HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

The First Buildings

History, Architecture, and Archæology

Charles Pearson
Richard McClintock

The First Buildings at Hampden-Sydney College

Their History, Architecture, and Archæology

Charles E. Pearson
Richard C. McClintock

VOLUME VI
in a series of booklets published on the occasion of the
250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF
HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE
in 1775-1776

250th Anniversary Volumes

To celebrate its two and a half centuries of service
to Commonwealth and Nation, the College commissioned
this set of six studies on various aspects of its institutional history.
The Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE),
a program of the Council of Independent Colleges
supported by the Lilly Endowment and member dues,
generously funded this project.

ON THE COVER

Artist's reconstruction
of the original "Academy Building" of 1775

MODEL BY RICHARD MCCLINTOCK, 1975

The marbled paper was produced by
John Scott '25
in the class "English 360: Authorship and the History of the Book,"
taught by Dr. Evan Davis.

The First Buildings
Their History, Architecture, and Archæology

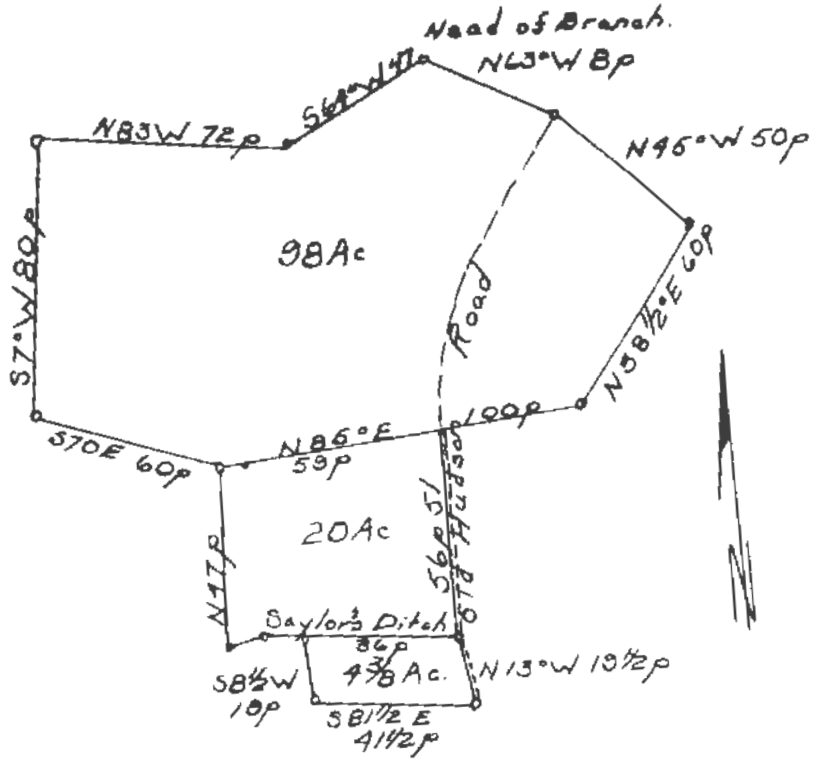


FIGURE 1. *Plat of the Hampden-Sydney campus in 1830. The area labeled "98 Ac" is the so-called 100 acres which Peter Johnston donated to the Trustees as a site for the new school. The other parcels were added later. Old College stood just to the left of the word "Road," while the current stadium is to the right. For reference, Old Hudson's Road is now called College Road and Saylor's Ditch is Via Sacra.*

£694.

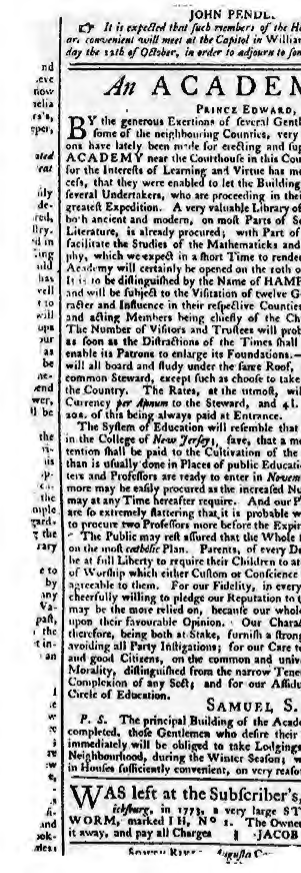
This figure, 694 British pounds, was the projected cost of constructing two buildings at an "Academy" recently established by the Hanover Presbytery in Prince Edward County, Virginia. The only mention of this monetary amount is found in the minutes of the Presbytery for a meeting of a small group of men held on November 8, 1775, at the Prince Edward County home of Nathaniel Venable, Senior, a property now known as Slate Hill Plantation.[1] Hanover Presbytery was the governing body of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia, and the church considered the establishment of a "Seminary for the Education of youth" a priority. The two buildings in the November 1775 minutes were a dwelling house for the President and the principal academic building.

Volume Three deals with the religious context of the Founding.

By the time of the November meeting, the Academy established by the Presbytery had been named "Hampden-Sidney" by the school's first President, the Reverend Samuel S. Smith. This name derives from two Englishmen, John Hampden and Algernon Sidney, both well known for their anti-Royalist sentiments in the seventeenth century. Smith's selection of this name was a strong statement as to the stand of the Presbyterian Church toward the just-beginning struggle for American independence, as well as a "poke in the eye" to the Royalists still in the Virginia Colony.[2]

Volume Two deals with the lives of Hampden and Sydney and why the American revolutionaries admired them.

The November meeting was the second held that year to organize and establish the "Seminary." The Presbytery had first met to discuss the establishment of the new school on February 1-3, 1775, also at Venable's home. According to President Smith's first advertisement for the school



JOHN PENDL… Clk.

It is expected that such members of the House of Burgesses as are convenient will meet at the Capitol in Williamsburg, on Thursday the 12th of October, in order to adjourn to some future day.

An ACADEMY.

PRINCE EDWARD, *Sept.* 1, 1775.

BY the generous Exertions of several Gentlemen in this and some of the neighbouring Counties, very large Contributions have lately been made for erecting and supporting a public ACADEMY near the Courthouse in this County. Their Zeal for the Interests of Learning and Virtue has met with such Success, that they were enabled to let the Buildings in *March* last to several Undertakers, who are proceeding in their Work with the greatest Expedition. A very valuable Library of the best Writers, both ancient and modern, on most Parts of Science and polite Literature, is already procured; with Part of an Apparatus to facilitate the Studies of the Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy, which we expect in a short Time to render complete.—The Academy will certainly be opened on the 10th of next *November*: It is to be distinguished by the Name of HAMPDEN-SIDNEY, and will be subject to the Visitation of twelve Gentlemen of Character and Influence in their respective Counties; the immediate and acting Members being chiefly of the Church of *England*. The Number of Visitors and Trustees will probably be increased as soon as the Distractions of the Times shall so far cease as to enable its Patrons to enlarge its Foundations.—The Students will all board and study under the same Roof, provided for by a common Steward, except such as choose to take their Boarding in the Country. The Rates, at the utmost, will not exceed 20l. Currency *per Annum* to the Steward, and 4l. Tuition Money; 20s. of this being always paid at Entrance.

The System of Education will resemble that which is adopted in the College of *New Jersey*, save, that a more particular Attention shall be paid to the Cultivation of the *English* Language than is usually done in Places of public Education. Three Masters and Professors are ready to enter in *November*, and as many more may be easily procured as the increased Number of Students may at any Time hereafter require. And our Prospects at present are so extremely flattering that it is probable we shall be obliged to procure two Professors more before the Expiration of the Year.

The Public may rest assured that the Whole shall be conducted on the most *catholic* Plan. Parents, of every Denomination, may be at full Liberty to require their Children to attend on any Mode of Worship which either Custom or Conscience has rendered most agreeable to them. For our Fidelity, in every Respect, we are cheerfully willing to pledge our Reputation to the Public; which may be the more relied on, because our whole Success depends upon their favourable Opinion. Our Character and Interest, therefore, being both at Stake, furnish a strong Security for our avoiding all Party Instigations; for our Care to form good men, and good Citizens, on the common and universal Principles of Morality, distinguished from the narrow Tenets which form the Complexion of any Sect; and for our Assiduity in the whole Circle of Education.

SAMUEL S. SMITH.

P. S. The principal Building of the Academy not being yet completed, those Gentlemen who desire their Children to enter immediately will be obliged to take Lodgings for them in the Neighbourhood, during the Winter Season; which may be done in Houses sufficiently convenient, on very reasonable Terms. 4

WAS left at the Subscriber's, in *Fredericksburg*, in 1773, a very large STILL-TUB and WORM, marked I H, No 1. The Owner is desired to take it away, and pay all Charges JACOB WHITLER.

FIGURE 2. *Reproduction of the advertisement in the* Virginia Gazette *placed by Samuel S. Smith stating that contracts for buildings at Hampden-Sydney College had been let in March 1775. This is the first newspaper advertisement for Hampden-Sydney College (*Virginia Gazette, *October 7, 1775).*

(*Figure 2*), which appeared in several October 1775 issues of Williamsburg's *Virginia Gazette,* plans for those two buildings were drawn up at the February meeting, and contracts for their construction had been issued in March of that year. At about the same time, another construction contract was let for two other buildings, a detached kitchen and smokehouse for the President "which are to be valued when the work is done and paid as above"—that is, paid from "subscriptions," donations made by local citizens.[3]

The first buildings at what is now Hampden-Sydney College were completed by the summer or fall of 1775, and by the end of the eighteenth century as many as a dozen structures seem to have been built at the school. Several of these were principal buildings, such as the three-story brick Academy House, as well as residences for the College President and the Steward (the person responsible for feeding and housing students), and the Common Hall, a building

used for classes and student presentations. Other known structures included a building to house students, at least two detached kitchens, two smokehouses and other unnamed outbuildings, such as privies, barns, stables and, possibly, quarters for slaves. However, the £694 figure for constructing the two buildings mentioned in the November Presbytery minutes is the only cost estimate that survives for the construction of any of these eighteenth-century buildings. Further, no plans or building contracts for any of the earliest buildings constructed at Hampden-Sydney exist today, although the Presbytery minutes indicate that both had been prepared.

As many have written, the majority of the records associated with the early years of Hampden-Sydney College no longer exist, having been lost, destroyed, or taken from the school over the years by professors, administrators, and employees.[4] What little we know about the eighteenth-century buildings at the school derives from a very small number of historical documents, chief among them the minutes for the two Hanover Presbytery meetings and the Hampden-Sydney College Board of Trustees Minutes for the years 1776 to about 1850.[5]

Samuel Stanhope Smith
PORTRAIT BY
DAVID DODGE LEWIS,
OIL ON PANEL, 2024

The Presbytery Minutes consist of ten handwritten pages and provide only very basic information on the school's early buildings. Supplementing these two principal historical sources are late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century accounts by students and faculty which mention the earliest buildings. Relying on this slim historical record, supplemented by information derived from a series of archæological studies undertaken at the College between 2017 and 2025, this volume discusses the eighteenth-century buildings at Hampden-Sydney in terms of their location, architecture, use, and lifespan.[6]

Not one of the school's eighteenth-century buildings stands today; most were removed by the 1840s. We might very well question why it is important to consider these earliest buildings at Hampden-Sydney. They have long been removed from view, having fallen into disrepair or purposefully dismantled almost 200 years ago. Those "old buildings" play no real part in life on the campus today, but they are of interest because of their important role in the formative years of Hampden-Sydney College, housing not only college classes but also faculty and students. Further, the recent archæological research has demonstrated that the buried remains of some of these very earliest buildings survive. As such, they represent the only original objects on the Hampden-Sydney campus that are 250 years old and thus figure prominently in the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the school held in 2025-26.

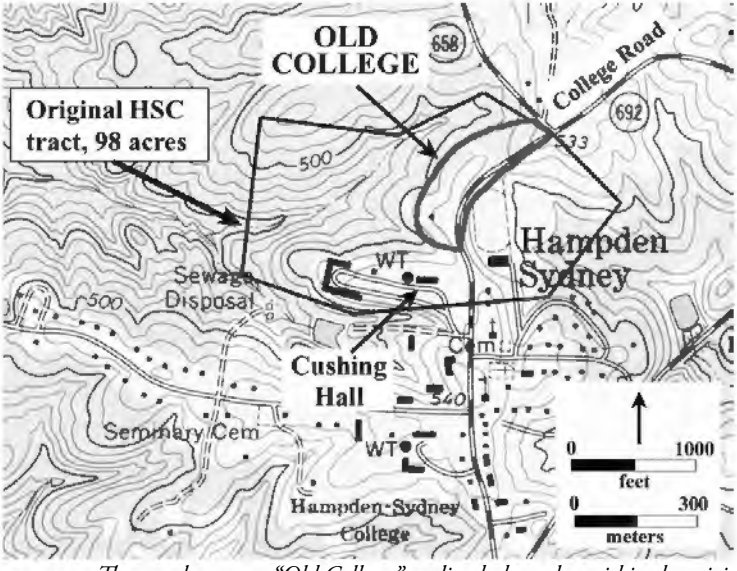


FIGURE 3. *The area known as "Old College," outlined above, lay within the original 98 acres donated by Peter Johnston for the establishment of Hampden-Sydney College.* BASE MAP: 1968 HAMPDEN-SYDNEY VA, 7.5 MINUTE TOPOGRAPHIC QUADRANGLE (UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 1968).

Old College: The Original Campus of Hampden-Sydney College

The minutes for the Hanover Presbytery meeting of February 1-3, 1775, report that "The Presbytery after viewing several Places shown by the Gentlemen of the Part, agree to build an Academy House, and a Dwelling House for the Superintendent, and other necessary Houses as far as the Subscriptions will admit at the head of Hudson's Branch in Prince Edward County on an Hundred Acres of Land given for the Use by Mr. Peter Johnson [*sic*—he spelled it "Johnston"] . . ." [7] It is unknown how many tracts of land the men attending this meeting had looked at. But since there was not time to visit many tracts during the three-day gathering, it is likely that properties of interest had been examined before the meeting.

When surveyed in April 1775, the tract offered by Peter Johnston *(Figure 1)* was found to contain 98 acres, not 100. The property was transferred for "five shillings Current money of Virginia," paid to Peter Johnston by the "trustees and Managers of an Academy about to be Established in Prince Edward County." The "five shillings" was the token amount required to secure the deed. The deed specifically states that the land could be used only for the "aforesaid seminary of learning" and if it is used for any other purpose it would revert to the "said Peter Johnson and his Heirs." [8]

On that same day, February 2, thirteen men were named to serve as "Trustees of the Academy," of whom the merchant-planter Peter Johnston was one. The selection of the land he offered may well have been swayed by his position as one of the newly named Trustees, but it is also true that the acreage he donated provided a setting ideal for the Trustees' purposes. The land sat at the head of Hudson's Branch, a small stream whose springs could provide drinking water for the school. Near the northeastern end of the tract, immediately east of the creek and springs, a low ridge rises to an elevation of 540 feet, which offered an elevated, well-drained landform suitable for the construction of buildings. Extending down the east side of this ridge was a roadway, known then as Hudson's Road, providing access into and out of the planned school. (This road still exists in its

eighteenth-century location as College Road, which continues to serve as the principal entry into the College.) About one mile east along Hudson's Road was French's Store (now Kingsville), a small community containing taverns, stores, and inns to serve the students and faculty of the new school. About a mile south of this cluster of buildings was the county court town, known then as Prince Edward Court House and now as Worsham, at the intersection of major north-south and east-west roads.

We have no descriptions of the state of the 98-acre tract at the time it was selected by the Trustees for their Academy. However, given how quickly construction began, it is possible that some of the ridge land was already cleared of trees and suitable for the erection of buildings. Construction of school buildings on this ridge apparently began shortly after the February 1775 meeting, as indicated in Smith's October advertisement, which specifically states that contracts for buildings had been let in March 1775 to "several Undertakers, who are proceeding in their Work with the greatest Expedition." ("Undertaker" was the name used then to identify a builder or contractor). Thus, construction may have begun as early as March or April, about the time the survey of the 98-acre College tract was officially recorded on April 20 (*Figure 1*).[9]

The "ridge" on which the earliest buildings stood is still evident today, on the west side of College Road, opposite the football field and stadium. Present-day Hampden House stands near the southern end of the ridge and generally marks the southern boundary of the eighteenth-century College campus. Crawley Forum and the Rivers Dorms lie along the northwestern side of the ridge and mark the northern end of the original campus.

Today, this area of the original campus is known as "Old College," a name that seems to have developed in the nineteenth century (*Figure 3*). Its 10 acres encompass all the known eighteenth-century buildings constructed on College lands and served as the campus of Hampden-Sydney for its first four decades of existence. However, with the building of a Vice President's residence (later part of the building known as the

Alamo) in 1817 and of a large brick classroom building originally known as "New College" (and now as Cushing Hall) in the 1820s, the focus of construction at Hampden-Sydney shifted to the south and over time the Old College buildings fell into disrepair. By the 1840s almost all the original structures were gone, having burned, fallen, or been dismantled to recycle their construction materials. Today not a single building associated with the eighteenth-century College is standing. Eventually, even the building foundations disappeared from view, such that by the early twentieth century all memory of where individual eighteenth-century buildings stood was lost.

Although the specific locations of individual eighteenth-century College buildings have been forgotten over time, accounts of former students, faculty, and visitors give us a general idea of their arrangement. Currently, our best visual depiction of the original College layout is a model developed by Dr. Richard McClintock, on display in the College's Esther T. Atkinson Museum. *Figure 4* provides an artist's depiction of the College as it existed in the early-nineteenth century, based on Dr. McClintock's model. Hudson's Road in the foreground is now College Road. In this illustration we look toward Hampden House (built in 1858, after the eighteenth-century College buildings were gone) from the northeast, just below the College Gate.

As you came into the main entrance of the school along Hudson's Road, the first building on the right was the President's House. Then came the College itself, the imposing, three-story brick academic building. The College Library, erected in 1803 and not part of the eighteenth-century campus, stood behind the College building, Further along Hudson's Road stood the Steward's House, also called Steward's Hall, in what is today the front yard of Hampden House. The final building shown in *Figure 4* is Common Hall, completed in 1789 for classes, student orations, demonstrations, and the like, at the southern end of the low ridge, marking the southern boundary of the original College campus.

Other structures nearby, not shown in *Figure 4*, are identified in historical accounts or can be postulated based on the types of dependencies found in association with eighteenth-century domestic environments—kitchens, smokehouses, privies (outhouses), barns, stables, and springhouses, and a temporary shelter privately constructed in 1776 to house students when the College still had insufficient room to accommodate all its students.

The basic layout of College buildings shown in *Figure 4* has been confirmed by the archæological work conducted in the Old College area since 2017. The two ground-penetrating radar surveys undertaken in 2017 and 2020 have been particularly important in this regard, locating the buried remains of three eighteenth-century buildings, the President's House, the Academy House or College, and the Steward's House (*Figure 5)*.[10] Many other buried objects were recorded in the radar surveys, including numerous modern utilities, such as buried electrical wires, fiber optic cables and water mains, as well as features which cannot now be identified. Some of these unidentified features may date to the eighteenth-century and represent objects such as buried trash deposits

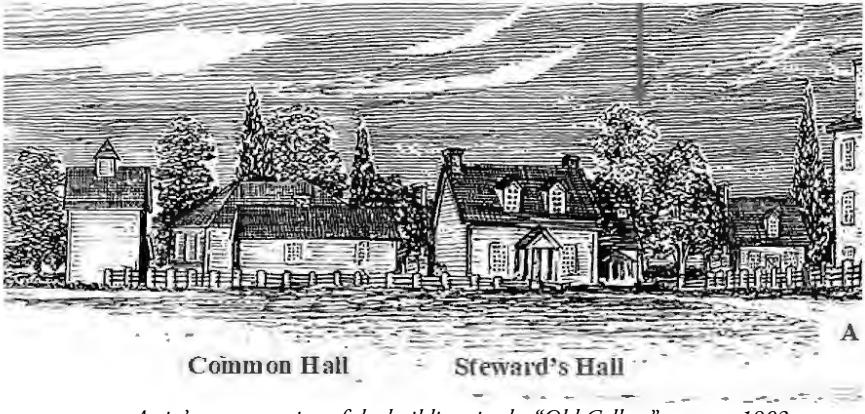
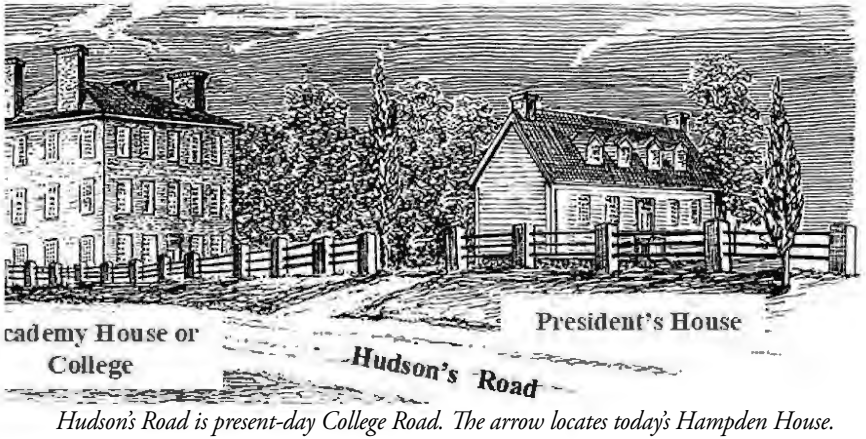


FIGURE 4. *Artist's representation of the buildings in the "Old College" area ca. 1803.* SKETCH BY N. DOUGLAS PAYNE '95, BASED ON A CONJECTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

or filled privy pits, but their identification will require additional study, including excavations.

College Buildings Constructed in the Eighteenth Century

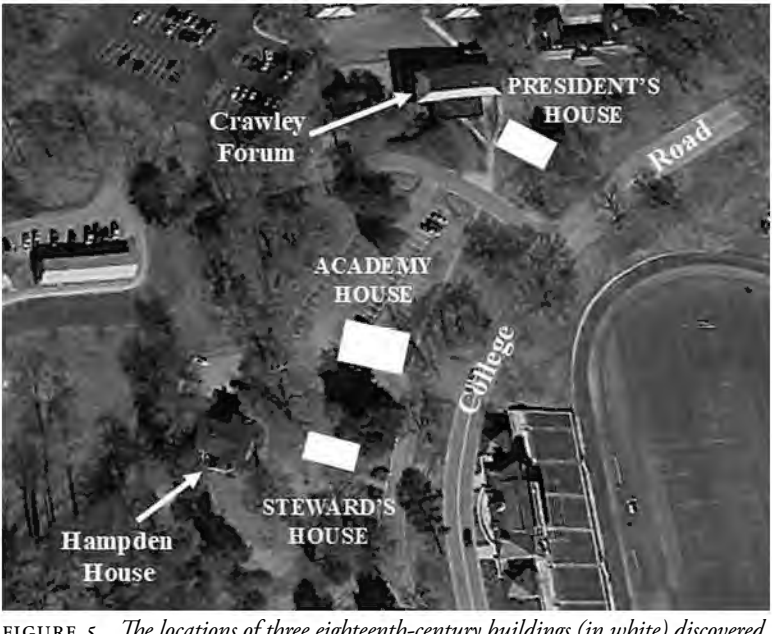
Our best estimate of the number of buildings existing at the College in the eighteenth century comes from a census of Prince Edward County for April 1785 that listed the "Number of White Persons' Dwelling Houses & other buildings" in the county. Organized generally by the names of male heads of households, the census does include an entry for "Trustees Hampden Sydney." No "White Persons" are listed under this entry, but it does enumerate "2 Dwelling Houses" and "9 other buildings." [11] It is believed the two "Dwelling Houses" were the residences for the College President and the College Steward. The other nine buildings included the principal classroom building, a residence for students erected in 1776 by Trustees Paul Carrington and Nathaniel Venable, and the President's and the Steward's kitchens; the five "other buildings" can only be guessed at. According to the minutes of the November 8, Presbytery meeting, a "Smoke House" had been authorized. [12] Smokehouses were



Hudson's Road is present-day College Road. The arrow locates today's Hampden House. IN THE ATKINSON MUSEUM AND ON THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL DIG BEGUN IN 2025.

small buildings, and may or may not have been included as an "other building" in the 1785 census. The nine "other buildings" may have included "dependencies" such as stables, barns, etc., whose existence is implied in the historical record or in our expectations of the types of buildings that would have been required for the operation of the College. Privies, or outhouses, were certainly built at the College during its earliest occupation, but it is unlikely that such small structures would have been included in the 1785 census.

Relying on the scant historical record available, and the recently collected archæological data, the following sections give information on each of the known and presumed buildings standing at the school in the eighteenth century.[13]



BASE MAP: GOOGLEEARTH IMAGE, FEBRUARY 2019.

FIGURE 5. *The locations of three eighteenth-century buildings (in white) discovered during ground-penetrating radar surveys in 2017 and 2020.*

The President's House

The President's House (identified as the "Dwelling House for the Superintendent" at the Presbytery meeting at Venable's plantation on February 2, 1775)[14] was one of the first two buildings planned for the College and may have been the first principal building completed. Like all other buildings at the new Academy, it relied on the collection of financial "subscriptions" from local supporters of the school.

Although no such documents survive today, plans and contracts of some sort were developed for these two buildings, laying out a basic description of the desired building, including its dimensions, the number and sizes of rooms, the shape and pitch of the roof, the materials to be used, and the number of chimneys and fireplaces. The contract might also have incorporated specifications for the size and placement of doors and windows and the nature of the foundation, as well as the financial terms and the schedule for completion.

Smith's October 1775 advertisement indicates that construction of some buildings, presumably the President's House and the Academy House, was underway at that time. In his *On This Hill,* John Brinkley states that Smith and his new wife, Ann Witherspoon, moved into the President's residence when they came to the school in July 1775.[15] While Brinkley may be correct, neither the November Presbytery minutes nor the October 1775 advertisement state that the President's House was completed; there is no evidence to prove it was finished as early as July.

Hugh Blair Grigsby, a graduate of Hampden-Sydney College, left a description of several College buildings as they existed in 1815, the year he entered school. In an address given in 1876 at the centennial of the founding of the College, Grigsby noted that the President's House was "a one story wooden building with a room on either side of the central passage, and a finished loft; and there may have been a shed room or two."[16] Another student, Benjamin Mosby Smith, provides a short description of the President's House as it existed in 1825, when he entered the College. Smith said the residence was "a house of one story, supplied with

passage and attics." [17] William Henry Foote, in his *Sketches of Virginia,* provides a short but detailed description of the living arrangements at the President's House and kitchen around 1824-1825. This was when John Holt Rice, an 1819 graduate of Hampden-Sydney, arrived to take charge of the Union Theological Seminary, recently established on lands adjacent to College property. Foote writes that Jonathan Cushing, Professor and President of Hampden-Sydney at the time, lived in the President's house with Professor James Marsh, but they offered John Rice and his wife rooms in the President's House until accommodations were available for the Rice family at the Seminary. Foote writes that the downstairs of the President's House had a "large passage," (central hallway) with a large room on one side and two "very small" rooms on the other. One of the two small rooms downstairs served as a dining room and parlor, while the other was used as a bedchamber by John Rice's niece Harriet Minor.

It is unknown where William Foote obtained his information on the living arrangements at the President's House in about 1824, but it likely came from a first-hand source. Foote reported that there was only one chimney in the house, with a fireplace to heat the large room downstairs and another to heat one of the rooms upstairs, which Professor Marsh used as a bedchamber, while President Cushing used the large room with the fireplace downstairs as his bedroom in addition to often holding classes there. When John Rice and his wife moved into the President's House, they were given the upstairs heated room and Professor Marsh moved into the large downstairs room with President Cushing. (John Rice and his family moved out of the President's House and into the still-under-construction Seminary building in 1825.) [18]

Typically, however, chimneys stood at either end of the house and provided heat into the downstairs rooms and, often, the upstairs "attic" rooms. It is unknown why the President's House would have been constructed with just a single chimney, since it meant that only half of the building could be heated, making it uncomfortably cold during the winter months, possibly usable only for sleeping. It is more likely that the

President's house, like other contemporary houses nearby, had an exterior chimney at one end for the larger rooms and an interior chimney (for the two small rooms) at the other, which Foote (or his source) may not have noticed.

The "shed room or two" mentioned by Grigsby referred to one-story extensions off the rear of the house. These shed rooms are not shown on the 1805 insurance policy sketch or mentioned by William Foote; they must have been added sometime later as extensions of the principal downstairs rooms.

In 1805, the College Trustees took out a fire insurance policy on three College buildings— the President's House, the detached kitchen building for the President, and the "College" or Academy House—with the Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia. The insurance policy includes a sketch map depicting these three buildings (*Figure 6*), the only early image of the eighteenth-century College buildings. Although not a true "map" in the sense of depicting the spatial relationships of these three buildings, the sketch does provide information on their value, dimensions, and construction. The President's House was insured for $1,000; the accompanying sketch describes the house as a one-story structure measuring 42 feet long and 22 feet deep, "built of & covered with wood," meaning it was a frame building roofed with wooden shingles.[19]

The data provided by the students Hugh Grigsby and Benjamin Smith, by William Foote, and by the 1805 fire insurance policy reveal the President's residence was a "central hall" or "central passage" house, one room deep. The central-hall house appeared in Virginia in the late seventeenth century and became a common configuration and style for homes through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. In rural Virginia, this style of house represented the vernacular expression of the widespread Georgian architectural tradition. [20] In its basic form, the downstairs consisted of a wide central hallway or passage extending through the house from front to back, with rooms on either side. Hugh Grigsby claimed that there was a single room on either side of the hall

FIGURE 6. *Sketch map of the three Hampden-Sydney buildings insured with the Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia in July 1805 (Mutual Assurance Society 1805).*

of the President's House, whereas William Foote specifically states there were two rooms on one side of the central passage. These downstairs rooms typically served as the "public" spaces in the house, including what we now think of as a living room or parlor and, possibly, a dining room. Although the insurance policy notes the house was only a single story, Grigsby and Foote both indicate it was one and one-half stories high to accommodate upstairs rooms. According to Foote, the upstairs heated "loft" room served as a bedchamber, while the other was fitted with shelves as the College library. The stairs to the loft in central hall houses was often

an open stairway running along one side of the central hall. Sometimes smaller houses had enclosed corner stairwells placed in the rear corner of the hallway, taking up minimal space and, because they had a door that could be closed, retaining heat in the lower rooms. We do not know what style of stairway was in the President's House, but we do know that three contemporary houses in Prince Edward, all owned by the Trustees who presumably designed the President's house, had stairways that ran first along the wall and turned over the back door in two flights to reach the second floor (*see Figure 7*).

The outside of the house would have been covered with wooden clapboards, held in place with hand-wrought iron nails. Many mid- and late-eighteenth century houses built in Piedmont Virginia were underpinned by a continuous brick foundation, which often raised the house two to three feet above ground and extended to the base of the cellar, forming the cellar's walls. Given the hard clay subsoil on the ridge at Old College, foundations did not have to be extremely deep, often only two feet or so for a building the size of the President's House. The cellar space was typically used for storage, although some had fireplaces in one or both end chimneys to provide heat or cooking facilities. Entry into a cellar might be from the outside or by stairs inside of the house, often located beneath the stairwell in the central hall. These cellars did not always extend under the entire footprint of the building; occasionally they extended under only one-half or three-quarters of the structure.

The bricks for the President's House and other early College buildings were probably manufactured on site, because it was simply too costly to cart heavy loads of bricks from distant sources. The clay for these bricks was likely dug from accessible clay beds located at a shallow depth on the Old College ridge. In later years, clay for bricks was obtained from beds adjacent to present-day Lake Chalgrove along a small branch leading into Hudson's Branch. [21]

Frame structures, like the President's House, were common in Virginia where timber was abundant and cheap. Some of the wood used in this

house and other buildings at the school may have been cut on the College property; the rest would have been seasoned wood obtained from nearby sources. In its construction, the President's residence would have followed the typical carpentry methods of the period. Very few nails were used in the main framing; nails at the time were wrought by hand and were expensive. Rather, construction employed hand-cut mortises and tenons and wooden pegs to connect framing pieces together, following what is generally termed "timber framing," and more specifically what is known as "flush framing." [22]

The house first occupied by Samuel Smith and his wife officially remained the College President's House until 1833, when a brick building comprising part of what is now known as Graham Hall was built as the residence for President Jonathan Cushing. However, over its half century of existence the first President's House became run down and dilapidated and the Board Minutes contain numerous mentions of repairs made to the house. Many of the mentions of repairs to College buildings are very general, for example noting that "repairs to the College buildings" were needed or undertaken, and no specific building is named. However, other

FIGURE 7: *Slate Hill, the home of Trustee Nathaniel Venable, built around 1750 just south of campus. Like several similar Trustee houses in the area, it may have been a pattern for the President's House.* RECONSTRUCTION OF ORIGINAL FORM BY RICHARD MCCLINTOCK, BASED ON OLD PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE HAMPDEN-SYDNEY ARCHIVES.

entries do name specific buildings, including the President's House. For example, in January 1795 the College Trustees named James Morton and Samuel W. Venable to "get the President's house at College put in good repair," noting that the two men could draw £25 to £30 from "subscriptions" for this purpose.[23] At the Board meeting held on April 20, 1799, a committee was established to undertake necessary repairs to the "College house, the President's house, and the house that the Steward occupies." These repairs too would be paid for by subscriptions.[24] The 1805 fire insurance policy notes that the value of the President's House was $1000, a rather modest amount, suggesting the now 30-year-old home may have been in some disrepair by this date. When Jonathan Cushing assumed the presidency of the College in 1821, the old house was in such bad condition that a new home, described as a "modest house," was constructed in 1830 adjacent to the old President's House for Cushing's use. This brick home was reportedly located a short distance west of the original President's House, meaning that its location was probably destroyed by the construction of Crawley Forum in the 1980s.[25]

In an 1825 petition to the Virginia General Assembly, William S. Morton described the President's House as "a small one-story house erected shortly after the Institution was established for the President's family, but it is too much decayed at this time and too small suitably, to answer such a purpose." Morton also wrote that the President's House was one of only a few wooden buildings left standing at Old College, all in poor repair and of little value.[26]

Minutes for the Trustee meeting held June 13-14, 1849, mention the establishment of a committee to "contract for the removal of the rubbish of the building recently burnt." This burnt building appears to have been the old President's House, because one year later the Trustees established a committee to "sell bricks, posts, house, &c., remaining on the old President's house lot and premises."[27] Alfred Morrison wrote that with the destruction of the President's House "there was little left of the old group of buildings," suggesting that the President's House, which was then

74 years old, was one of the last of the eighteenth-century buildings left standing at Old College.[28] Hugh Grigsby stated that "The site of the house may yet be traced" as of 1876, indicating that portions of the President's House, presumably part of its brick foundation, were still visible 100 years after its construction. It could be, however, that Grigsby was referring to the brick cottage built for President Cushing in 1830 and not the original President's House. [29] Regardless, no remains of the President's House have been visible for many years.

Archæological Research at the President's House

The ground-penetrating radar (GPR) surveys conducted at Old College in 2017 and 2020 were undertaken specifically to locate buried features associated with the early College,[30] under the auspices of the Esther T. Atkinson Museum of Hampden-Sydney, with funding from the S. Mason and Lula Cole Charitable Trust and the Hampden-Sydney College History Department. The Museum funding was arranged by Angie Way, Director of the Atkinson Museum. Further, these surveys were conducted as classes in the History Department at Hampden-Sydney organized by Dr. Caroline Emmons, so students were involved in all aspects of the research (*Figure 8*). The objectives of these classes were to enhance students' knowledge of the long history of their College, to expose them to a new and unique way to study that history (*i.e.,* through archæological survey), and finally to provide them the opportunity to directly participate in the collection of this new historical information.

Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) operates by sending an electromagnetic wave into the ground and measuring the intensity of the return of that signal as it reflects off buried objects. The strength of the returning signal is related to the physical characteristics of the object reflecting the returned signal. Objects that are denser than the surrounding soil reflect a strong signal that is recorded by the machine and converted into a visible display by the instrument's software. Thus, buried objects, such as brick foundations, or buried pipes and electrical wires, are normally

distinguishable from the surrounding soil in GPR records.

Figure 9 presents ground-penetrating radar records collected over buried features identified as the remains of the President's House. The soils containing no buried features appear as white to very light grey, while objects that are physically more distinct from the surrounding soil appear progressively darker, with black reflecting the densest of the buried objects.

The feature interpreted as remains of the buried President's House lies between Crawley Forum and College Road (*Figure 5).* The most prominent object recorded here consists principally of strong reflectors, produced by a roughly rectangular-shaped feature measuring 22 feet 4 inches by 18 feet 10 inches in size. The regular shape of this feature argues that it is a "cultural" or man-made object and not a natural feature, such as the amorphous signal typically produced by a mass of tree roots. This feature is identified as the rubble-filled cellar of the President's House and

FIGURE 8. *Student participants operating the ground-penetrating radar in the Old College area. Thomas Alvarado '21 is pushing the GPR cart and Jonah Popp '21 is maintaining notes of the survey line. View is to the west.*

FIGURE 9. *Ground-penetrating radar image of the President's House.*

is most definitive in radar records as a dense layer lying at a depth of about three feet below the ground surface, which is likely the approximate depth of the cellar floor when the building was constructed in 1775. Probing this feature with an iron rod suggests that most of the fill consists of a stratum of broken and fragmentary bricks, presumably residue left from the demolition of the building. The 22-foot 4-inch dimension along one side of this feature essentially matches the 22-foot depth of the President's House shown in the 1805 fire insurance sketch (*Figure 6).* The other dimension of the rectangular feature, approximately 19 feet, indicates the basement extended under about 45 percent of the house, possibly beneath only the eastern room of the residence. The slight "bulge" in the northwest corner of this identified basement feature as seen in *Figure 9* is where the ditch for a modern utility line struck the corner of the basement and spread the rubble fill into the utility trench before it was refilled. A short linear feature was recorded in the radar survey exactly 42 feet west of and parallel to the easternmost end of the probable cellar. This distance matches the length of the President's House shown in the 1805 insurance policy sketch and this linear feature is believed to be a remnant of the western brick foundation of the house. The orientation of the probable cellar and the western foundation segment reveal that the President's

House did not face present-day College Road, but was oriented with the long dimension extending perpendicular to the road, as shown in *Figure 5*.

Supporting the identification of this buried feature as the cellar of the President's House is that it lies 82 meters north of the well-defined and positively identified foundation of the classroom building. This distance is a very close match to the "about 80 yards" space between the two buildings shown on the 1805 fire insurance sketch (*Figure 6*). The radar survey also demonstrated that the remains of the President's House lie toward the northern end of the ridge on which the earliest buildings were constructed, making it the first building encountered when coming into the College through the main entrance, as early accounts describe the location of the President's House and the layout of College buildings. It is believed the front entrance to the President's House was on the south side of the building, facing toward the other buildings on the eighteenth-century campus.

The President's Kitchen

The detached kitchen for the President's House was one of the original four buildings mentioned in the November Presbytery minutes. Based on these minutes, a contract for this kitchen and a smokehouse had been issued at an earlier date, possibly the previous March. These buildings may have been under construction by the November 8, 1775, meeting, but they may not yet have been completed, because no cost is given for their construction; the Presbytery Minutes note only that the cost would be determined when the two buildings were finished. The kitchen was presumably available for use sometime in November, given that it was important for the occupancy of Samuel Smith and his wife.[31]

The 1805 Mutual Assurance Society policy sketch of insured buildings shows that the kitchen measured 16 feet by 32 feet and was "one story" and "built of & covered with wood," meaning a frame building with a roof of wooden shingles (*Figure 6*). The kitchen would have been constructed using timber-framing techniques and covered with wooden clapboards

attached with hand-wrought iron nails, as was the President's House. The kitchen was valued at the modest sum of $100, suggesting that it might have been in poor condition by 1805. This kitchen stood a short distance from the President's residence. The 1805 insurance policy sketch provides a distance that the kitchen stood from the residence, but this entry has been marked out and is difficult to decipher, but it appears to read "about twenty four feet." [32]

Placing the kitchen in a separate or "detached" building from the residence reflects a trend that began in Virginia in the late seventeenth century and continued through the mid-1800s. Moving the kitchen from the main house and into a separate building took the heat and odors resulting from cooking and food preparation out of the residence. Further, and possibly more importantly, this arrangement moved black slaves, who were largely responsible for food preparation, out of the mainly white domain of the main residence, and into a separate building, reflecting the social mores and racial concepts of the time.

Edward Chappell notes that by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, most Virginia households had detached kitchens and, generally, these kitchens were less well built than residences.[33] The low value of the kitchen at Hampden-Sydney may reflect this. The 1805 insurance policy does not indicate where the kitchen stood in relationship to the President's residence, but typically detached kitchens were situated to the rear or side rear of the main house.

The President's Kitchen, at 16 by 32 feet, may have been slightly larger than the typical detached kitchen of the period. The size suggests it was divided into two rooms of about 16 feet square, a common room dimension. William Foote confirms that the kitchen building contained two downstairs rooms when he notes that the "servants" (*i.e.,* slaves) had been using the room "adjoining the kitchen," before John H. Rice moved into the President's House in about 1824 and took over this room for his library and "recitation room." [34] Foote's description suggests that the kitchen building had a central chimney with its principal hearth

for cooking and food preparation opening into a room identified as "the kitchen," with a smaller hearth to heat the adjoining room. This arrangement was not uncommon in eighteenth-century kitchen buildings of the size of the President's kitchen, such as the one at Middlecourt. Although the 1805 insurance policy notes that the kitchen was a single story, it was apparently a story-and-a-half with an upstairs loft. This is confirmed in William Foote's statement that "The servants were fixed in the loft of the kitchen to sleep" when John Holt Rice took over their downstairs room as his study and library in about 1824. [35]

No record has been found that specifies how long the President's Kitchen stood, although it was standing when John Holt Rice converted one room into his study in about 1824. In 1825, William Morton wrote that in addition to the President's House, the Steward's House, and the Library, there "were several other old houses of wood of very little value" standing at Old College. [36] It is possible that one of these "several old houses" was the President's Kitchen, although one would expect a kitchen to be specifically identified as such.

Archæological Research at the President's Kitchen

No evidence of the kitchen was recognized in the ground-penetrating radar data collected in the vicinity of the identified basement of the President's House. In 1981, however, Dr. Jim Jordan and students from Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia, undertook archæological excavations at two locations on the Hampden-Sydney campus. One of these locations was in the small brick outbuilding, a former kitchen and quarters now known as Coleman Cottage, that lies behind Middlecourt. This outbuilding was undergoing renovation at the time, and the excavations were undertaken in relation to that work. The other area where the Longwood students excavated was at Old College in the area of the present main entrance to Crawley Forum, which was in the planning stages at the time. The excavations were undertaken to rescue archæological remains associated with the early College before

construction work destroyed them.

During their excavations at Old College, the Longwood team recovered a wide range of artifacts and encountered two archæological features of interest. One, a partially buried section of a brick wall or foundation, Dr. Jordan suggested might be the subsurface remains of an icehouse. The other feature discovered were the remains of a poorly preserved "brick and stone" foundation. Although it was only partially uncovered, Dr. Jordan estimated that it measured 18 by 34 feet and speculated that it might belong to the President's kitchen, which, according to the 1805 fire insurance sketch, measured 16 by 32 feet. He believed the slight differences in dimensions between the remains he found, and the figures given in the insurance policy sketch, could be due to the outward collapse of the kitchen foundation at some time in the past. The Longwood excavations recovered a number of artifacts in the vicinity of the foundation feature, including fragments of white clay smoking pipes, glass, ceramics, and some animal bones. According to Dr. Jordan, these items appeared to date to the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries and were certainly associated with the early occupation of the College.

The brick and rock foundation discovered during the Longwood excavations at Old College could be remains of the foundation of the President's Kitchen; however, some architectural features expected to occur with kitchen remains were not found, the most obvious being a brick or stone hearth and associated chimney base typically found in eighteenth-century detached kitchens. As noted previously, it appears the hearth and chimney were situated in the center of the kitchen building, but Dr. Jordan found no evidence of such features. It is possible that the bricks or rocks from a hearth or chimney base were removed when the kitchen was abandoned and reused in construction elsewhere at the College. This practice is known to have occurred when other buildings were dismantled at the school. The area where the Longwood archæologists discovered the foundation and the possible icehouse feature was dug away during the construction of Crawley Forum in 1982. Fortunately, these construction

activities occurred a short distance west of the identified President's House remains, sparing them from destruction.

"Smoke House"

Based on the Presbytery minutes of November 8, 1775, a contract for the construction of a "Smoke House" had already been let. Like the kitchen, no cost is given for the construction of the smokehouse, only that the cost would be determined when it was completed. [37] This might suggest the smokehouse was not completed by November 1775, although it may have been under construction.

If typical of smokehouses of the period, it would have been a small one-story frame structure, measuring on the order of 12 to 16 feet square. Smokehouses were used for smoking meat, one of the most common methods used to preserve meat at the time. A typical smokehouse had exposed beams running across the upper interior of the building, from which meats of various types could be suspended over a smoldering fire in the center of the floor. Often, wooden "salting" troughs were erected inside smokehouses, where meat could be buried in salt for some period of time to preserve it. Putting up a smokehouse required minimal carpentry and masonry expertise, quite different from the more sophisticated skills needed in the construction of the President's House and Kitchen. The smokehouse could have been erected by a local carpenter in a relatively short time. [38]

Even though the smokehouse was a simple structure, the fact that it is specifically mentioned in the Presbytery minutes indicates its perceived importance to the men planning the College, since it was used to preserve meat to feed the anticipated faculty and students at the school. It is unknown where the smokehouse stood, but its mention in conjunction with the President's Kitchen in the Presbytery minutes suggests it may have been near the kitchen. Thus, the smokehouse may also have been impacted by the construction of Crawley Forum in 1982.

The "Academy House" or "College"

The principal academic building at the new school was originally known as "Academy House" or simply as the "College" and, after the construction of Cushing Hall in the 1820s, as the "Old College." The Academy House was an imposing three-story brick structure, containing twelve rooms. George Craghead, one of the earliest students at Hampden-Sydney College, in a letter to Francis N. Watkins, stated that "In May 1776, the walls of the Academy were about three feet high, and on account of scarcity of room for the students to study in, they obtained leave from the undertaker, Mr. Coleman, to erect little huts with the shingles that were intended to cover the Academy." [39] This was about a year after construction on the building began. The Academy building was reportedly completed in the fall of 1776, meaning the pace of construction must have picked up significantly after May when the walls were only three feet high. [40]

The Builder of the Academy House

The use of the singular "Undertaker" in the Presbytery minutes when referring to the person who built both the Academy House and the President's House suggests a single builder for these buildings. [41]
It appears that this undertaker was a gentleman from Hanover County, Virginia, named Francis Smith, also identified as Captain Francis Smith, or as Francis Smith, Senior.

