction nor its reconstruction on the new site had been very well done. Indoor plumbing was not added until a decade after the Church purchased it, and electricity arrived only in 1919. The Gammons thought it "decidedly substandard."

ON EXHIBIT

"Marking Time: Voyage to Vietnam"
SEPTEMBER 8 TO NOVEMBER 6, 2009

The exhibit features Vietnam War-era graffiti on bunk canvases salvaged from the *USNS General Nelson M. Walker*, a troopship that shuttled thousands of young Americans across the Pacific Ocean in 1966 and 1967.

The canvases feature scrawled inscriptions, signatures, cartoons, and poems by young servicemen headed to combat in the Vietnam War. In a 2007 press release, The United States Navy Memorial described the cache of canvas graffiti as "diverse and poignant in its simplicity. It included names



Grffiti-inscribed berthing unit canvases from the troopship General Nelson M. Walker.

and hometowns, dates they expected to leave the service, and day-by-day calendars to mark the voyage progress. There were messages of patriotism, politics, humor, anxiety, and love. They were written for personal comfort, or to be seen by other troops who would contribute."

The "Marking Time: Voyage to Vietnam" exhibit was created by the Vietnam Graffiti Project, working in partnership with the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

"Unbuilt Hampden-Sydney"
NOVEMBER 12, 2009, TO FEBRUARY 5, 2010

What might Hampden-Sydney have looked like if all its visionaries had had their way? This exhibition gives an overview of some of the plans, dreams, aspirations, and downright follies which, as John Brinkley says in his epic *On This Hill*, "seemed like good ideas at the time," but never came to fruition.

Architects' models, drawings, and quotations from the masterminds themselves will give visitors insight into the way people have envisioned an ideal campus for Hampden-Sydney College—and inspire gratitude that sometimes it didn't happen.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #714
LYNCHBURG, VA

www.wm.edu/museum/

Academic year: Tuesday–Friday, 12:30–5 pm,
Saturday, 10 am–2 pm. Closed during College holidays.
Summer: Wednesday and Friday, 12:30–4:30.
Other times by appointment.

HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE
HAMPDEN-SYDNEY, VA 23943

THE ESTHER THOMAS ATKINSON
WM
MUSEUM
OF HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE