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Williamsburg, Virginia

armies of occupation—or for the knitters of James City County.

**Bright Property Is Bought By College**

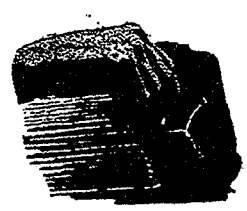
The Bright property on Richmond Road adjoining the College Stadium and St. Bede's Catholic Church, was purchased last Saturday by the College of William and Mary from the owners, Mr. and Mrs. George Neas, at an announced price of \$25,000. The Neas purchased the property last fall from the Bright estate.

It is stated that the property will be used by the College for housing single veterans, beginning with the fall term. Approximately 25 men can occupy the house which was used for many years by the Kappa Alpha fraternity.

The Bright property is comprised of the large brick house which faces the stadium and includes approximately 10 acres. The college stadium and practice field was at one time part of the Bright farm. Part of College Terrace which is all now privately owned and the property on which St. Bede's stands, was at one time also part of the Bright estate.



Put your ashes in earth



Use the ash tray



BEFORE LEAVING FIRE, drown with water or cover with dirt. BE SURE IT'S DEAD OUT.

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3/15/46

**J. A. BOZARTH**

BY PASS ROAD

PHONE 552

WILLIAMSBURG, VA.

March 15, 1946

**THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE**

BEAT TROUBLE

Golden that also brings

B+G-- Bright House

PLACEMENT OF SPECIAL TRIBUTE  
IN ALUMNI HOUSE

WHEREAS, The Society of the Alumni of the College of William and Mary expressed its appreciation to President Davis Y. Paschall during his last month in the Presidency by the following tribute:

In appreciation to President Davis Y. Paschall for his leadership in attaining the Bright House and Grounds for use by the Society of Alumni, and in recognition of his development of the New Campus, and the College of William and Mary to modern university status--

Society of The Alumni, August, 1971

and

WHEREAS, During the subsequent fund-raising campaign for furnishing the Alumni House, Mr. J. Edward Zollinger, a distinguished alumnus, made a sizeable contribution for the expressed purpose of naming and using a facility in the House as the "Pat and Agnes Paschall Library," and

WHEREAS, Many alumni have expressed regret at the apparent necessity to utilize this designated facility for office purposes, thereby obscuring and diverting its intended use by the donor, and

WHEREAS, There has been no plaque erected, or otherwise visible recognition made of the notable leadership of former President Paschall in the actual attainment of the Bright House and Grounds for use by the Society of the Alumni,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the House Committee of the Board of Directors of the Society recommends the placement of a framed tribute, bearing the above quoted text, in an appropriate location in the large reception and meeting room on the first floor of the Alumni House.

# The Alumni House

## A History of the Bright House and its Plantings

BY J. T. BALDWIN, JR.

The Business Office, College of William and Mary, has copies of Abstract of Title to the Bright Property (V. M. Geddy, 1928) and to the Bright House Property (Ashton Dovell, 1946), these being respectively two hundred seventy-two acres and ten acres. It is prophetic that these properties were once called "New Hope" — prophetic because the new campus is on that land, and developments there for ettel a new phase in the history of the College.

"The College of William and Mary was originally built upon a tract of 330 acres (purchased from Col Thomas Ballard, 1693), most of which has been sold off Only about thirty acres remain" (William and Mary Quarterly 10, Series 1:91, 1901). Records of the city of Williamsburg and of the County of James City were destroyed by fire in 1864, so title of record for the College land can not be traced beyond that date.

However, a deed of trust recorded August 5, 1848, and re-recorded July 4, 1864, shows that title to one hundred thirty-two acres, including the ten acres of the Bright House Property, was once before vested in the College and that Samuel F. Bright, proprietor of nearby Porto Bello Plantation in York County, paid \$1989 to the "President and Masters or Professors of the College of William and Mary in Virginia" for "New Hope." In his account book for "Porto Bello" and for "New Hope" — the account book now in the Swem Library — he recorded on p. 46: "Purchased College Lands in Oct. 1847. . . . It contains by Survey 132½ acres." His son, Robert Anderson Bright, student at William and Mary, 1854-1855, bought four hundred sixty-three acres (including "New Hope" and "College Land") from his father for \$10,500, May 30, 1866; Robert deeded his property, four hundred forty-two acres, June 30, 1871, to William H. E. Morecock, Trustee. William Henry Edloe Morecock was for many years clerk of the County Court of James City County.

Robert Anderson Bright's three children — Robert Southall, Alexander McCauley, and Nannie Mumford — inherited his estate; McCauley died intestate and unmarried, so ownership of his share passed to his brother and sister.

On Oct. 1, 1923, Robert S. Bright, et al., of Philadelphia, deeded to the College for \$33,000 "All that certain tract, or parcel of land, situate, lying and being in the County of James City, Virginia, containing two hundred and seventy-four acres (274) more or less. . . . The property hereby contracted. . . . being all the unsold portion of the property conveyed by deed from Robert A. Bright to W. H. E. Morecock, Trustee, dated June 30, 1871. . . ., excepting that the vendors expressly reserve to themselves ten acres of land fronting on Richmond Road, together with the brick residence and out-buildings thereon."

The above reference to the "brick residence," i. e., the Bright House, is the earliest that I have come across for this building: it is possibly a post-Civil War structure. Another house in Williamsburg, dating from the eighteenth century, was lived in by Samuel F. Bright and was likewise known as the Bright House: it was destroyed by fire in 1873 (Tyler's Quarterly Magazine 31: 225, 1950).

Nannie Mumford Bright Cook and her husband, October 1, 1923, deeded their one-half interest in the ten-acre tract to Robert S. Bright. On May 19, 1932, Robert and his wife, Caroline deBeelen Lovett Bright, sold a parcel of this land to the Right Reverend Andrew J. Brennan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Richmond, for \$1400. Robert S. Bright, formerly of Williamsburg and of Philadelphia, resided in Frederick, Maryland, when in his will dated September 28, 1942, he left the Williamsburg property to his second wife, Mary McCaw Bright; he lived at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond from October, 1942, until his death there on December 18, 1943.

The Bright House tract was conveyed to George A. Nea — acting for G. T. Brooks, Sr. — by deed from Mary McCaw Bright, et al., for \$17,500, June 21, 1944, and was sold by George A. Nea and his wife, Anne Hall Nea, to the College for \$25,000, February 27, 1946. In May, 1947, the College — unwisely, in my estimate — sold a parcel of land adjacent to the property of St. Bede's Catholic Church to St. Bede's for \$4,000.

Evidently the Bright House was under lease to the College prior to its purchase by the College of William and Mary, for, as related to me by Dr. Richard L. Morton, Chancellor Professor of History, Emeritus, on July 18, 1972, he and Earl Jerome Grimes (died December 15, 1921; memorialized by the Clayton-Grimes Biological Club) — both of them World War I veterans and young instructors at the College — rented the house in the fall of 1919 from President J. A. C. Chandler. The building was in a state of advanced disrepair, so the two men set about making renovations in anticipation of the arrivals of their brides-to-be. The Mortons lived on the first floor; the Grimeses, on the second. A kitchen and other facilities and a breeze-way were in the basement, and there was a big front porch. That summer the families had a good garden. But soon they had to vacate the house for occupancy by Mr. and Mrs. Oscar W. Shewmake; President Chandler had brought him in to be head of the law school. Dr. Walter A. Montgomery, Professor of Ancient Languages, succeeded the Shewmakes as tenant. In January, 1925, according to Mr. Herbert Ganter (July 1972), Kappa Alpha took over the building as a fraternity house. In 1949, the College renovated the structure and made it into apartments for the faculty at a cost of \$95,000 (Mr. Vernon L. Nunn, July 1972); for example, the last three deans of women lived there: Katherine Jeffers, Dorothea Wyatt, Birdena Donaldson. Now, 1972, as the Bright House becomes Alumni House, another chapter is added to the history of this building.

Few trees on the Bright House grounds survive from the time of the 1946 purchase by the College: two mulberries by the front entrance to the building; a loblolly pine to the north; and to the south a volunteer red cedar; six seedlings of a huge black walnut which is now gone; a fairly big red maple; and, near the stadium, a handsome specimen of American beech.

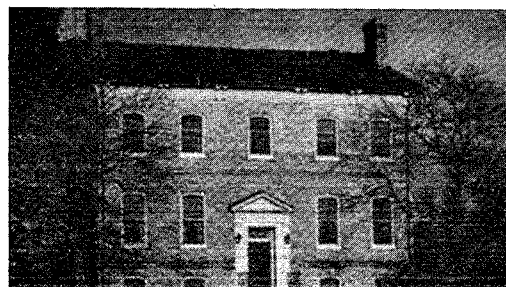
The late Charles F. Gillette, landscape architect of Richmond, Virginia, designed the basic plantings, executed in 1953 by Mr. Ansel D. Rorer, landscape superintendent for the College. The boxwood hedges are outstanding: they are of plants of a clone propagated by Mr. J. B. Brouwers, former landscape superintendent for Colonial Williamsburg. These and other plants of this clone filled a field and were sold to the College for \$1,200; the plants are now about twenty-five years old. The bayberry or wax-myrtle hedges are impressive, and especially effective is the shield planting of loblolly pine along Richmond Road. In addition, Mr. Gillette used crape-myrtle rather extensively, and west of the house cherry-laurel and three live-oaks; also, near the house, two white oaks, flowering dogwoods, and an American beech. In the circle east of the house are two groupings of American hollies, of which only one tree is male; a single individual is completely effective for the pollination of the nearby females: these specimens were dug from the College woods.

Various noteworthy trees are additions to the Gillette scheme. Near the black walnuts is a small American beech of historical and probable horticultural significance. Its provenance is the Walsingham Academy woods where I observed it to have contorted branches, a most attractive habit of growth. Robert McCartney moved the tree to the Colonial Williamsburg nursery. Dr. John P. Baumgardt pruned this specimen before the audience of the 1968 Garden Symposium, and it was later put in its present location. A red oak has a special interest: it was used at the request of President Alvin Duke Chandler to block a view of the rear of the Bright House as seen from Richmond Road. Mr. Rorer grew the three seedlings of basket oak and purchased from MacDonald's Nursery the three fine and fast-growing specimens of willow oak. And he also grew from seed an unusually beautiful American holly and located it west of the house. Nearby is a winged elm from the College wood and a bigger American elm. Grown by Dr. Bernice M. Speese are four seedlings across the church and in the southwest part of the grounds seven specimens of Lawson cypress from seed collected by her in 1946 from a tree in Maymont Park in Richmond. Present also are four large-leaved cucumber-trees grown by me about ten years ago from seed of an old specimen on the grounds of Marshall Lodge in Williamsburg. Going west on Richmond Road one sees in the circle east of the Alumni House six striking live-oaks which Doctor Speese grew from 1947 acorns collected in the Seashore State Park. Globose and with branches to the ground these trees are wonderful to behold.

\*Sentence scrambled.



Above: Original House.



Old Bright House, current Alumni House, after first re-modeling effort.

## WILLIAM AND MARY

*Alumni Get A Home Of Their Own*

After 132 years, the Society of the Alumni of the College of William and Mary finally has a home it can call its own.

Alumni House is the former Bright House, which sits on a grassy knoll beside Cary Field, just off Richmond Road in Williamsburg. It is surrounded by handsome old boxwood, and it was once part of a ten-acre tract known as New Hope. Part of the property was sold off in this century to the Catholic church for St. Bede's church on Richmond Road. The brick home in the 19th century boasted a large verandah across its front, and a gabled attic window. Both of these were subsequently removed in a 20th century remodeling.

Although work is still in progress on the building, it has been in use by the Society for some months. And alumni used the site as a gathering place during home football games last fall.

It was in 1970 that the college decided to offer a longterm lease on the building to the Society of the Alumni, as the official on-campus home for more than 22,000 alumni. A fund-raising drive took place in 1972 to try to raise \$300,000, to remodel and furnish the building, and to inaugurate a New Era in establishment of additional alumni support for more grants, fellowships, scholarships, and revitalizing of alumni chapters. About \$292,000 was realized during the campaign. So far, according to Gordon C. Vliet, executive secretary of the Society, close to \$116,000 has been spent for remodeling and \$25,000 for furnishings and fees.

In re-doing a structure as old as the post-Civil War house, there were many considerations. The building in its more recent years had been used as faculty housing, and the college spent \$95,000 in 1949 to make seven apartments out of its three stories. The last three deans of women have all resided there: Katherine Jeffers, Dorothea Wyatt, and Birdena Donaldson.

Dr. Richard L. Morton, Chancellor professor of history, emeritus, recalls that he and another young instructor rented the house in 1919 as first home for their brides, making renovations and repairs themselves. Vernon L. Nunn, college treasurer-auditor for many years prior to his retirement in 1969, and his wife lived there at one time, and so did the Nunns' son-in-law and daughter, Prof. and Mrs. John L. McKnight.

Alumni Society headquarters are based on the top floor in five sunny offices. The main floor features a large living room, created by knocking out walls which formerly enclosed a three room apartment; a club room; a library; a powder room; and a large reception lobby opening onto a rear porch.

The basement, or ground floor, has still not been finished, but can serve in times of need as a club room and kitchen. When funds become available for its completion, it will have a huge dining-tavern room, a smaller club room, kitchen, powder room, equipment room, and a foyer with glass doors opening upon a patio to accommodate spillover crowds during Homecomings.



The building, as it has gradually received its furnishings and draperies, has been utilized in a variety of ways. The first alumni wedding reception was held there by Miss Barbara Batson, '71, and Stuart D. Martin, '73, and more are scheduled. In addition, there have been faculty receptions, parents' groups, college committees, admissions counselors' sessions, a farewell party for a college professor, and a meeting of the Spiked Shoe Society, composed of former William and Mary track team performers. During the late winter, when the gasoline crunch was at its worst, two state government committees met there as a halfway point between Richmond and Norfolk.

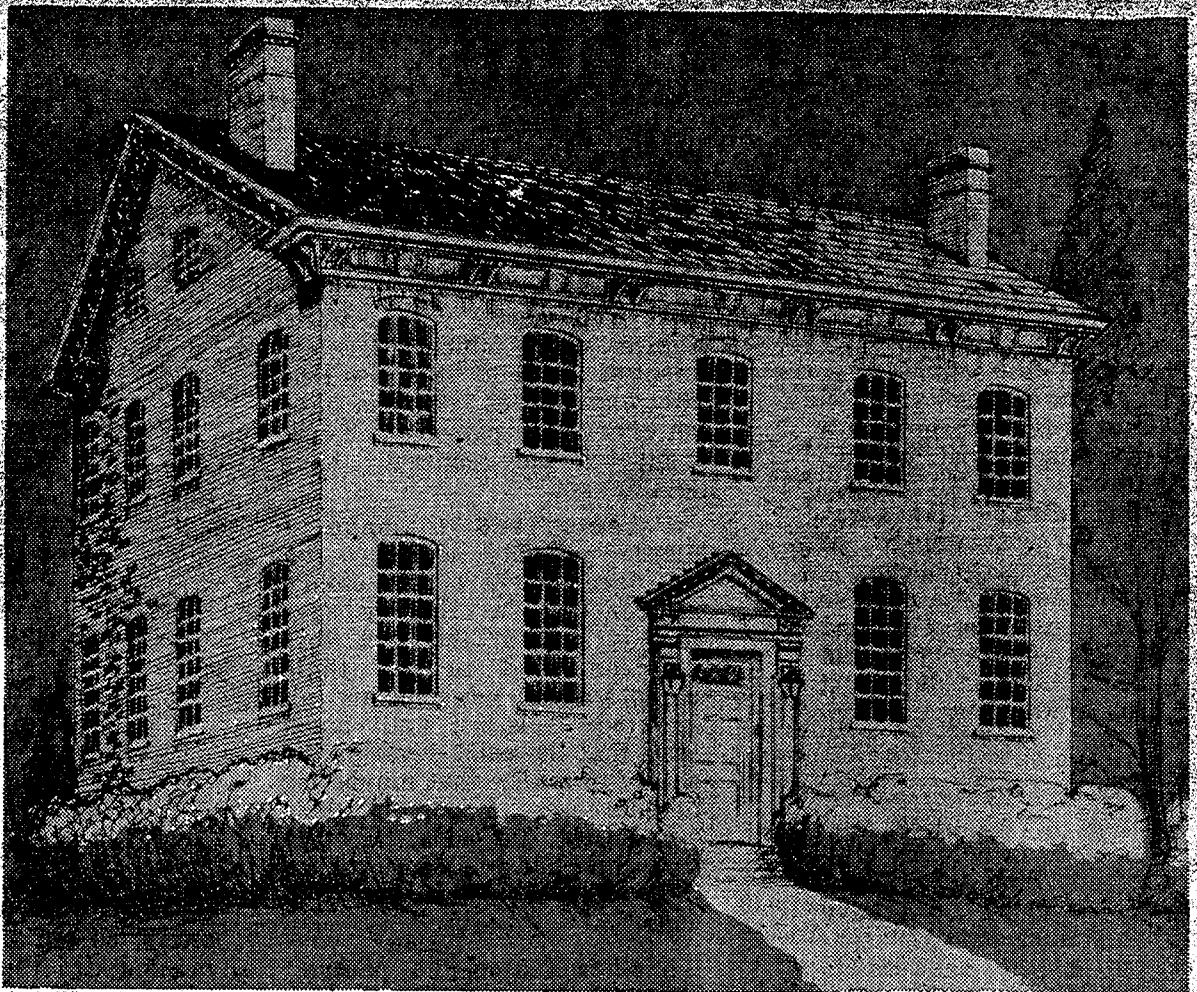
The Alumni House, highly visible beside the Cary Field stadium, is a visible reminder, says Vliet, of a concerned and dynamic body of alumni who care about William and Mary. The house, headquarters for an international alumni program, will strengthen the bonds between students, faculty and alumni, he adds.

Story

By

TINA JEFFRI

*Own*



This is the way the living room of the alumni House, left, looked last summer, when workmen were knocking out walls to make one large room out of three small ones. Above is a drawing of the exterior of the former Bright House which has been designated as the official on-campus home for William and Mary's over 22,000 alumni.

Story  
By  
A JEFFREY

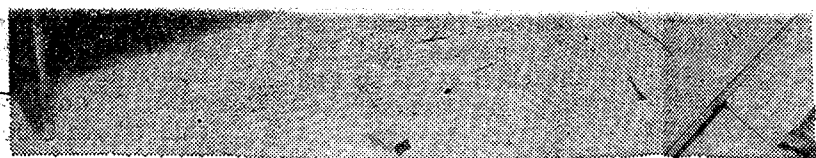
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Story

By

TINA JEFFREY



The library in the Alumni House will enable an alumnus to have a quiet  
moment to think, to write or to conduct personal business. It is located on the  
first floor along with a large living room and a club room.

# rec camps the arts

## From Past to Mostly Modern

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July 11

Field trips and activities will explore jewelry making, furniture design, interior design, glass, clay, and pottery. Trips are planned to the School of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University, D'Art Center in Norfolk and the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum.

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Aug 1 through Aug 5 the Department of Archaeological Research of Colonial Williamsburg and the Tidewater Cultural Resources Center of William and Mary join the parks and recreation in offering a week of archaeology in Digging Into the Past. Activities have been designed to explore and examine archaeological digs, artifacts, and history. Field trips are planned to the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Archeology, Syms Eaton Museum in Hampton, Montpelier digs, Orange Country dig site, and Flower Dew Hundred sites. Camp participants will visit the archaeology lab at Colonial Williamsburg.

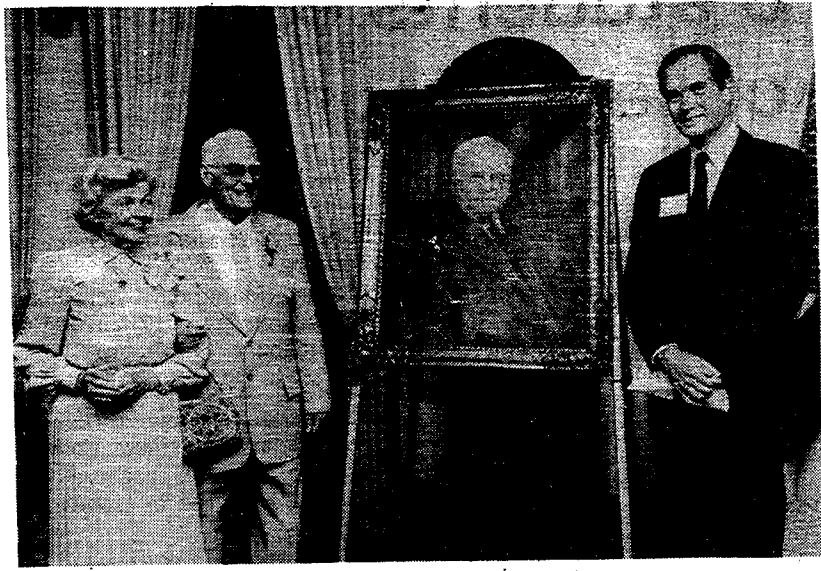
The final week of Camp Articipation will be Museum Mania, Aug 15 through Aug 19. Students will explore the backstage area of museums.

Trips are planned to the Casemate in Fort Monroe, the War Memorial Museum in Newport News, MacArthur Memorial Museum in Norfolk and the Naval Museum in Portsmouth.

All of the camps are scheduled 9 - 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. Camp Shakespeare is a week camp, the others are one day. Fee is \$40 per week, which includes supplies and field trips.

### Family Day Scheduled

Family Day will be held at the Trinity Baptist Church, on Sunday June 26, at 4 p.m. Rev. Herbert Davis will be the speaker. The Hawkins family will provide the music.



After the dedication of the John Garland Pollard Room at the College of William and Mary's Alumni House, Betty and Charles Pollard of Williamsburg were joined by President Paul R. Verkuil beside the former governor and professor's portrait, now displayed in the room.

# Gift to W&M honors former Gov. Pollard

WILLIAMSBURG — As the result of a \$200,000 commitment from the family of former Virginia governor and educator John Garland Pollard, the Society of the Alumni at the College of William and Mary has dedicated in perpetuity the Pollard Room at the university's Alumni House.

Pollard served as governor from 1930-1934, and among his major accomplishments was establishing through private funds the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Pollard was a leader in the Williamsburg community, where he served as mayor and taught at William and Mary during the 1920s.

The Pollard gift will be used toward a planned expansion of the

Alumni House. The newly dedicated Pollard Room is located on the first floor and serves as the primary meeting and reception area.

Pollard from King and Queen County, served as attorney general from 1913-1917. In 1922 he came to William and Mary at the request of college president Julian Chandler to teach Virginia government and related courses. The following year he was named dean of the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship, a name that later was transferred to the college's law school.

Members of the Pollard family who gathered at the recent dedication ceremony June 17 included descendants of the former governor. His sons, John Garland Pollard Jr. of Irvington and Charles Phillips Pollard of Williamsburg, are William and Mary alumni.

Martha Carol Jones and Edward Roy Williamsburg were Saturday, June 18, Williamsburg United Church. The Rev. Dafford formed a double ring. Wedding music was Marcia Koller, organist; Mays, vocalist.

The bride is the daughter of Mrs. William C. Richmond. The groom is Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jr. of Williamsburg.

Joe Lawson of Colonial Williamsburg is the best man. The bridesmaids are David Wigley and John Jones, and John Jones, bride; and Bradnier, Andy Steinhammack.

Jeanne Wigley of Madison, Ala., served as the maid of honor. Bridesmaids were Lisa Wigley, Girl Rebecca Jones,

Betty Hendrickson, aunt of the bride, and the flower girl, nephew of the groom.

The bride wore a white satin gown with a shoulder neckline, enhanced by pearls and a gown's chapel train bordered with lace. The bride wore a lace attached to the cascade of ivory rosebuds, steiv.

The attendant, floral table

### Assertiveness course

Improving communications with others through assertiveness training will be the subject of a 4-week course starting July 14 at the Peninsula Wellness and Fitness Center. The class will meet 7-9 p.m. on Thursdays. For information, call 877-1735.

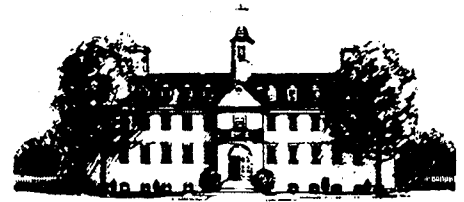
## IVA'S

It's New ...  
It's Different ...



B3h - Alumni House - - Pollard Room

# NEWS of



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ALUMNI SOCIETY (804) 229-1693  
JUNE 23, 1988

### GIFT HONORS FORMER GOVERNOR JOHN GARLAND POLLARD

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The Pollard gift will be used toward a planned expansion of the Alumni House to accommodate the facility's increasing use for alumni, campus and community events. The newly dedicated Pollard Room is located on the first floor and serves as the primary meeting and reception area.

"The legacy of Dr. Pollard, still so vivid in the memories of his former students and others whose lives he influenced, will continue in this focal setting where thousands of alumni and guests visit or gather annually for special occasions," said W. Barry Adams, executive vice president of the alumni society.

"The Pollard family's generosity leads the way for serving future needs that revolve



around the college's alumni activities."

A native of King and Queen County, Pollard also served as attorney general from 1913-1917. In 1922 he came to William and Mary at the request of college president Julian A. C. Chandler to teach Virginia government and related courses. The following year he was named dean of the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship, a name that later was transferred to the college's law school.

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# Review board criticizes W&M Alumni expansion

By Bentley Boyd  
Daily Press

## WILLIAMSBURG

Williamsburg should oppose an expansion of William and Mary's Alumni House because it would damage the city's largest surviving 19th-century farmhouse and harm an adjoining neighborhood, the Williamsburg Architectural Review Board said Tuesday.

The college wants to begin work next fall on a \$2.6 million addition that would more than double the size of the Richmond Road headquarters of the Society of the Alumni.

"Context here is the key issue," said Review Board member David Vogan. "It's not just a

building, but a site. Right now you have a building that is subordinate to the site. The green really dominates. This is going to change that."

The Architectural Review Board recommended the Planning Commission look critically at the expansion, though neither board can stop the college from building the addition.

The three-story, 13,500-square-foot addition would contain a 120-seat banquet hall and offices that would free 20 employees from the cramped offices they have made for themselves from the brick farmhouse's parlors, closets and kitchen.

Please see Alumni/B2

## Alumni

Continued from B1

The top of the addition would be two feet lower than the top of the farmhouse and would be further hidden behind the existing building by landscaping, said Norfolk architect John Paul Hanbury.

"Unless you're an alumnus, you won't see the addition," Hanbury said. "The whole thrust of the new building is back toward Zable Stadium. We're focusing everything away from the Richmond Road side and the neighborhood."

Hanbury also said the changes would highlight the existing building by removing parking spaces and shrubbery from the front.

"You'll see the full two stories of the house without the boxwoods for the first time in memory. Our whole focus has been on the original," Hanbury said.

"This building is not a Virginia Historic Landmark, but we have treated it as such."

The addition would attach to the farmhouse with a connector made mostly of glass, preserving the farmhouse's corners and leav-

“  
*Unless you're an alumnus, you won't see the addition. The whole thrust of the new building is back toward Zable Stadium.*

John Hanbury  
Norfolk architect

ing its front untouched, Hanbury said.

But Vogan said the addition is too close an imitation of the farmhouse — a principle discouraged by architectural preservation guidelines.

"I do see preservation as a crucial issue here, and there are some serious compromises. I have reservations about something that looks this close to the original building,"

he said.

Board member Stella Neiman criticized the plan to double the parking lot to 55 spaces for its impact on the West Williamsburg Heights neighborhood and on the Alumni House itself.

"The parking lot buffering, to me, appears to be minimal. On both ends, it seems minimal," she said. "Normally, city lots have trees in the middle. This does not. This is going to be a pure parking lot."

Hanbury noted the new banquet room would reduce the number of events the society holds outdoors and under tents, and new restrooms mean the society will have to rent portable toilets less often.

The site plan also directs traffic away from the West Williamsburg Heights neighborhood nearby.

But Richmond Road resident Caroline Jordan, the only audience member to speak against the plan, said the addition was simply too big.

"It will be a massive structure and have the same impact on the neighborhood as the Hospitality House, which cuts us off from any other neighborhoods. It's a real isolating feature," Jordan said.

# Alumni building behind schedule

## W&M dorm project right on time

By Allison Freehling  
Daily Press

### WILLIAMSBURG

Work on a \$2.6 million addition to the Society of the Alumni headquarters on Richmond Road is behind schedule, so the building will not be dedicated at the end of October as planned, officials at the College of William and Mary said this week.

But work on a longterm project involving more than \$30 million in renovations to

campus residence halls is running on or even ahead of schedule, said Sam Jones, vice president for management and budget.

A groundbreaking ceremony on the three-story alumni addition was held last October. The goal was to dedicate the new structure at this year's Homecoming weekend, the last weekend in October.

"We were a bit overly optimistic," said Barry Adams, executive vice president of the Alumni Society.

The addition now is expect-

Please see W&M/B2

\$500 to have their names imprinted on individual bricks used in construction, Adams said.

The residence hall renovations are part of a master plan now in the fourth year of an estimated 10-year span, Jones said.

About \$4 million in improvement work has been done in the past year, with projects completed at nine different buildings over the summer, Jones said. Another \$4 million of work should be done this year, he said.

Work includes replacing furniture, painting and installing new lighting. Targeted residence halls include DuPont, Monroe, Old Dominion, Brown, the Botetourt and Bryan complexes and some fra-

ternity complexes.

"I feel we've really turned a corner," Jones said. "We've gone past the first phase of installing infrastructure, and we're on to improving the environment of these buildings."

Another \$4 million project is wiring of all residence halls into a new campus computer network, designed to give students access to both the Internet and to campus systems such as Swem Library.

Wiring began this summer and is complete at Dupont Hall and sections of the Botetourt and Dillard complexes. The rest of the halls on campus are slated to be hooked up by the end of the fall semester, Jones said.

balancing  
ever, have

ed to be completed in mid-January, with the entire project — which includes the addition of new parking spaces — to wrap up in late May. A dedication ceremony likely will be held at Homecoming 1997, Adams said.

Work now involves installing windows in the addition, a red brick structure designed to match the original building. "The old and new match up perfectly," Adams said. "It looks great."

Private funding paid for the project. In addition to direct contributions, more than 500 alumni paid

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

Alumni House Today. From the Alumni Society Website

Draft: July 17, 2007

Terry L. Meyers  
English Department  
College of William and Mary

### The Alumni House: Older Than We Knew?

According to the web site of the Alumni Society, "the original portion of the House, formerly known as the Bright House, dates from 1871 and was built on a tract of land once called, appropriately enough, 'New Hope.'"

But the date of 1871 is wrong. It comes apparently from some notes on the house by J. T. Baldwin, Jr., a professor of Biology at William and Mary, notes printed in a program (now in the College Archives) for the October 11, 1972, dedication of the building as the home of the Alumni Society. Someone has misread what Baldwin calls "the earliest [reference to the house] that I have come across" as being in a title transfer of June 30, 1871. But the mention of "the brick residence and outbuildings" on the land is actually in a title transfer Baldwin quotes that dates from October 1, 1923. And in calling this the earliest reference, he must mean the earliest in legal records, for he later mentions that two faculty members lived there in 1919. In any case, when Baldwin suggests cautiously that the house "is possibly a post-Civil War structure," he clearly implies it may actually be ante-bellum. I think a good case can be made that it is.

Evidence recently come to light suggests that the house was possibly standing in the summer of 1862. The evidence comes from a panoramic view of Williamsburg as seen from its north side (the vantage point difficult to determine since the perspective is askew). That view (figure 1) is a watercolor by a Union soldier, Robert Knox Sneden (1832-1918), a mapmaker for the Federal Forces who, after the May 5, 1862, Battle of Williamsburg, passed that year through Williamsburg several times.



Headquarters tents Church used for hospital The Governor's houses William and Mary College College park  
 Figure 1. From Robert Knox Sneden, *Eye of the Storm*, ed. Charles F. Bryan, Jr. and Nelson D. Lankford (New York: The Free Press, 2000), p. 114.

The somewhat stylized watercolor was painted many years later from a sketch made during Sneden's second visit to town, August 18, 1862. And that sketch, like all the others Sneden made, seems no longer to survive, a serious loss since it might have clarified a mystery at the heart of the question I am posing here. In any case, the watercolor derived from the sketch captured a number of the important buildings in Williamsburg, though misnaming them and even relocating them somewhat. The caption to the painting, for example, reflects some misunderstandings Sneden conveyed as well in his journal, quoted in *Eye of the Storm*. He notes that the flag was flying at sunset at the "College park" (what we call the Wren Yard, in front of the Wren Building) and that there was "a red hospital flag [flying] from the steeple of the largest church in town."

Although one can clearly see Bruton Parish Church with a steeple and cross, Sneden has placed the hospital flag not at the largest church in town, the Baptist Church, just in front and east of the Powder Magazine, but at the Asylum. The "Gothic Building" there (figure 2) stood at the southeast corner of Henry and Ireland Streets; its two towers are clearly in evidence. And it was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers, though it is not a "Church used for hospital" that the caption would have it be.

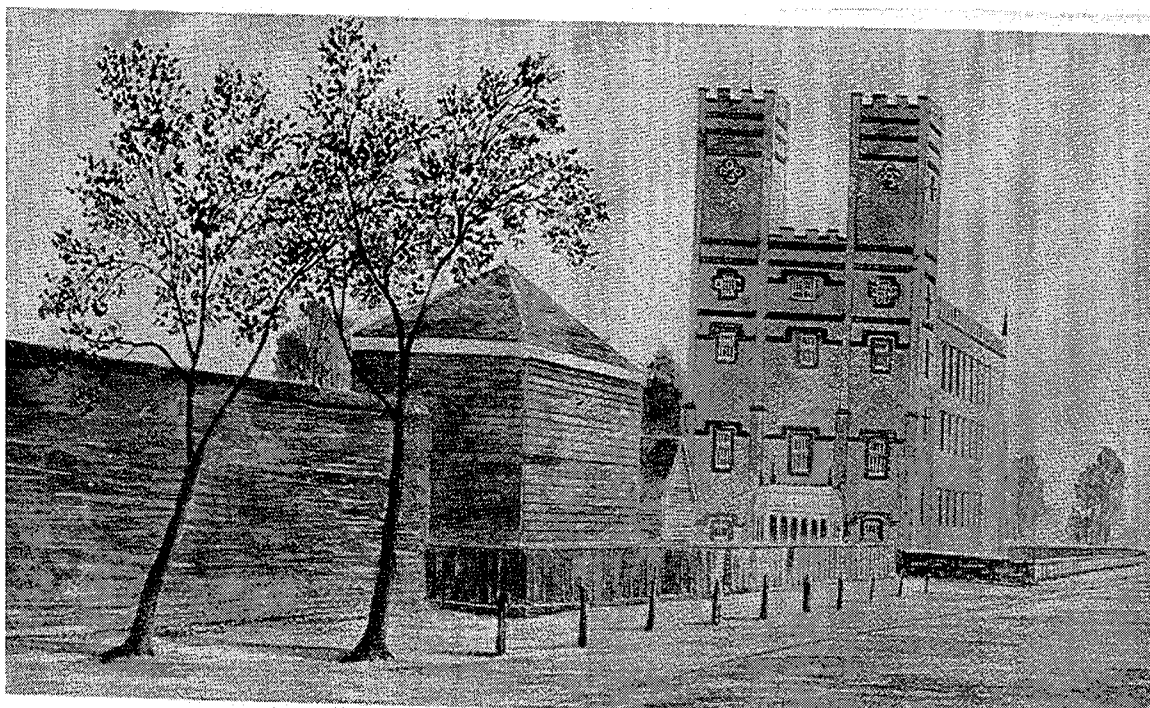


Figure 2. From Norman Dain, Disordered Minds: The First Century of Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Virginia, 1766-1866 (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1971), p. [103].

Snedden makes several other errors as well, as a stranger to town might do. He labels The Brafferton and The President's House as "The Governor's Houses." Given the relative prominence of the buildings, the appellation might seem appropriate to a visitor, but Sneden appears to have confused them with the surviving outbuildings at the front of the long gone Governor's Palace (figure 3).

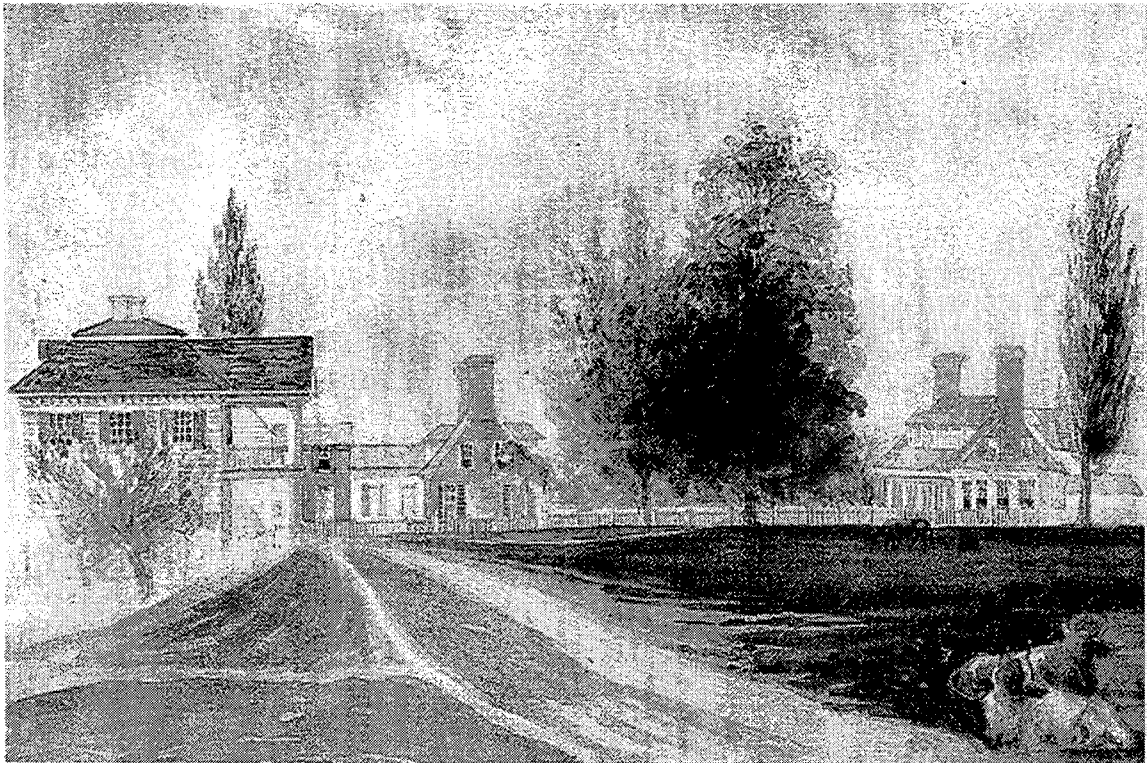


Figure 3. From George Humphrey Yetter, *Williamsburg Before and After: The Rebirth of Virginia's Colonial Capital* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988), p. 35.

And other details are wrong: the distances are distorted, as between the College and Bruton Church, for example. And the Gothic Building at the Asylum did not have the triangular front arch or the pitched roof Sneden gives it—but the Baptist Church, a Greek revival building with neither steeple nor towers did (figure 4). Perhaps Sneden conflated the two in his sketch or in working from it years later.



Figure 4. From George Humphrey Yetter, *Williamsburg Before and After: The Rebirth of Virginia's Colonial Capital* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988), p. 5.

One other error, in fact, may call into question whether the building at the far right of the painting is indeed Bright House, as I think likely.

The house is in the right place, on a distinctive rise, and I know of no other building that was there earlier. And Sneden's building resembles Bright House closely, except in having at its rear what seems a one story extension or shed of some sort and, more importantly, in having a cupola, quite a pronounced one.

We already know that Sneden could get things wrong, as with the Gothic Building roof. And, indeed, the first time Sneden did a watercolor of the Gothic Building (based on his sketch of May 6, 1862), he appears to have recorded the towers as on separate buildings, at a distance from each other (figure 5, which depicts Williamsburg from Fort Magruder and shows a red hospital flag at the College with its Italianate towers and at the Gothic Building; Bright House may be one of the smudges just to the left of the Wren Building).



QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 5. From Robert Knox Sneden, *Images from the Storm*, ed. Charles F. Bryan, Jr., James C. Kelly, and Nelson D. Lankford (New York: The Free Press, 2001), p. 60.

I think Sneden simply made a mistake in his later watercolor of the Bright House—and am willing to speculate why. I would lay odds that when he first made his sketch in 1862, Sneden captured something distinctive about Bright House, but did so in such a way that, years later, he could no longer determine or recall for sure what the feature was. I believe he read that detail of his sketch as a cupola.

It turns out that Bright House did have a distinctive front with a feature (now gone) that was pronounced. In a picture of Bright House in the 1920's or 1930's (figure 6), the building front has at its center a prominently raised, triangular roof, a feature even more pronounced than the chimneys. That would have been in Sneden's early sketch; to read that a murky detail years later as a cupola seems creditable.



Figure 6. From the Alumni Society Website (the same feature is clear in a 1924 aerial photograph at <http://www.williamsburgpostcards.com/other/other51.htm>).