The identity of Francis Smith as a builder of the first buildings at Hampden-Sydney does not come from any records of the College or the Presbyterian Church, but from an advertisement placed in the *Virginia Gazette* by Smith's son Thomas in September 1776. Francis Smith had died the previous year, in October 1775, and Thomas, as executor of his father's estate, was requesting that those who had subscribed to the "Prince Edward academy" should make payment to him or to Francis Watkins, treasurer of the College Trustees, as soon as possible. Thomas Smith noted specifically that his father "undertook the building of the academy." [42]

We know little about Francis Smith's life, principally because of the

loss of so many Hanover County public records over the years. However, available records do reveal that he was an experienced contractor and builder, responsible for constructing numerous buildings across the Virginia Colony. As early as 1745 he was hired to perform maintenance on church buildings in St. Paul's Parish of Hanover County, and he was paid £40 for the construction of two vestry houses for the Parish several years later.[43] In 1760, he received a contract to build a large brick church in Staunton, Virginia. In this instance, he not only built the church, but he was responsible for collecting the taxes required to pay for it.[44]

There is every reason to believe that Francis Smith's experience in brick construction, a requirement for building the large Academy House, was the principal reason he was selected for the Hampden-Sydney work. Also, it may have been difficult to hire a contractor to work on the basis of payment by subscriptions, which were not always forthcoming, as indicated by Thomas Smith's 1776 newspaper advertisement. Francis Smith apparently saw no difficulty with payments by subscriptions, a position possibly reflected in his earlier agreement to collect the taxes as payment for his construction of the church in Staunton. Additionally, there is some evidence that Francis Smith was a Presbyterian, meaning he may have known members of the Hanover Presbytery and the College Trustees, several of whom were Presbyterians.[45] It is suspected that the death of Francis Smith in October 1775 resulted in delays to the construction of the Academy House. George Craghead's account suggests that a "Mr. Coleman" replaced Francis Smith as undertaker, although we know nothing else about him.[46]

The finished Academy House was a large and impressive structure, particularly for central Virginia, which in 1776 was well in the "back country" of the Colony (*Figure 10*). Hugh Grigsby wrote that the building "was deemed the wonder of the day. Travelers would turn aside to see it, and it was undoubtedly the largest brick structure reared by Protestant hands [as of 1783] in the cause of education between the falls of James River and the Pacific Ocean."[47]

As was the case for the President's House and other early buildings at the College, some of the wood used in the Academy House may have been cut on school lands. Other wooden pieces, particularly small easily transported items, such as wooden shingles, may have been carried by wagon from short distances away. All or much of the clay used to make the large number of bricks used in the building would have been dug near the construction site. This clay may have been the stiff reddish clay that lies at a depth of only about two feet on the Old College ridge. The sand and water mixed with the clay to make the bricks probably came from Hudson's Branch. The kiln, or "clamp," erected to fire the bricks would have been built near the College buildings.[48] In light of the quantity of brick needed in the construction of the Academy House, as well as other buildings, it is likely that Francis Smith, and the undertaker(s) who followed him, brought in experienced brick makers to oversee the task. The manufacture and firing of bricks, as well as the production of mortar used in laying the bricks, took a considerable amount of time, certainly several weeks if not months, and had to be well underway before any actual construction on the Academy House began.

The 1805 Mutual Insurance Society policy sketch (*Figure 6*) shows the Academy House (identified as "The College") was three stories high and measured 50 feet by 35 feet and was "built of Bricks & covered with wood," meaning it was roofed with wooden shingles. The building was valued at $5600 in the policy. Alfred Morrison says the Old College building was "about 45 feet by 40 feet" in size, three stories tall, and had 12 rooms. Hugh Grigsby recalled the "main College building" was built of brick, measured about "forty-odd by thirty-odd feet" and stood two stories high. (Grigsby was mistaken in his recollection that the building was only two stories tall.)[49]

Although not shown in the insurance policy sketch, the College building had a central hallway on all three floors to permit access to the four rooms on each level (*Figure 10*). This is confirmed by an entry in the Trustee minutes of April 2, 1794, noting the appointment of a

"Committee to finish the plaistering [*sic*] of the first and second story and the passage in the upper story, to paint the outdoors, windows, and cornice." [50]

The Academy House served as the principal academic building at Hampden-Sydney until the completion of part of present-day Cushing Hall in the early 1820s. In addition to providing the main classroom space at the school, some of the rooms in the building occasionally served as accommodations for students and, possibly, faculty members. In his 1825 petition on the condition of the College, William Morton describes the building as "three stories high, 44 feet long by 34 feet wide, and contains

FIGURE 10. *Conjectural model of the three-story Academy House at Hampden-Sydney College, from the diorama in the Atkinson Museum.* RESEARCH AND MODEL BY DR. RICHARD MCCLINTOCK, 1975.

12 rooms. This building was erected in 1776 and now needs thorough and extensive repairs." Morton wrote the building was then being "used as an academy," meaning it was used as a preparatory school for the College, its old functions having moved to the New College (now Cushing Hall).[51]

Over the years, the Trustee minutes often mention the College building, especially about required repairs. For example, in 1782, the Trustees appointed Reverend Archibald McRobert and Captain John Morton "to superintend the repairs of the Academy House & the other Houses belonging to it." Exactly what the "other Houses belonging to it" means is unknown, but it might refer to outbuildings specifically associated with the Academy House, such as privies, or it may refer generally to all the other buildings then at the school. Repairs at the school were so necessary that the Trustees appointed a "Committee for Superintending repairs" sometime before June 1783.[53]

In the fall of 1785, the steward, James Morton, was appointed to "superintend the repairs of the College chimney," a reference to the Academy House. In March 1787, the minutes note that "The Revd. Mr. Smith is appointed by this Board to employ a Workman to make a door Case for the north side of the College also to repair the stair case." The "Revd. Mr. Smith" mentioned in the Minutes was John Blair Smith, who succeeded his brother, Samuel Stanhope Smith, as President of Hampden-Sydney in 1779. For the Trustee meeting of June 18, 1787, the minutes note, "As the windows in the College stand in need of some immediate repairs. Ordered that Capt. Jno. Morton collect as soon as possible a sum sufficient for that purpose from a subscription payable last May for this particular object, & that he purchase a Box of Glass 9 by 11, & employ some person to repair the windows." In September 1799, the Trustees ordered that the "College house" be enclosed by a "post and rail fence." This may have been related to keeping animals off the College grounds.[54]

Many of the repairs were certainly related to normal maintenance required of aging buildings. However, some of the damage to buildings was directly caused by the mistreatment of the school's facilities by

students. In August 1792, the Trustees specifically discussed the damage to College property caused by students playing a popular form of handball called "fives" against the walls of College buildings. [55] In 1784, the Trustees had instituted a ban on this game, which students flagrantly ignored. [56]

John Blair Smith
PORTRAIT BY
DAVID DODGE LEWIS,
OIL ON PANEL, 2025

Minutes of the Trustees for September 23-24, 1830, report on the establishment of a committee to plan and oversee construction of a new house for the President (*i.e.,* the north wing of present-day Graham Hall). The builder of the new President's home was authorized to use "such part of the materials of the Old College, as the said Committee may think proper." [57] This short statement, almost an aside in the Minutes, is the only record we have of the dismantling and removal of the old Academy House, certainly the most important structure at the College in the eighteenth century. It appears that by 1830, the now 54-year-old building was in poor condition and considered unusable. In fact, it appears that the old Academy House building had been derelict for at least a year before the Trustees authorized the reuse of its building material. In the summer of 1829, a lengthy article appeared in several Virginia newspapers lamenting the serious financial hardships that Hampden-Sydney College was enduring and urging the state government to consider providing funding to the school from the "Literary Fund." The article, possibly written by or for College Trustees, stated that "the old college [the Old College or Academy House building], though by dint of constant repairing, has been heretofore kept in a habitable condition, is now become unfit for use." [58] This article implies that the Academy House stood unused as early as the summer of 1829, meaning its dismantling may have begun shortly after that; certainly it was gone before the new President's house was completed in 1833.

In his 1876 centennial address, Hugh Grigsby stated that the College building stood "about one hundred yards westward from the house of the president, on ground now enclosed in the lot of Professor Holladay," referring to the yard of present-day Hampden House, the residence of Professor Lewis L. Holladay in the 1870s.[59] The distance suggested by Grigsby is somewhat greater than the "about 80 yards" distance between the two buildings given in the 1805 fire insurance sketch map, but it does indicate the great space between these two buildings.

As noted, considering the great quantity of bricks and mortar required in building the Academy House, it is likely that an experienced brick maker was hired to oversee the production of the required bricks and mortar. This person may have been white. Most of the physical labor involved in making and firing the bricks and actually building the Academy House, as well as the other early buildings at the school, however, would have been undertaken by enslaved persons. Who these enslaved men (and possibly some women and children) may have been is unreported, but they might have been persons owned by the building contractor(s) or, possibly, by local residents, including Trustees of the new school, several of whom owned large numbers of slaves, whom they might rent out for labor.

Volume Five deals with slavery in the context of the College's early days

Archæological Research at the Academy House

The buried foundation of the Academy House was clearly recorded during the ground-penetrating radar survey conducted in 2017.[60] *Figure 11* shows one of several radar records obtained of these foundations. As shown in this Figure, the remains consist of a clear rectangular feature (shown as a solid white line), representing the outer foundation wall of the building, within which are several linear features interpreted as internal foundation walls. The western one-third or so of the buried foundation lies beneath a paved parking lot that has obscured the radar signal to a considerable extent. Similarly, the southern foundation wall lies beneath the paved

entrance road into the parking lot, where also the radar signal has been attenuated. However, approximately 75 percent of the footprint of the building lies within a grassy area where radar records clearly depict the buried foundation.

The size of the outer foundation shown in the radar data matches the 50-by-35-foot dimensions of the building given in the 1805 fire insurance sketch (*see Figure 6*). As seen in *Figure 11,* the radar records depict one internal linear feature (designated by a dashed line) extending across the center of the building along its long axis. Two other parallel linear features (also depicted by dashed lines) extend across the short axis of the building. The dark gray to black colors of these internal features indicate they are very dense in their composition, and probing with an iron rod demonstrated they consist of brick rubble as well as intact sections of brick foundation. The two parallel features extending roughly north-south across the short axis of the building appear to be foundations for the walls of the central hall. Like the President's House, the radar records show that the long axis of this building was perpendicular to College Road, and it is suspected that the front entrance to the building faced north, toward the President's House. It is likely that there was a less formal entrance at the other end of the central hall, under the stair landing.

In Spring Semester 2025, excavations were conducted at the location of the buried foundation of the Academy House as one element of a class on the history of Hampden-Sydney College taught by Professors Caroline Emmons and Charles Pearson. The Academy House was selected for these excavations because both the ground-penetrating radar survey and probing across the buried remains indicated the presence of intact foundation elements buried at a shallow depth. Hampen-Sydney students participated in all aspects of the excavations, ultimately uncovering a 20-square-meter area, revealing a section of the intact brick foundation—dating to 1775 or early 1776—at the northeast corner of the Academy House, as well as an area of the front (north) foundation wall of the building in the presumed vicinity of the main entrance. In addition, these excavations

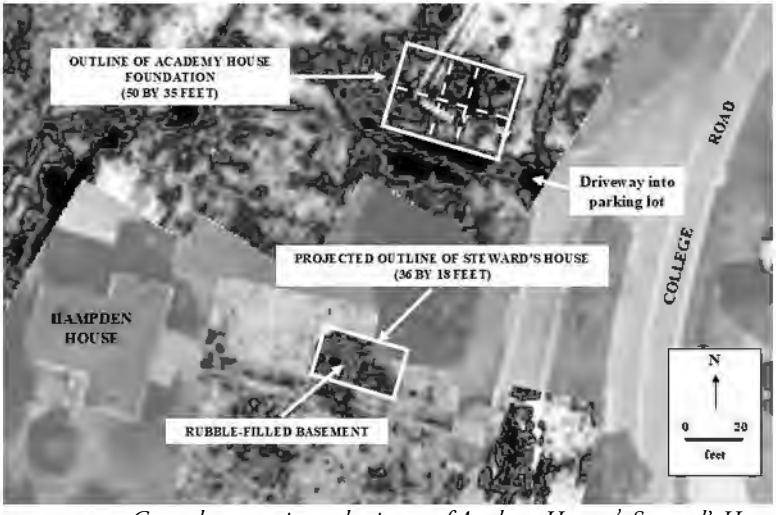


FIGURE 11. *Ground-penetrating radar image of Academy House & Steward's House.*

recovered a very large number of architectural artifacts, as well as many personal objects lost or discarded by students and faculty over the life of the building.

