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### ART 400: Research Project

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Katie Smith

Art 400

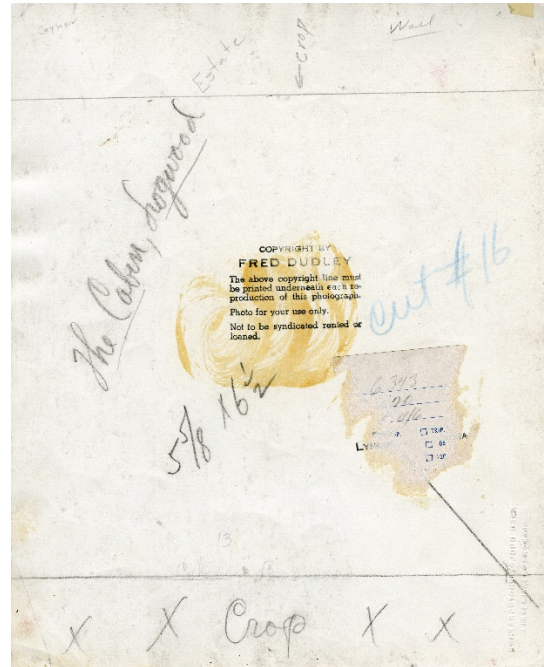
Fall 2019

Research Project

Word Count: 943



*The Cabin, Longwood Estate*



*Back of photograph*

For the amount of time I spend looking at photos, I cannot say I have ever actually taken the time to stop and try to interpret what is going on in the photo. In this day and age, with our prevalence of taking photos on a daily basis, I have realized that I take photography for granted. I use photos practically every day, especially for reference for when I am creating a painting or drawing. I cannot imagine not being able to use photographs. So, to imagine what these individuals in the photographs might have felt like, that this is such a novel thing to them, it was like I suddenly had an epiphany.

The first photo I chose was of a quaint log cabin in the middle of the woods. The cabin itself has a nicely sized front porch with an overhang, and it looks to have one or two rooms just by looking from the outside of the cabin. The time of year of when this photo was taken in was a little difficult to determine.

However, by looking at the trees in the foreground and background, I believe this photo was taken during the late fall or early spring because most of the trees either had no leaves or very few.



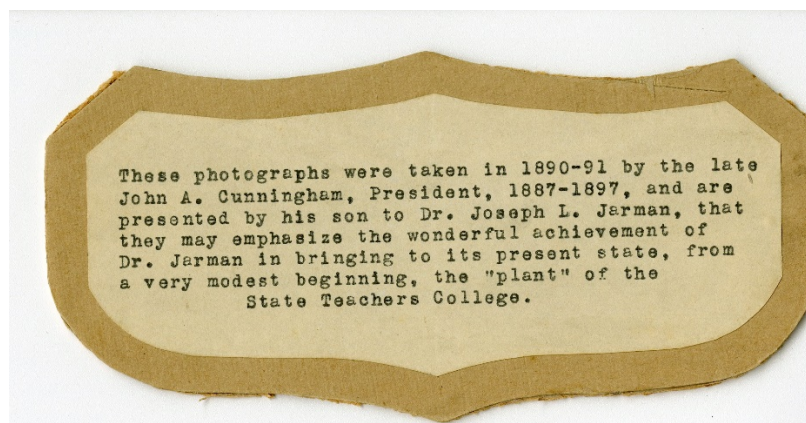
*Delta Psi Kappa in front of the Cabin*

It was very difficult to find any information on this cabin. On the back of this photo was a name, “The Cabin, Longwood Estate”. I only found one reference to the cabin itself which was on the Longwood Center for the Visual Arts. The LCVA puts on the Cabin Film series that shows cult classic and horror films, like “The Cabin in the Woods”. The LCVA included an address, but when I put it into Google Maps, it only showed me the outside of Longwood House (which is where the President of Longwood and his family lives). I also found an image of the women’s physical education honor society, Delta Psi Kappa, on the porch of the cabin. The angle of this photo is a frontal view of the cabin. What is interesting about this photo is that there are not as many trees surrounding the cabin (like in the first photo); I assume that the Delta Psi Kappa photograph was taken before my chosen photo.





John A. Cunningham, *Parisian styles, as displayed by the students*, 1890-91



*Info Card*, 1890-91

The second photograph shows several young ladies standing in front of, what I assume to be, a dorm. However, if you look closely at the windows of the building behind the ladies, you can see other students sitting by the windows. A comment below the photo, as well as the date -1890, states that the

ladies are wearing “Parisian styles”. The photographer of this photo was John A. Cunningham, who was President from 1887-1897.

John A. Cunningham was born on June 24, 1849 in Richmond, Virginia. According to “Longwood College: A History” by Rosemary Sprague, Cunningham’s family had “made a large fortune by iron works... and by a line of country stores” (65-66), he was thus provided with every educational advantage. He studied at the University of Virginia and “graduated in Chemistry, Latin, Moral Philosophy, Natural Philosophy, Pure Mathematics, and French (Language and Literature)” (66). In 1887, John Cunningham was nominated and accepted the position as president of the Normal School at Farmville. During his administration, Cunningham completely altered the number of classes that were offered to students, added that each applicant had to write an essay on a given topic, and lengthened the amount of time of study instead of cramming all required courses into just two years. Cunningham died suddenly on October 9, 1897 after falling ill with meningitis.

The type of fashion that was popular during the 1890s was known for its greatly simplified styles than previous decades. During this time period, there was an increase healthy outdoor exercise, like swimming and bicycling became proper feminine activities. Because of this increase in outdoor activities, corsets were loosened and a larger feminine figure was no longer disapproved of. However, Paris continued to serve as a beacon for fashion which had a pension for tight-laced corsets and exaggerated female curves that restricted women’s movements.

Certain characteristics of 1890s fashion that are seen in the photograph are high neck, stiff collars, enlarged upper sleeves, and a walking skirt (made to not touch the ground completely because it was considered “bad form” to have skirts touch the floor). Fashionable accessories during this period, according to the July 1891 *The Ladies’ Home Journal* said that the “brooch...is the round one of twisted gold, with an enameled heart just in the center” (Dressed for the Photographer, 468). Other accessories were small earrings, a watch that was pinned to the chest or wrist, gloves and fans. The most prominent hair styles during the 1890s were soft, short bangs and a very small topknot with more or less loose hair

around the temples and cheeks. In photographs, hair was often worn in a bun at the nape (Dressed for the Photographer, 470). Footwear for young ladies favored dressy walking boots laced above the ankle with high-curved heels and pointed toes.

While researching these separate photos, I discovered a link between the two. Both of the photographs relate in some way to John A. Cunningham. The cabin photograph, which sits on the Longwood Estate, was originally owned by a Scottish immigrant Peter Johnston who purchased the land in 1765. Cunningham's mother was a descendent of Peter Johnston. The second photograph was taken by Cunningham himself of the students in their Parisian fashion.

## Bibliography

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