All this does not give us a certain date for when Bright House was constructed. But if I am right that date must be earlier than the summer of 1862. It might be worth having architectural historians take a closer look.

#### A Sidebar:

The changes between Sneden's sketches in Williamsburg and his later watercolors come up in another instance where the Alumni House may also be pictured. The missing sketch Sneden made May 6, 1862, formed the basis both for Sneden's watercolor (Figure 5) and for a drawing prepared for an engraving published in 1887 (figure 7). Reading the engraving is made easier by the fact that Swem Library's Special Collections Research Center owns the drawing (figure 8) the engraving was made from--not Sneden's sketch, but a drawing from it by Charles A. Vanderhoof (1853-1918), an artist employed by *Century* magazine. Some details are slightly clearer in the drawing than in the engraving.



Figure 7. From *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 vols. (New York: The Century Company, 1887), II, 207.



Figure 8. Drawing by Vanderhoof for Figure 7 [n.b. this is a holder; scan of actual drawing to come)

Figures 5 and 8 differ in a number of ways. For example, Vanderhoof adds a United States flag to the pole in front of the College. Vanderhoof generally tries to simplify the representation by excising details such as The Brafferton and The Presidents House, both recorded by Sneden. Sneden includes two square towers and Bruton Church to their right. Vanderhoof removes one tower.

The two differ also on the details behind the Wren Building. Sneden seems to hint at several structures behind the College, but the hints, at least in the watercolor, are indistinct and ambiguous. Vanderhoof represents a house to the rear of the College and at some distance from it; its height relative to the Wren Building suggests it is on a rise, and though no chimneys are apparent, the front of the house appears to have a peaked quality to it and perhaps a corresponding element at the back. It's possible Sneden's sketch was a guide to that.

In the end little can be concluded from Figures 5 and 8 and the differences between Sneden and Vanderhoof. If we had Sneden's original sketch, we might know more. But we don't.

## The Alumni House: Older than You Knew

By Terry Meyers

Two buildings on the campus of the College have construction dates that are unknown. One, the Dudley Digges House (now at 524 Prince George Street), might have been built, at the site of Brown Hall, as early as ca. 1713, if we were to trust the paper trail of title transfers. Certainly it was built by the time of the 1747 smallpox outbreak in Williamsburg. And we know that it was so dilapidated by 1765 that the "Negroe School" probably located there had to move; that implies that the house was already pretty dilapidated in 1763 when it was rented for the school. But definitive evidence for the date has yet to be developed.

The second building whose date of construction is not known is the Alumni House on Richmond Road. According to the web site of the Alumni Society, "the original portion of the House, formerly known as the Bright House, dates from 1871 and was built on a tract of land once called, appropriately enough, 'New Hope.'"

The date of 1871 comes from the Buildings and Grounds file on the house in the College Archives, Swem Library, which also contains a program from the October 11, 1975 dedication of the building as the home of the Alumni Society. That program includes some notes on the house by J. T. Baldwin, a professor of Biology at William and Mary. Baldwin says that "the earliest [reference to the house] that I have come across" is a title transfer of June 1871 which mentions "the brick residence and outbuildings" on the land. And he allows that it might be older, that "it is possibly a post-Civil War structure."

New evidence suggests that the house was standing in the summer of 1862. The evidence comes from a panoramic view of Williamsburg as seen from its north side, from a vantage point difficult to determine since the perspective seems somewhat askew. That view (figure 1) was sketched by a Union soldier, Robert Knox Sneden (1832-1918), a mapmaker for the Federal Forces who, after the May 5, 1862 Battle of Williamsburg, passed through Williamsburg several times.



Headquarters tents Church used for hospital The Governor's houses William and Mary College Galleries Fort  
 Figure 1. From Robert Knox Sneden, *Eye of the Storm*, ed. Charles F. Bryan, Jr. and Nelson D. Lankford (New York: The Free Press, 200), p. 114.

This somewhat stylized watercolor (painted on Sneden's second visit to town, August 18, 1862) captured a number of the important buildings in Williamsburg, though misnaming them and even relocating them somewhat. The caption to the painting, for example, reflects some misunderstandings Sneden conveyed as well in his journal, quoted with the painting. He notes that the flag was flying at sunset at the "College park" (what we call the Wren Yard, in front of the Wren Building) and that there was "a red hospital flag [flying] from the steeple of the largest church in town."

Although one can clearly see Bruton Parish Church with a steeple and cross, Sneden has the hospital flag not at the Baptist Church just in front and east of the Powder Magazine, but at the Asylum. The two towers of that building, the "Gothic Building" (figure 2; it stood at the southeast corner of Henry and Ireland Streets), are clearly in evidence; it was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers, though it is not the "Church used for hospital" that the caption would have it be.

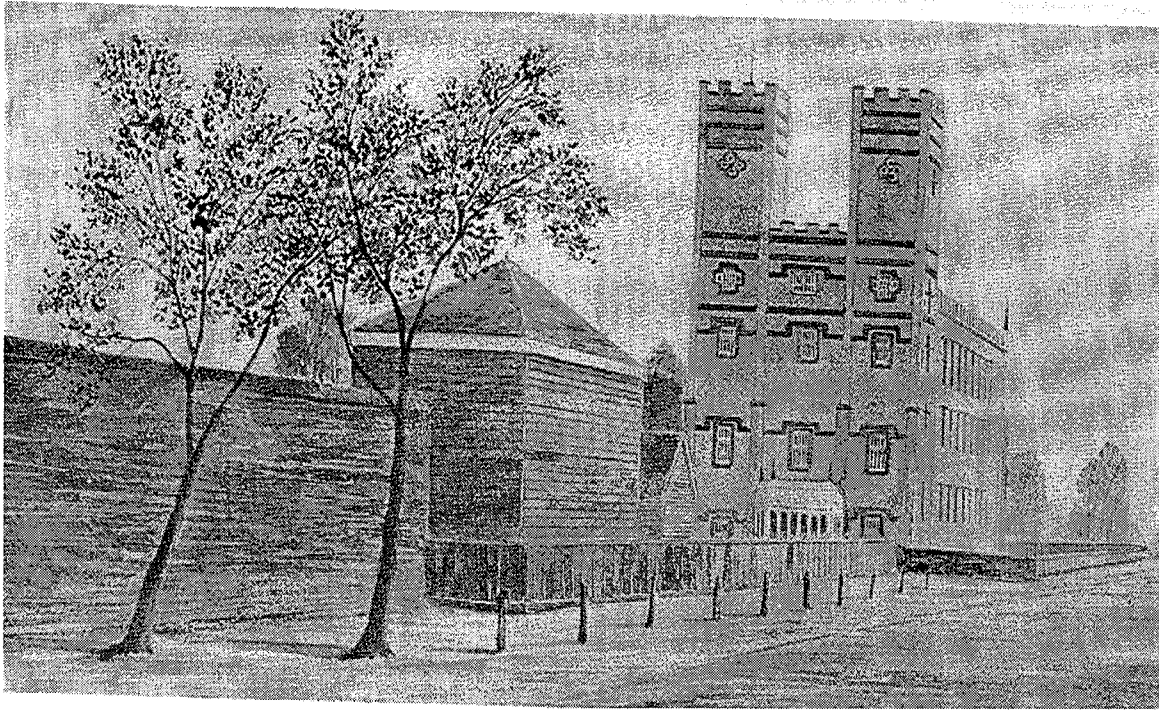


Figure 2. From Norman Dain, Disordered Minds: The First Century of Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Virginia, 1766-1866 (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1971), p. [103].

The Baptist Church was indeed larger than Bruton Parish, but it was a Greek revival building with neither steeple nor towers (figure 3).



Figure 3. From George Humphrey Yetter, *Williamsburg Before and After: The Rebirth of Virginia's Colonial Capital* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988), p. 5.

There are several other errors as well, one of which may call into question whether the building at the far right of the painting is indeed Bright House. Sneden labels The Brafferton and The President's House as "The Governor's Houses." Given the relative prominence of the buildings, the appellation might seem appropriate to a stranger, but Sneden confused them with the surviving outbuildings at the front of the long gone Governor's Palace (figure 4).