Figure 12 shows students uncovering the northeastern corner of the intact brick foundation of the Academy House during the early stages of the excavation, while *Figure 13* depicts the entire exposed portion of the intact foundation. Here, at the northeastern corner of the Academy House, approximately 10.5 feet of the building's eastern foundation and 10 feet of its northern or front foundation were uncovered. The existing foundation in this area consists of as many as four intact courses of brick, representing the very bottom of the eastern and northern (front) walls of the building. The width of the intact foundation at its bottom is 26 inches; it rests on stiff reddish clay that lies at a shallow depth across the Old College ridge of land. The original foundation extended only about two feet into the ground, a seemingly shallow footing for such a large building.

Except for the whole bricks in this intact portion of the foundation,

most of the bricks recovered in the excavations consist of fragments and pieces, all showing evidence of being hand-made.

Excavations undertaken near the center of the front (north) wall of the Academy House exposed the well-defined trench for the foundation; however, the intact bricks had been removed, and the trench was filled with brick fragments (*Figure 14*). These same excavations revealed a well-defined foundation trench extending perpendicular to the outer foundation wall into the interior of the building. The whole bricks from this foundation had also been removed, and the trench was filled with brick fragments, mortar, and other building materials, such as hand-wrought iron nails. This trench originally held one of the foundations supporting the walls of the central hallway in the building. This rubble-filled trench is the westernmost of the pair of linear features seen in radar

FIGURE 12. *Students excavating the northeast corner of the foundation of the Academy House. Foreground Watson Grabar '26; background Savey Lombardo (Archaeological Assistant, Longwood University '25).*

FIGURE 13. *wThe fully exposed intact foundation at the northeast corner of the Academy House. North is to the left, College Road is beyond the fence.*

records extending across the short axis of the building (*see Figure 11*).

All soil removed during the Academy House excavations was screened by the students and resulted in the recovery of literally thousands of artifacts (*Figure 15*). As shown in *Figure 16,* some of the artifacts were cleaned and washed at the site to aid in identification. The artifacts recovered in these efforts included many associated with the structure of the building itself, such as iron nails, pieces of door hinges, iron hardware from shutters, one complete wrought-iron door lock, and a huge quantity of window glass. In addition to these structural remains, the excavations recovered many items that can be considered personal in nature. These included metal buttons (mostly from waistcoats or jackets), metal cufflinks, a few shell and bone buttons, many fragments of white clay (kaolin) tobacco pipe stems and bowls, and pieces of writing slates as well

FIGURE 14. *Hampden-Sydney students excavating near the front entrance to the Academy House. The deep area on the right is the foundation trench for the front wall of the building from which bricks have been robbed. Foreground Jack Thomas '25, background, Josh Campbell '26.*

as slate (or soapstone) pencils. Also recovered were fragments of ceramics from various types of plates, bowls, and storage jars as well as pieces of glass from drinking glasses, wine bottles, and medicine bottles.

The most numerous items recovered in the excavations were iron nails and fragments of window glass. Although the Academy House was a brick building, it contained numerous wooden architectural elements, such as floor sills, floor boards, roof beams, door frames, window frames and the like which were attached or constructed using nails. Most of the recovered nails are heavily corroded, but, based on observable physical characteristics, two types of nails can be identified in those collected. These are "hand-wrought nails" and "cut nails." When the Academy House was

FIGURE 15. *Hampden-Sydney students excavating next to the Academy House foundation. Students to the rear are screening the excavated soil. Front left Tim O'Connell '26, front right Jack Roberts '26, back right Jonah Barzel '26.*

built in 1775-1776, the only type of nails in use were hand-wrought, in which each nail was made individually by a blacksmith. By about 1790, the technology for rolling out thin iron sheets the thickness of a nail had been developed, as had the machinery for cutting these sheets into individual nails. Cut nails were easier, quicker, and cheaper to produce than hand-wrought nails, so their production and use spread rapidly after 1790. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, cut nails had largely replaced hand-wrought nails in the United States.[61] We can assume the hand-wrought nails recovered in the Academy House excavations date to its original construction and to repairs made before about 1810. Cut nails may have been available in the Prince Edward County area as early as the 1790s, but most of those found at the site probably date to repairs made

FIGURE 16. *Hampden-Sydney students washing recovered artifacts. Left Tucker Jones '25, right David Johnson '25.*

to the building after 1800. Based on entries in the Trustee Minutes, repairs to the Academy House were a common, almost constant, occurrence. For example, at the Trustee meeting held on March 8, 1787, it was noted that the "Revd. Mr. Smith" was appointed to hire a workman to make a "door case for the north side of the College" and to repair the staircase.[62] Both of these repairs required the use of nails, which, given the date, would have been hand-wrought.

A particularly interesting architectural item recovered was a large 6-by-9-inch wrought iron door lock that includes all of its interior mechanism. Identified as a late-eighteenth century "rim lock," it was found just outside of the front foundation near the center of the building.[63] This lock may have been installed on the front door of the Academy House in 1776, when the Academy House was likely completed, or possibly in March

1787 when a new "door case" was constructed on the north side of the building under the authority of President John B. Smith as noted above.

Many hundreds of pieces of thin aqua-colored window glass and non-structural artifacts were recovered in the Academy House excavations. The vast majority were found immediately outside of the north foundation of the building, in the front yard, where these items were accidentally lost or discarded or thrown out of the front windows of the Academy House. Relatively few artifacts, other than bricks and iron nails, were recovered from what would have been the interior of the building. Some of the window glass recovered may have come from the box of 9-inch by 11-inch window panes purchased by Trustee John Morton in the summer of 1787 to repair the windows in the Academy House. [64]

A large number of artifacts originally belonged to students or faculty who attended class in the Academy House or, possibly, lived in the building. Among these items were various buttons of cupreous metal, white metal, shell, and bone. All of the metal buttons found are flat disks, most have a simple loop for attachment on the back, and the majority measure approximately 1.25 inches in diameter, a size and type typically used on jackets, vests, or waistcoats. Several of these metal buttons have lettering stamped on the back, such as "RICH TREBLE LONDON," "DOUBLE GILT NO 2," and "RICH ORANGE LONDON." The words "RICH" and "GILT" indicate the button was originally covered in gold gilt, although this gilt coating has been partially or entirely worn off. Gilding was accomplished by brushing a mixture of gold and mercury on the buttons and then heating them to fix the gilding. This gilding technique became popular in England around 1790 but was not adopted in the United States until twenty or thirty years later.[65]

Many pieces of broken smoking pipe stems and bowls from white-clay (kaolin) were recovered, mostly outside of the front (north) wall. Excavations extended only about three feet beyond the north wall of the building, so it is unknown how far from the building these types of items are distributed. One of the pipestems contains a portion of the stamped

name of the maker and place of manufacture of the pipe: "T. HAY?S LIVERPO…" This maker has not yet been identified, but Liverpool, England, was a center for the manufacture of clay smoking pipes during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Many pieces of pottery were found, most of them from "tableware," such as plates, cups, saucers, and bowls used in eating and serving. These ceramics appear to have been deposited over the entire period of the building's use, from 1776 to about 1830.

The presence of these various types of tableware supports the contention that some of the rooms in the Academy House served as residences for students and, possibly, faculty. An entry in the Trustee Minutes for April 1799 notes that "John H. Rice" was to be reimbursed for the "small repairs" he had made "to a room in College," in which he may have lived.[66] Furthermore, cow and pig bones found outside of the front wall of the building imply that some food preparation did occur in rooms in the Academy House, presumably by individuals living there.

Two types of items recovered during the Academy House excavations that speak directly to student life are pieces of writing slate and slate pencils. Writing slates were most often used for practice writing and arithmetic and provided a reusable medium that students could carry with them for practice and study outside of the classroom.[67] The writing slate found consists of thin pieces of dark grey slate, only 0.1 to 0.2 inches thick, carefully smoothed on one or both sides. No complete writing slates were recovered; the largest pieces found measure no more than 4 inches across. Complete writing slates would have measured 4-by-6 or 7-by-10 inches, encased in a wooden frame, providing an impermanent writing surface easily erased with a rag. The "slate" pencils recovered consist of rods of stone (either slate or soapstone) measuring about 1/8 inch thick and up to 3 or 4 inches long. Many of the pieces of pencils found retain sharpened points, obtained by rubbing the point against a hard surface, such as a brick or plastered wall. Even today those recovered from the Academy House leave clearly visible, whitish marks on the pieces of writing slates.

Surprisingly, several prehistoric Native American artifacts were among the items recovered during the excavations at the Academy House. These include several arrow points and knives or scrapers made of fine-grained white quartz, dating to the late prehistoric period, after about AD 1000. It is believed these derive from a Native American occupation that existed here prior to the construction of the Academy House.

The Steward's House

The Steward's House, or Steward's Hall as it was sometimes called, was the dwelling for the individual responsible for feeding and housing students and, apparently, for many maintenance chores around the College. John Brinkley implies the Steward's House was constructed in the summer of 1776.[68] However, in the notice published in the *Virginia Gazette* in December 1775 describing the Trustee meeting of November 10, Samuel Smith stated that the first Steward of the College, Philemon Holcombe, was to immediately move with his family to the Academy and would be able to accommodate student boarders by January 1, 1776.[69] This implies that housing for the Steward, presumably the Steward's House itself, was completed and available for occupancy by that November, and certainly by January 1, 1776.

No published descriptions seem to exist that provide information on the style, size, or configuration of the Steward's House. However, it was probably similar to the President's House, a one-and-a-half-story frame structure with a central hall. Benjamin M. Smith said the Steward's House was a one-story frame structure when he arrived at Hampden-Sydney in 1825, while Hugh Grigsby reports only that the Steward's House was "of moderate dimension."[70] We do have a few records of additions made to the Steward's House before 1800. For example, in July 1777 the second Steward at the College, William Bibb, was given permission to add two rooms to the Steward's House and to add 16 feet to the "dining room."[71] There are other references to the College "dining room," but it is unclear if it was part of the Steward's House, part of the Steward's detached

kitchen, or a separate building altogether. There seems to have been good reason to enlarge the Steward's House, given the number of students who boarded there. For example, according to the April 1785 census of Prince Edward County enumerating white persons and houses, James Morton, the Steward of the College at that time, had 35 white persons living in his "household." Morton is specifically identified as "Stew'd" in this census, and it is presumed that most of these 35 individuals were Hampden-Sydney students. [72] Some of these students lived in the Steward's House, but others must have lived in other buildings on campus or in nearby homes.

The Trustee Minutes for the meeting of September 26, 1821, note that discussions were held about improving the "Steward's department" because "the house appropriated to the Steward's family is so confined as to forbid anything like convenient or advantageous management in that department," a statement implying the inadequacy of the house as a residence. The Trustees discussed the possibility of adding a dining room to the Steward's House and a proposal was put forth to move the old President's House and join it to the Steward's House to create a structure of sufficient size to make it useful. Neither of these ideas seems to have been acted upon. [73] There is no evidence that a fire insurance policy was ever taken out on the Steward's House and kitchen, as was done for the President's House and kitchen. Why no policy was taken out for these important buildings is puzzling.

