

OCTOBER 2021

FARMVILLE - PRINCE EDWARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monthly Newsletter

UPCOMING MEETING:

OCTOBER 19, 2021

7PM AT THE HISTORIC FARMVILLE TRAIN STATION

GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME!



**Bizarre Local Tales
of the Paranormal
and Supernatural**

Our speaker will be FPEHS Vice-President John Burton, who will present "Bizarre Local Tales of the Paranormal and Supernatural!"

Just in time for Halloween, come hear about the Venable Ghost of Hampden-Sydney and the Tragedy of Cushing Hall. Find out about Longwood's Theater Ghost and other scholarly spirits, and learn about other local legends of monsters and mysteries!



NEWS:

OUR LAST MEETING

If you missed our September meeting, the recording of Jimmy Hurt's presentation on the history of the Craddock-Terry Shoe Factory and his ongoing research into the history of Farmville tobacco factories is available online. Click the image below to view his presentation.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The historical society archives needs volunteers to help process and organize our collections. If you are interested, contact Benedict Chatelain via email at chatelainbg@longwood.edu or call 434-395-2448.



On October 8, 1897...

Dr. John Atkinson Cunningham passed away at his High Street home after a brief illness. For nearly eleven years, Cunningham had served as president of the State Female Normal School, overseeing a dramatic increase in faculty and students, the construction of several campus buildings, and the introduction of electric lighting to the school.

Born in Richmond on June 24, 1846 to Mary Morris Johnston and John Atkinson Cunningham, his childhood was plagued by ill-health. During his early youth, Cunningham was educated at home by a French governess and later attended the New London Academy in Bedford County.



LU-016, Katherine Courtenay Johnston Collection, Longwood University Archives

In 1864, Cunningham enlisted in Captain Willis Jefferson Dance's Powhatan Artillery and served with that company until the end of the Civil War. From 1865 to 1868, he studied ancient languages and mathematics at the University of Virginia. After graduation, Cunningham moved to Kentucky where he taught at a military academy. When a fire destroyed that school in 1870, he moved to Tennessee and was employed as Chancellor of the University of Nashville (now Vanderbilt University). Cunningham married Florence M. Boyd in 1875. In 1876, he moved back to Richmond with his wife and newborn son, where his wife died unexpectedly later that year. After briefly working as a druggist, Cunningham returned to education when he was hired as principal of the Madison School in Richmond.



LU-120, Dorothy Schlegel Slide Collection, Longwood University Archives

In 1887, after William H. Ruffner retired from the school he founded in 1884, Cunningham was elected president of the State Female Normal School in Farmville. During his time at the helm of the school, Cunningham and his family lived at 608 High Street. The home was later purchased by State Teachers College and served as the home of the president until 1969 when Longwood College president Henry Willet moved his residence to the newly remodeled Longwood House.

Cunningham oversaw a period of tremendous growth for the State Female Normal School. By the time of his death, both faculty and student numbers had doubled. The Cunningham Dormitories, which stood at Longwood University until 2014 were named in his honor.

It Happened in October...

- 10-1-1928** Hampden-Sydney President J.D. Eggleston restores spelling "Sydney" in college's to match 1783 Charter.
- 10-2-1892** First Baptist Church dedicated.
- 10-3-1933** County citizens vote in favor (461-436) of retaining Prohibition.
- 10-4-1798** First sale of lots in newly surveyed town of Farmville; purchasers agreed to build within 7 years.
- 10-8-1890** John O. Collins, local inventor, receives gold medal from Paris World's Fair for his railroad car coupler.
- 10-9-1897** Dr. John Atkinson Cunningham, second president of the State Female Normal school, dies in Farmville.
- 10-10-1910** Buck Fuqua, renowned local restaurateur, died.
- 10-11-1900** Confederate Monument unveiled, honoring county's eight military companies.
- 10-11-1918** Farmville native, Wiltshire C. Davis, 116th Infantry, receives distinguished Service Cross and the Croix de Guerre for bravery in battle exhibited near Verdun.
- 10-11-1979** Pepsi Cola commercial filmed at the Farmville train station.
- 10-12-1909** Remains of Gov. Beverly Randolph re-interred at Westview cemetery.
- 10-15-1902** O.T. Wicker, postmaster, mayor, councilman, died.
- 10-15-1954** Hurricane Hazel comes through Farmville.
- 10-15-1909** Andrew Reid Venable, Inspector General for J.E.B. Stuart, commission merchant, died.
- 10-16-1859** John Brown's Harper's Ferry raid sparks fear among white citizens and produces many enlistments for Prince Edward militia.
- 10-19-1781** British surrender at Yorktown assures free county government.
- 10-20-1871** Cornerstone laid for Prince Edward Courthouse in Farmville.
- 10-20-1884** State Female Normal School opened with 110 students.
- 10-20-1925** Hotel Weyanoke opens.
- 10-21-1948** Farmville Sesquicentennial celebrated.
- 10-21-1998** Farmville epicenter for an earthquake 1:57 a.m., 3.3 Richter scale.
- 10-23-1897** Kappa Delta Sorority organized at the Normal School.
- 10-24-1845** S.W. Paulette, Farmville's "old Reb", born.
- 10-24-1946** Dabney S. Lancaster inaugurated president of State Teachers College.
- 10-27-1859** Hampden-Sydney alumnus and future Confederate Brig. Gen. Roger Proyer is elected U.S. Congressman from this district.
- 10-27-1901** Fire destroyed the dog pound of Farmville.
- 10-29-1907** Several citizens witnessed the falling of a dazzling meteor.