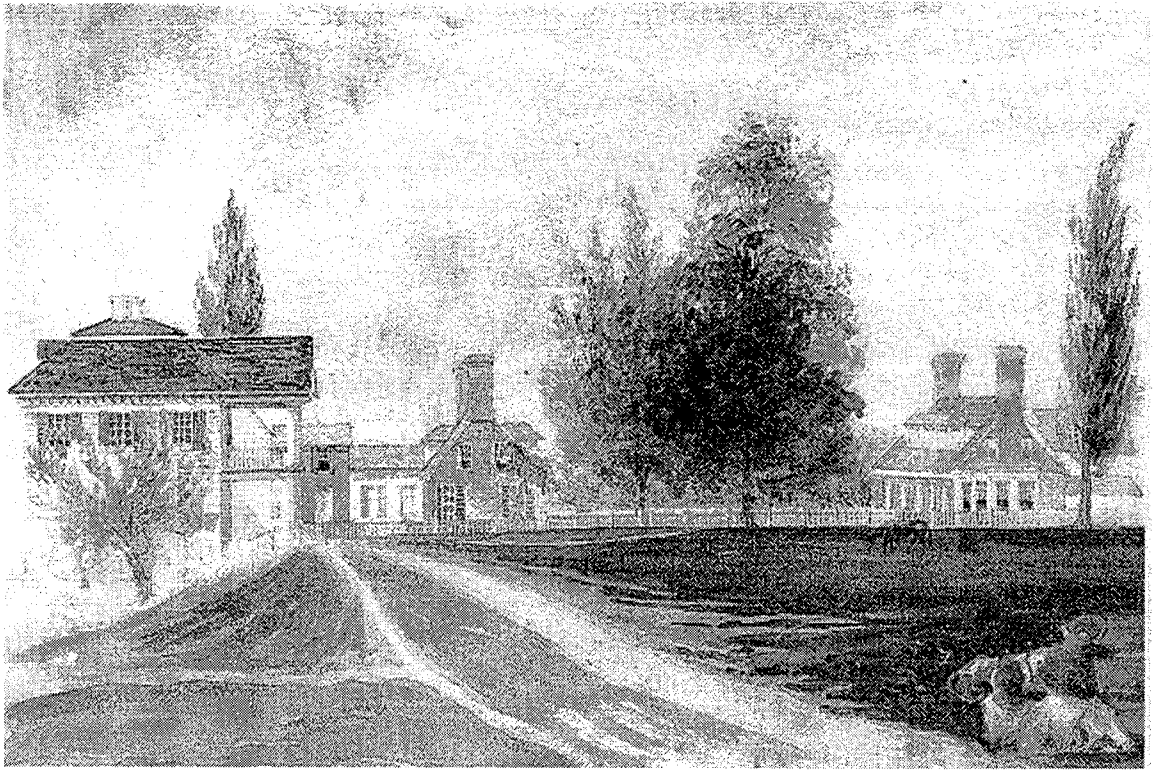


Figure 4. From George Humphrey Yetter, *Williamsburg Before and After: The Rebirth of Virginia's Colonial Capital* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988), p. 35.

And other details are wrong: the Gothic Building at the Asylum, for example, did not have the triangular front arch Sneden gives it and the distances are distorted, as between the College and Bruton Church.

Clearly, Sneden did not always accurately capture reality.

As to the brick building at the far right of the sketch (figure 1) and whether it might be Bright House....

The house is certainly in the right place and I know of no other building that was ever there. That it was there in 1871 suggests that it likely was there earlier; local practice seems generally to have retained rather than to have replaced buildings. In other words, it seems unlikely that the 1871 "brick residence" would have replaced a brick building there in 1862. Most likely they are one and the same.

And certainly Sneden's building resembles Bright House closely, except in having at its rear what seems a one story extension or shed of some sort and, more importantly, in having a cupola, quite a pronounced one.

We already know that Sneden could get things wrong, as with the Gothic Building roof. And, indeed, the first time Sneden drew the Gothic Building (May 6, 1862), he missed a whole tower (figure 5, which depicts Williamsburg from Fort



Magruder and shows red hospital flags at the College with its Italianate towers and at the Gothic Building; Bright House may be one of the smudges just to the left of the Wren Building).

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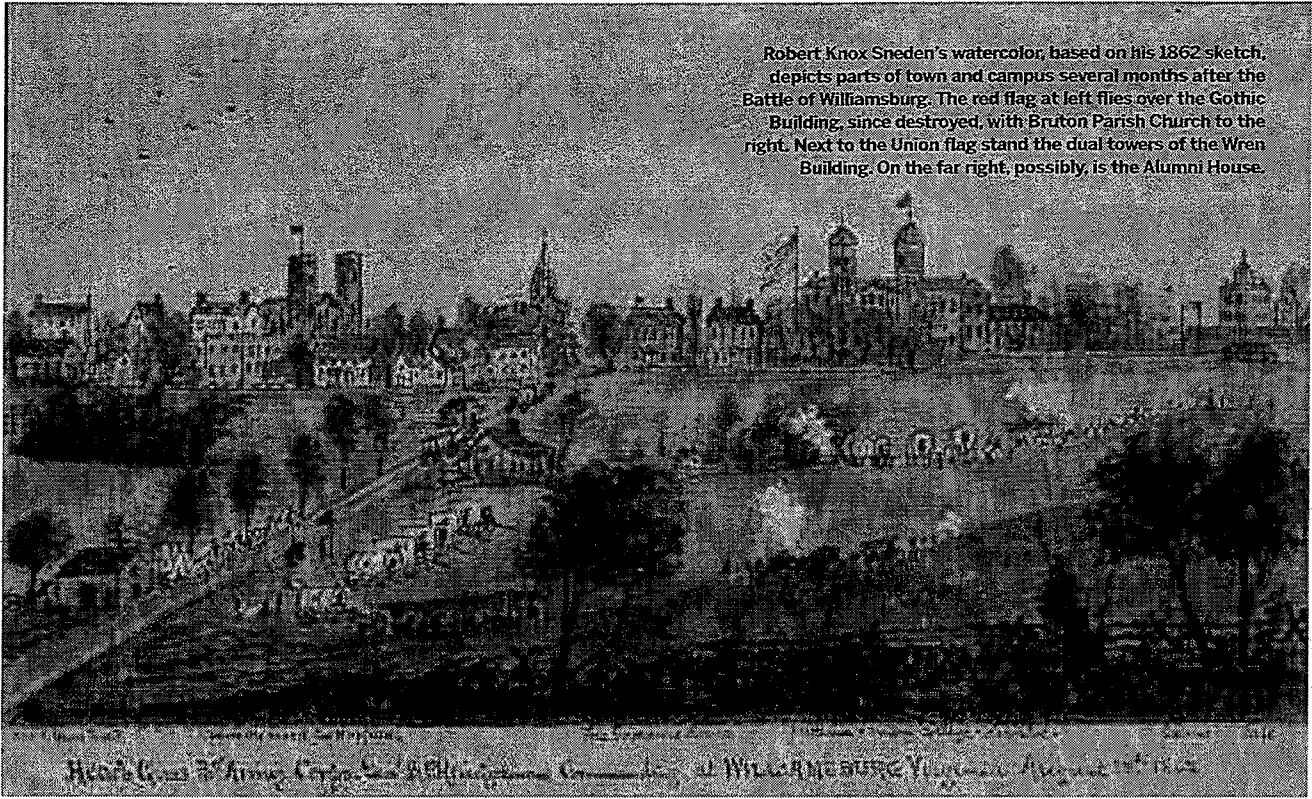
Figure 7. From Robert Knox Sneden, *Images from the Storm*, ed. Charles F. Bryan, Jr., James C. Kelly, and Nelson D. Lankford (New York: The Free Press, 2001), p. 60.

I think Sneden simply made a mistake in his August sketch of the Bright House—though one that can be explained. Bright House, it turns out, did have a distinctive front with a feature (now gone) that could be easy to see as or transform into a cupola. In the picture of Bright House in the 1920's or 1930's (figure 7), the building has a prominent triangular arch, even more pronounced than the chimneys. To see that as inspiring Sneden's cupola is easy.



Figure 7. From the Alumni Society Website

Robert Knox Sneden's watercolor, based on his 1862 sketch, depicts parts of town and campus several months after the Battle of Williamsburg. The red flag at left flies over the Gothic Building, since destroyed, with Bruton Parish Church to the right. Next to the Union flag stand the dual towers of the Wren Building. On the far right, possibly, is the Alumni House.