Hampden-Sydney College was established at the very start of the American Revolution, an eight-year period of considerable turmoil and dislocation. As has been noted, this contributed significantly to the difficulties the school experienced in almost every aspect of its existence—and to the hardships affecting the College Steward and his abilities to care for students. In December 1777, the second Steward, William Bibb, left his position unexpectedly; Trustees Nathaniel Venable, James Allen Sr., and John Morton provided food for the College during at least some of the War years, suggesting there was no Steward during this period. In fact,

by 1779 the College had given up any effort to provide board to students, and they were forced to seek out private arrangements.[74]

Since the Steward seems to have been responsible for much of the maintenance at the school, the Steward's House, like other College buildings, probably underwent considerable deterioration until the War was over. The Trustee Minutes reflect this. For example, in December 1795, Charles Scott and Richard N. Venable were appointed to have the Steward's House "put in good repair" and to have a "suitable meat house" built for the place.[75] Three years later, the Minutes for April 20, 1799, record the appointment of a committee to "procure the necessary repairs to be done to the College house, the President's house, and the house that the Steward occupies."[76] There was a constant turnover of Stewards throughout the eighteenth century; few served for more than two years. When no Steward was available, repairs were sometimes made by faculty, as has been noted in relation to repairs to a room in "the College" made by John Holt Rice in April 1799.[77]

Volume Four covers the founding of the College in the context of the American Revolution.

In 1822, a new "Steward's Hall" was added to the College Vice President's house, a building later known as the "Alamo." This brick building, located a short distance south of the original "Old College" area, contained dining space for students and a residence for the Steward. The old Steward's House seems to have been considered insufficient for use by the Steward by this date. In 1825, William Morton stated the Steward's House was still standing, but "from necessity, it is occupied by students."[78] On July 1, 1826, the Trustees gave authorization to rent the "old Steward's establishment" to someone "who shall be at liberty to receive students as boarders."[79] The original Steward's House was standing as late as 1835, since the Trustees "ordered that repairs be made to the old Steward's tenement as necessary and have the porch of the new Steward's house repaired if necessary,"[80] but it likely was dismantled or removed by 1840 or so.

According to several accounts, a small frame structure attached to the side of Hampden House for many years was a remnant of the original Steward's House. This remnant seems to have been the building called the "Rat Castle" in the nineteenth century when it was used as student housing.[81] Later it was used principally as an office or storeroom for the residents of Hampden House. This structure was bulldozed in 1967, destroying the last original eighteenth-century building on campus.

Archæological Research at the Steward's House

Buried remains associated with the Steward's House were recorded during the ground-penetrating radar survey conducted in 2020.[82] The location of the Steward's House, relative to the modern campus, was shown in *Figure 5. Figure 11* shows one of the radar images obtained of these remains, a rectangular feature measuring 18 feet by 36 feet. The western one-half of the feature exhibits strong reflectors characterized by their distinctive dark grey to black colors. This feature, measuring approximately 18 feet square, closely resembles the rubble-filled cellar of the President's House. Probing in this area with a metal pole revealed the presence of a layer of brick rubble, and possibly other building material, at a depth of only 16 to 18 inches below the present ground surface.

The eastern one-half of the radar image (*Figure 11*) of the Steward's House consists of scattered and only moderately intense reflectors, most of which are dark grey. These reflectors do, however, form a visibly identifiable shape that appears to represent the eastern half of the footprint of the Steward's House.

The orientation of the identified Steward's House is perpendicular to College Road, the same as that of the President's House and the Academy House. Additionally, the Steward's House appears to be a mirror image of the President's House, with its very shallow cellar under the western side of the house. It is believed that the main entrance of the Steward's House faced north, toward the Academy House, which was less than 100 feet away.

Based on the ground-penetrating radar evidence, the Steward's House was slightly smaller than the President's House. It is unknown why this was, unless it reflects two different builders, or "undertakers," of the two structures. The small size of the Steward's House is likely the reason the second College Steward, William Bibb, was given permission to add two rooms to the building only two years after the house was constructed, as well as the reason it was considered inadequate as a residence for the Steward in 1821. It is unknown where the two rooms added by Steward Bibb were located, or even if they were actually built.

The Steward's Kitchen

Based on written accounts, we know that a kitchen was constructed for the Steward. Logically, this kitchen was completed at about the same time as the Steward's House, or shortly thereafter, considering the requirement to feed students. This would have been by the fall or early winter of 1775, and certainly before January 1776, when President Smith wrote that Steward Philemon Holcombe was ready to receive students. While no written descriptions of the original Steward's Kitchen are known to exist, it would have resembled the wooden kitchen built for the President as discussed above and as shown in the 1805 fire insurance sketch (*Figure 6*). Given the requirements of the Steward to prepare food for the numerous students at the school, we might expect this kitchen to contain a large cooking fireplace, possibly larger than the one in the President's Kitchen. Like the President's Kitchen, the Steward's Kitchen probably had an upper half story that served as sleeping quarters for those engaged in cooking and food preparation. We have no eighteenth-century accounts of who these individuals were, but they were certainly black slaves owned or hired by the person serving as Steward. It is unknown how long the Steward's Kitchen stood, but it too was probably gone before the 1840s.

It is presumed the Steward's Kitchen stood a short distance west or southwest of the Steward's house. He would also have needed facilities for storing food, such as a spring house along Hudson's Branch or a

small, well-ventilated wooden building known as a "dairy." In addition, there may have been stables, barns, and fenced-in pasture lots for milk cows. We do know that in 1796 the Trustees ordered that a "suitable meat house," presumably a smokehouse, be constructed for the Steward. [83] We have no information on where these outbuildings and or other facilities stood, but they probably stood to the west of the Steward's House in the vicinity of the Steward's Kitchen and on the western slope of the ridge leading down to Hudson's Branch. Much of this area is now occupied by recently constructed buildings, roads, and parking lots which have destroyed or covered traces of any eighteenth-century features and structures that formerly stood there.

The Carrington-Venable House for Students

There was a serious shortage of accommodations for students on College grounds during the school's earliest years. In the summer of 1776, for example, there were reportedly as many as 110 students at the school. Some were housed by the Steward, but others boarded at private homes in the area. [84] Given the lack of accommodations, in September 1776 Trustees Paul Carrington and Nathaniel Venable were given permission to build a house on College lands for their sons as well as other students. Presumably it was a frame building supported by a continuous brick/stone foundation or by brick/stone piers, with a brick or stone chimney. We have no information as to where this building stood. Trustee Minutes note only that the building would be erected "at such a place as the Revd. Mr. Smith & Franc. Watkins shall make choice of." [85] Presumably, it was situated near the main buildings.

There was also a building at Old College that by the nineteenth century was called the "Fort." This building stood to the west of the main College buildings, along the trail that led to the College spring along Hudson's Branch.[86] It is possible that the Fort was the building erected in 1776 by Paul Carrington and Nathaniel Venable to house students. No evidence of either building was discovered in the radar surveys of 2017 and 2020.

The Common Hall or College Hall

In 1778 the Trustees ordered another building, known as "Common Hall" or "College Hall," to be built at the school. Construction of this building was an arduous task, taking many years—it was not completed until 1789. The slowness of construction arose in part from a lack of funds and, of course, from what Samuel Smith in his advertisement politely called "the Distractions of the Times." Actual construction of this building began only in the summer of 1784 when the Trustees obtained possession of the abandoned French's Episcopal Church in Kings Tavern, present-day Kingsville.[87] This church stood on the 412 acres of land that were escheated to the College by the state of Virginia in 1784.[88] The church was dismantled, and the material was used in the construction of Common Hall.

It did not help that the Trustees kept changing their plans for the building, even as conflicts arose with Richard Allen, the builder hired for the project. The Common Hall was originally to measure "40 feet by 30 feet with a 15-foot pitch" and was to be used as a chapel for students as well as for student presentations and exhibitions. In June 1785, the Trustees drew up a new plan for the building, enlarging it to 34 feet by 52 feet; later they requested even more changes. Progress on the construction continued at a slow pace; it was not until September 1785 that the Trustees requested that James and Richard Morton "fix a value on the cartage of the Timbers for the Com. Hall," a reference to moving the timbers of the dismantled French's Church to the College.[89]

In June 1786, the Trustees ordered a payment to Benjamin Hubbard for "making and burning" the bricks used as underpinning for Common Hall. This entry suggests that little construction had been done since the building contract was approved two years earlier. At that same June meeting, the College Trustees noted they were dissatisfied with Richard Allen because he had not complied with his contract. They ordered that no further payments were to be made to Allen until his work was reviewed.[90] As of the summer of 1788, ten years after its authorization, the Common Hall was still not

completed, and the Board engaged a new builder to replace Richard Allen. It appears that the Common Hall was completed by the new builder shortly after this.

The Common Hall stood just south of the Steward's House, and for many years it marked the southern end of the College campus. It is described as a one-story structure next to present-day College Road. The Trustee Minutes of March 28, 1800, ordered that the "west end of the common hall be fitted up as a common school room." [91] At the April 25, 1805, meeting of the Trustees, the minutes note that a fund had been established for "supporting the Gospel at the College Hall," a reference to the Common Hall which the Presbyterian Cumberland congregation used for their services.

Hugh Grigsby, in recalling his first visit to the College in 1815, calls this building the "old Hall" and provides a detailed description. He says it was "a one-story wooden building probably forty by twenty-five feet, with seats raised one above another, which was situated between the present College building [*i.e.,* Cushing Hall] and the fence on the main road passing through the present village. In this building were held the exhibitions of the College, and it was also used as the Church of the Presbyterian congregation of the neighborhood. As you entered the eastern door, and I believe there was no other, you saw on the left hand a platform three feet high, extending across the building, on which was a pulpit, from which Dr. Hoge preached every Sunday, and a chair for the precentor, who was in my day, and had been long before, the venerable James Morton, who had served his country faithfully during the Revolution (especially in the battles near Philadelphia), had been for a short time the steward of the College, and was for half a century one of the most valuable members of the Board of Trustees." [92]

The Common Hall seems to have been removed by the early 1820s. The Reverend J. D. Paxton, a tutor at the College and pastor of the College Presbyterian Church, wrote that in 1823 "a new church had been built [the first College Church], [and] the old Hall removed," presumably a reference

to Common Hall where the church formerly met.[93] The Common Hall is not mentioned in the description of extant College buildings submitted to the General Assembly by the Trustees in 1825, supporting the contention that it had been removed by that year. In addition, the functions of the Common Hall were superseded by space available in buildings constructed in the early 1820s, principally the "New College," present-day Cushing Hall, which included a chapel.

No definitive evidence of buried remains of the Common Hall was discovered in the radar survey conducted in that area to the south of the Steward's Hall. It is suspected that when the Common Hall was dismantled in the early 1820s, all evidence of it was removed.

Other Buildings at Old College

The nine buildings discussed above represent the buildings erected at Old College in the eighteenth century for which we have reliable, written accounts. Several other buildings at the school are mentioned in eighteenth-century records, but the information on them is vague, unclear, and often contradictory, making their positive identification difficult. What little information we have on these buildings is given here.

Overstreet's House

On March 6, 1783, John Holcombe Overstreet was named Steward of the College. Trustee Minutes show that Overstreet served as Steward for only a few months before being replaced by James Morton in June 1783.[94] At a meeting on April 18, 1785, the Trustees agreed that "Mr. Wm Mahon have the leave to occupy the House built upon the land belonging to the College by Mr. Overstreet, during such a term of years as shall appear reasonable to the board. To reimburse him for his expenses in making the said House habitable."[95] William Mahon was a tutor at the College. Apparently a conflict arose when Overstreet attempted to sell this house to Mahon, but the Trustees declared that

Overstreet had no right to sell it because it was a College building.

It is unknown where "Overstreet's house" stood or what it looked like, but it survived for some time—in February 1805, James Morton was ordered to repair "Overstreet's House" to accommodate students. [96] James Morton was the College Steward at the time and, although the available information is unclear, it appears that Overstreet's house was distinct from the Steward's House, where Morton may have been living.

Overstreet's Shop

In September 1785, the same John Overstreet requested permission to build a "shop" adjacent to the College. [97] It is unclear exactly what kind of building is meant by the term "shop," nor is it clear if the statement "adjacent to the College" refers to the brick College building itself, the cluster of buildings comprising the College campus, or to College-owned property. It is possible the request was to build the shop near the building Overstreet had erected on College property and attempted to sell to the tutor William Mahon. It is unknown if John Overstreet ever constructed his shop building.

John Overstreet seems to have continued his relationship with the College after the fiasco of his attempt to sell College property. At a Trustee meeting on June 18, 1787, the Board resolved that Samuel W. Venable and Charles Allen form a committee to deal with Overstreet's request to exchange some land he owned for College land. [98] The outcome of the College's dealings with John Overstreet is unknown.

Chapel

In April 1777, the Trustee Minutes report that Nathaniel Venable had contracted with workmen to build a "chapel" on College property. [99] It is unclear if this refers to a separate building or to construction attached to an already standing structure.

Outbuildings and Dependencies

The structures discussed above are the buildings that are known or suspected to have stood on the eighteenth-century College campus. In addition to these described buildings, a number of outbuildings and service structures were certainly erected, even though not mentioned in the historical record. These included privies, barns, stables, and possibly icehouses, spring houses, and quarters for enslaved persons working at the school. The numbers of these buildings could have been quite large. For example, during the summer of 1776, the first summer of classes at the school, there were reportedly 110 students in attendance. About 75 boarded with the steward and the rest in surrounding private residences.[100] One can imagine that many privies were needed to accommodate this number of individuals. Privies, typically located to the rear of main buildings, consisted of a small frame structure over a pit dug several feet into the ground. Privies were commonly shifted to new locations as they became full, and the old privy pits became receptacles for trash and debris.

Several faculty members and Stewards were slave owners, so housing and outbuildings for these individuals would have been required. The President's Kitchen and the Steward's Kitchen would have provided living spaces for some of the enslaved people at the school. However, it is possible that purpose-built cabins were required to house all the slaves associated with the early College. No records seem to exist that specifically identify slave housing on the eighteenth-century campus, and no evidence of such housing was identified in the ground-penetrating radar records. However, based on what we know about the architecture of slave quarters, they would have left behind only a minimal record of their existence, and recent construction in this area will have covered or removed any evidence that survived.

Conclusions

The 250-year history of Hampden-Sydney College is an important element in the school's identity. We suspect most would agree that this history is one factor that distinguishes Hampden-Sydney and sets it apart from so many other schools. This history is expressed in many ways, ranging from the long and distinguished list of the school's students, alumni, and faculty to the many historic buildings standing on the campus today. This volume has explored one aspect of that history, the buildings and archæological remains associated with the eighteenth-century campus. As has been noted many times, any study of the eighteenth-century school is fraught with difficulties, the principal one being a lack of primary records such as building plans and contracts, which are reported to have been written as early as February 1775. Further, several other buildings, about which we know almost nothing, seem to have stood on the eighteenth-century campus, such as Overstreet's House and Shop.

No records have been found that name the various individuals responsible for constructing the first buildings at the College. These include carpenters, brickmakers, and the like. We know only the name of the "Undertaker" Francis Smith, who was named to oversee the construction of the Academy House and the President's House, and we have no information (beyond Mr. Coleman's name) on any undertakers who followed him. Nor do we have any information on the enslaved persons who were certainly responsible for most of the physical labor involved in constructing early College buildings.

A considerable amount of effort has been expended over the years in trying to locate written documents relating to the eighteenth-century College. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that unknown historical documents will be discovered that will contribute significantly to our present knowledge of the eighteenth-century College and its buildings.

Despite this lack of historical documents, archæological surveys and excavations undertaken over the past several years have expanded

considerably our understanding of the buildings that stood at the school in the eighteenth century. This research has located the buried remains of what must be considered the three most important buildings at the College in the eighteenth century—the President's House, the Academy House, and the Steward's House. Further, archæological excavations at the Academy House have gathered information on the physical attributes of that building and recovered many objects that tell a story of life at Hampden-Sydney in the eighteenth century. It is anticipated that future archæological research at Old College will continue to expand our understanding of the early history of the school.

As has been noted several times, Hampden-Sydney students have been involved in all this recent archæological research. To a man, students have said their participation in this archæological research has expanded their knowledge of the history of the College but, most importantly, has strengthened their pride in their connection to the long and distinguished history of Hampden-Sydney. It is hoped that future archæological research conducted at the College will include student involvement, providing them a unique way to study—and participate in—the long history of their school.

Notes

[1] *Hanover Presbytery Minutes,* Vol. 2, 1769-1785, pp. 70-71, November 8, 1775. Union Presbyterian Seminary Library, Richmond VA; available online at: *https://cdm17236.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/HanoverPres/id/968/rec/12*.

[2] The name "Hampden-Sidney" seems to appear first in the advertisement for the school placed in the October 7, 1775, issue of the *Virginia Gazette,* p. 3, Williamsburg VA; available online at Newspapers.com, *https://www.newspapers.com/image/40483025/*.

[3] *Presbytery Minutes,* Vol. 2, 70-71, November 8, 1775, *Virginia Gazette,* October 7, 1775, p. 3, Williamsburg VA.

[4] Herbert C. Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney College,* Vol. 1, From the Beginning to the Year 1856, Durham: Private Printing 1976; John L. Brinkley, *On This Hill: A Narrative History of Hampden-Sydney College, 1774-1994*, Hampden-Sydney VA, 1994.

[5] *Presbytery Minutes,* Vol. 2, 135-141, February 1-3, 1775, and pp. 69-72, November 8-9, 1775; *Hampden-Sydney College Board of Trustees Minutes,* Vols. 1-3, LD2101.H58 H34, Hampden-Sydney College Archives and Special Collections, Bortz Library, Hampden Sydney, VA, available online at: *https://dams.hsc.edu/collections/show/33*.

[6] Charles E. Pearson and Bryan S. Haley, *Finding Old College: A Geophysical Search for the Original Hampden-Sydney College Buildings,* Esther T. Atkinson Museum, Hampden-Sydney College, 2017; Charles E. Pearson and Bryan S. Haley, *Additional Geophysical Survey of "Old College" at Hampden-Sydney College and Geophysical Survey of Portions of Slate Hill Plantation, Prince Edward County, Virginia,* Esther T. Atkinson Museum, Hampden-Sydney College, 2021.

[7] *Presbytery Minutes,* Vol. 2, 137, February 2, 1775.

[8] *Prince Edward County Deed Book 5,* p. 325, April 20, 1775, Prince Edward County Clerk of Court Office, Farmville VA.

[9] *Virginia Gazette,* October 7, 1775, p. 3, Williamsburg VA; online at: Newspapers.com, *https://www.newspapers.com/image/40483025/*.

[10] Pearson and Haley 2017; Pearson and Haley 2021.

[11] *Prince Edward County Census of White Persons and Buildings, April 1785,* in *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790;* Records of the State Enumerations, 1782-1785, Virginia. Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce and Labor, Government Printing Office, Washington DC., 1906, 101.

[12] *Presbytery Minutes,* Vol. 2, 70-71, November 8, 1775.

[13] Pearson and Haley 2017; Pearson and Haley 2021.

[14] *Presbytery Minutes*, Vol. 2, 137, February 2, 1775.

[15] Brinkley, 11.

[16] Hugh Blair Grigsby, *Discourse on the Lives and Characters of the Early Presidents and Trustees of Hampden-Sidney College.*

Delivered on June 14, 1876. *Bulletin of Hampden-Sidney College,* Vol. VII, No. 4, January 1913, 44. The Hermitage Press, Richmond.

[17] Benjamin Smith's account is found in Alfred J. Morrison, *College of Hampden Sidney, Dictionary of Biography, 1776-1825,* Hampden Sidney College, Hampden Sidney VA, 1922, 287.

[18] William Henry Foote, *Sketches of Virginia: Historical and Biographical,* William S. Martien, Philadelphia, 1850, 389-391.

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[87] Board Minutes, Vol. 1, 42, July 19, 1784.
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[92] Grigsby 1913, 44.
[93] Morrison 1912, 85.
[94] Morrison 1912:26-27.
[95] *Board Minutes,* Vol. 1, 47-48, April 18, 1785.
[96] Ibid, Vol. 1, 236, February 18, 1805.
[97] Ibid, Vol. 1, 56, September 7, 1805.
[98] Ibid, Vol. 1, 81, June 18, 1787.
[99] Ibid, Vol. 1, 6, April 11, 1777.
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In one of history's little ironies, one eighteenth-century building does survive on the Hill—but it is not one of the original structures. It is "The Birthplace," the ca. 1750 plantation office of Nathaniel Venable, where the Trustees met in February 1775 to establish the College. Built at Slate Hill, it was moved to campus in 1943.

250TH ANNIVERSARY VOLUMES

I.

Neither All the Questions nor All the Answers:
A Brief History of Hampden-Sydney College
Thomas H. Shomo

Drawing primarily from the two official histories of the College—Brinkley and Bradshaw—this volume summarizes the College's history from the founding through the late 20th Century. The style is accessible and answers many frequently asked questions about Hampden-Sydney while encouraging readers to expand their knowledge through the other 250th Anniversary volumes and, for the more seriously interested, the many other publications and resources housed in the Bortz Library.

II.

John Hampden and Algernon Sydney:
Making Heroes in the Seventeenth-Century
L. Nicole Greenspan

The lives, careers, and contributions of Hampden and Sydney shaped the fabric of seventeenth-century society, religion, and politics. Their struggle for liberty and opposition to tyranny, coupled with their reputations as heroes and martyrs of their time, later inspired American revolutionaries. Understanding the lives of Hampden and Sydney sheds light on why Hampden-Sydney College is named in their honor.

III.

Between Athens and Jerusalem:
Enlightenment Faith, Religious Revival,
and the Shaping of Hampden-Sydney College, 1774-1812
J. Michael Utzinger

In 1774 the Presbytery of Hanover met at Cub Creek Presbyterian Meeting House in Charlotte County, Virginia, to discuss hiring Samuel Stanhope Smith as the head of its proposed academy in Prince Edward County. Smith maintained a confidence in both human reason and revealed faith as complementary means to shape individuals and the wider society. The creative tension between reason and faith continued to mark Hampden-Sydney College and its founding Presbyterian dissenters. Further, those associated with the College made important contributions toward conversations surrounding religious liberty and disestablishment, revivalism, and the ethics of enslavement.

IV.

From Academy to College: Hampden-Sydney in the Revolution

John C. Coombs

This volume examines the early development of Hampden-Sydney within the broader context of Virginia's transformation from British dominion to independent Commonwealth over the course of the revolutionary era. The tumultuous events roiling America in the last years of the imperial crisis with Great Britain— which president Samuel Stanhope Smith referred to as "the Distractions of the Times"—would exert a profound influence over the formative years of the new "public Academy" that extended far beyond the decision to name it after two great champions of English liberty. Virginia's struggle for independence and adoption of a republican constitution not only created the political conditions that allowed the College's leaders to successfully secure a charter of incorporation from the General Assembly in 1783, but would also give new import to their stated mission "to form good men, and good Citizens, on the common and universal principles of Morality" and through constant attention to "the whole Circle of Education."

V.

Climbing the Hill: African American History at Hampden-Sydney College

Caroline S. Emmons

In the early period of the college, enslaved individuals' labor and presence on campus helped shape the College's founding. While often unnamed in the College records, there is nevertheless abundant evidence of their contributions, which were critical in enabling the construction and operation of the campus. The institution of slavery itself was regularly debated in a variety of settings. After emancipation, African Americans continued to contribute in critical ways to the success of the college, as members of the staff and eventually, in the late 20th century, as students and even as President.

VI.

The First Buildings at Hampden-Sydney College: Their History, Architecture, and Archæology

Charles E. Pearson & Richard C. McClintock

Construction at Hampden-Sydney College began in the summer of 1775 and, by 1820, a dozen or more buildings existed at the school. By 1850, the original campus of the school was abandoned and the locations of the first buildings were forgotten. A 2017 geophysical survey revealed the buried traces of several original buildings. This volume presents what is known about the earliest buildings at the school and what we can learn from their archæological remains.