# THIS *Old* HOUSE

A Civil War Watercolor Casts Light on the  
True Age of the Alumni House

BY PROFESSOR TERRY MEYERS

PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



**W**illiam and Mary's Alumni House (once the Bright House) may be older than the 1871 date generally ascribed to it. Built as a home to the Bright family, owners of the farm called "New Hope," the building has housed faculty members and — not at the same time — the Kappa Alpha fraternity. The construction date of 1871 derives from misreadings of several documents, including the program notes by William and Mary biology professor J. T. Baldwin Jr. '32 for the 1975 dedication of the Alumni House. Those notes include Baldwin's intimation that the house might possibly date to before the Civil War.

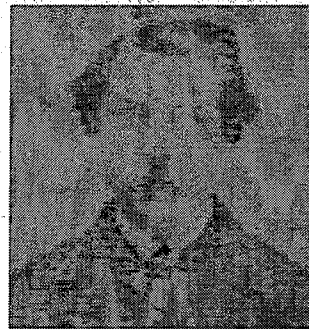
And now comes evidence to justify Baldwin's guess: a long-lost panoramic watercolor of Williamsburg painted by a Union mapmaker, Robert Knox Sneden. Sneden visited Williamsburg after the Civil War battle for the city and his watercolor (pictured on page 44) shows what must be the Bright House standing in August 1862. This image and others appear in *Eye of the Storm* and *Images from the Storm*, recently published by the Virginia Historical Society.

The Battle of Williamsburg (May 5, 1862) had been intense. That evening, a soldier, Randolph Abbott Shotwell, 8th Va, described the Wren Building fitted out as a hospital: "wounded, dying, and dead — here, there, everywhere — halls, recitation rooms, dormitories — all were crowded with bloody bodies!"

In one of the larger rooms, Shotwell saw two or three surgeons "busy at low tables, sawing off, or binding up limbs of poor fellows who lay upon the tables in such a way that the ghastly hue of their distorted faces showed all the more horribly from the flickering glare of the tallow candle at each corner." He tripped on "a pile of legs and arms that had been amputated and thrown on the landing of the stairway, that being the only place unoccupied by the wounded."

The carnage inside the Wren was apparent outside the next day, May 6, when Sneden depicted his first view of the College (not pictured), surrounded by shattered cannon and fences. But it is a slightly later watercolor (on facing page) by Sneden that may push back the date of construction for the Bright House. Sneden's sketch of Williamsburg on Aug. 18, 1862, his second visit, has been lost, but his watercolor made from it years after the war's end, despite some errors and conflated details, is intriguing.

We see a military encampment north of town, perhaps along Boundary Street. An enormous Union flag flies in the Wren Yard and dominates the town — to remind one and all that Federal forces now occupied Williamsburg and William and Mary. The point is rein-



**Above left:** The Bright House, standing in 1941, serving as home to the Kappa Alpha Fraternity. Note the brick triangle in the center. **Above right:** The Alumni House today, with the 1997 extension in the background. Substantially renovated in the 1970s, the new Alumni House no longer has the porch or the triangle shown in the earlier photo. **Immediate left:** Union mapmaker Robert Knox Sneden in an undated photograph.

forced by suggestions of military justice at the right of the picture — a jail and, ominously, a gallows.

Sneden's panorama includes a number of identifiable buildings, including the Asylum's "Gothic Building" (no longer standing, but identified by the red hospital flag on its eastern tower). The Brafferton and the President's House are misnamed (Sneden confused them with the front buildings at the Governor's Palace), but apparent.

Most intriguing is what appears to be the Bright House, on that distinctive rise west of campus. The building differs a bit, in that it has a one-story extension or shed at its rear and a distinctive cupola.

But the building could be the Bright House, for the shed could easily have been removed over the years, and the cupola may have been Sneden's belated guess at an obscure or ambiguous detail.

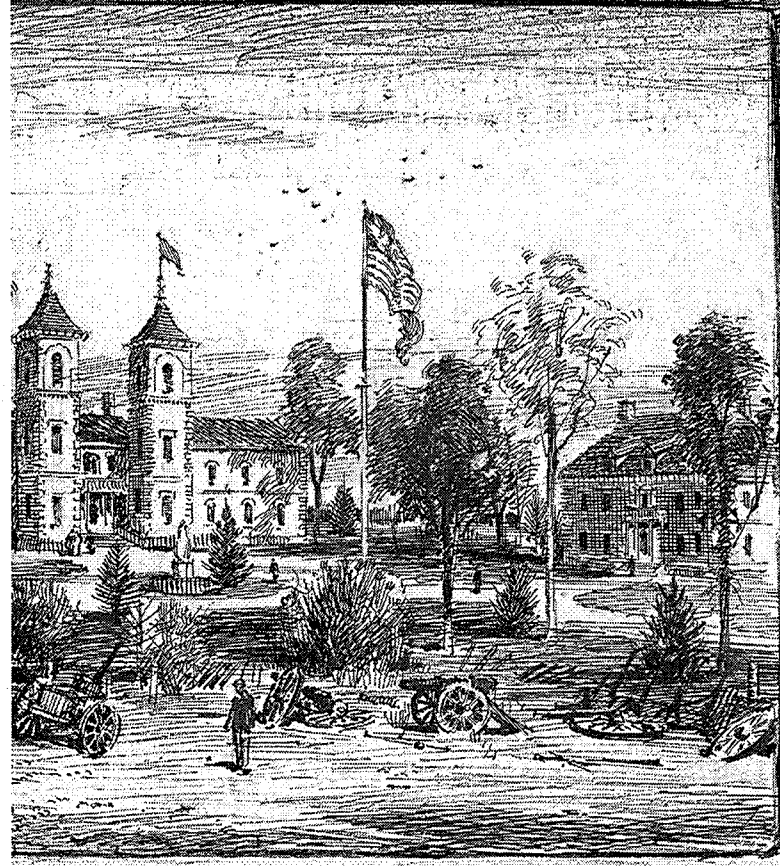
Keep in mind that Sneden painted from a sketch he had made years before. My guess is that, sketching rapidly in 1862, Sneden recorded a feature on the Bright House that decades later he could no longer recall. I think he converted a squiggle in his sketch to a cupola in his watercolor.

And there's some evidence behind that guess. A 1941 picture of the Bright House (above, left) shows an architectural flourish at its center front that it now lacks: a prominent brick triangle thrusting above the roofline.

If the building to the far right of Sneden's Williamsburg panorama is the Bright House, as I believe (and as J. T. Baldwin's words allow), the Alumni House is an antebellum structure, one of only a few buildings on campus to have witnessed Civil War Williamsburg. ■

*Terry Meyers has taught English at the College since 1970. Swern Library is publishing online his edition of the "Daybook and Ledger" of Richard Manning Bucktrout, a document richly informative about Williamsburg life in the mid-19th century.*

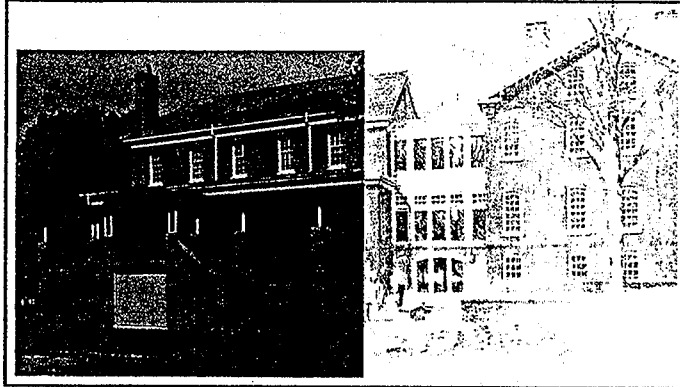
\* Mary O'Connell



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A Place to call Home...



THE ALUMNI CENTER AT THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY was rededicated during the 1997 Homecoming festivities in historic Williamsburg, Virginia.

The original portion of the Center, formerly known as the Bright House, dates from 1871 and was built on a tract of land once called "New Hope." The Bright House was home to several generations of the William and Mary family, including the Kappa Alpha fraternity, World War II veterans, and College faculty. As the function of the house changed, so did its exterior appearance. The house underwent several renovations over the years, all of which retained its mid 19th century architectural identity. The latest addition, designed by Hanbury Evans Newill Vlattas & Company, more than doubles the size of the original building.

The design of the facility is a careful adaptation of the historically significant home. The addition maintains the appropriate scale and character of the original structure. Spatially organized to optimize use of the surrounding site, the renovations incorporate new exterior terraces and simple, elegant detailing, reminiscent of a time in the past and a place to call home.

*William & Mary Alumni Center*