

BATTLE OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

**A Centennial History of
The Athenaeum Society
of
Hopkinsville, Kentucky
1902 – 2002**

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2002 marked the 100th Anniversary of the Athenaeum Society of Hopkinsville, Kentucky. In commemoration of this milestone, and with a deep appreciation for the society's rich heritage, this history was compiled and submitted to the current membership. May its contents serve as a pleasant reminder of the past to present members and bring interest to future members.

Throughout the past thirty-five years, the compiler has interviewed many club members; reviewed club minutes and programs; newspaper files have been researched, and many interesting stories have surfaced.

Society minutes survive excepting the time gaps of 1923 – 1928; 1938 – 1948; and most annual printed programs since 1910, have been saved. A nearly complete set of annual "Open Session" programs, covering eighty years, is also a part of Athenaeum archives.

Appreciation is expressed to all members, especially to those of the past who have shared their memory and enthusiasm about membership in a most interest organization. Special thanks are expressed to Suzanne Greenfield, executive secretary of the Christian County Historical Society for the computer programming and to David L. Riley for the graphic design.

THE ATHENAEUM SOCIETY at 100

'Twas a Friday night, the 18th of April, 1902, when nine Hopkinsville professional men were entertained at dinner at Hotel Latham by a Bethel Female College professor, William H. Harrison. After a usual evening meal, Professor Harrison proposed a plan to organize a men's literary society and a local tradition was born. Suggested names for the group included: The Reviewers; The Query Club; and The Literary and Scientific Club. Unable to reach a unanimous decision, the matter was postponed. The motion was made that the society would meet on the first Thursday of each month.

Monday afternoon, April 21, 1902, at 4 p.m., a meeting was held in the office of Dr. Frank M. Stites, then located in the Summers Building, on the southwest corner of Main and Court Streets. There members selected a name, The Athenaeum Society, and it survives 100 years later as the oldest group of its type in Kentucky.

The original Athenaeum, a sanctuary of Athena at Athens, was built by the Roman emperor Hadrian, and was frequented by poets and men of learning. A school by the same name in ancient Rome, was a place for the study of art, and reflects the society's reason for being. The society has as its objective "the increase of knowledge and information among its members on the subjects relating to the Arts, Biography, History, Literature, and the Sciences."

Across the 20th Century, 305 men of The Athenaeum Society have met once a month to continue the proud traditions where two members present papers on varied subjects. Argument, criticism and heated debate follow, all for the sake of learning and entertainment.

'Twas a century ago – Hopkinsville boasted a population of 7,200, and the society shared the local scene with the construction of the Odd Fellows Building and the Tennessee Central Railway into Hopkinsville. A name long associated with local agriculture, Planters Hardware Co., was incorporated that year and the local Odd Fellows Green River Lodge hosted the Kentucky Grand

Lodge at Hotel Latham. *Courier-Journal* editor Henry Watterson spoke at Holland's Opera House in November and the First National Bank occupied its handsome new building located on the southwest corner of Ninth and Main – "the crossroads of America."

The town in 1902 extended to Dry Branch beyond West Side; Metcalfe's Wholesale Greenhouse to the north of town; Belmont Hill to the east; and 21st Street on the South. Pre War-Between the States homes lined East Seventh Street out to Western Kentucky Lunatic Asylum. Post-war homes enhanced the streetscape out South Main. Blue-collar cottages on West Side and African American cabins at the old fairgrounds on the north east side formed a balance with the other sections. The town was served by three railroads; the Louisville & Nashville, the Illinois Central and the Tennessee Central. Mogul wagon manufacturing represented the largest industrial employer and the Kentucky New Era and Hopkinsville Milling Co. had been fixtures on the landscape for over thirty years.

The Athenaeum Society followed at least four other men's literary societies. The Hopkinsville Lyceum discussed current social issues, 1830 – 1834; the Hopkinsville Moot Senate met in 1859 – 1860; and the Adelpian Society, a literary and debating group met at Beverly in 1873. The Hopkinsville Literary Club was in session in November, 1899, and several of its members later affiliated with the Athenaeum. The Blackstone Club was in operation in 1912, though little is known of its life.

The first constitution adopted April 21, 1902, set forth the initial regulations for the society. Membership in the society would be set at 30. The number was raised to 40 in October, 1956. Monthly meetings would be conducted September through June. The June meeting was dropped in May, 1951. The initial initiation fee was \$1. Regular dues were 50 cents per month. A \$5 fee is now charged upon admission with dues set at \$30 for each half year.

The first regular meeting of the society was held at 8 p.m. on May 1, 1902, at Hotel Latham. After supper was served, the program was then called. Tom Underwood read a paper on "Cecil Rhodes"

and Dr. Manning Brown read a paper on "Air Ships." The third presenter was not present. After several years of great difficulty in getting three presenters for each meeting, the society voted to move to two papers per meeting in the fall of 1911. Motion was made at the first meeting that all papers should be filed with the secretary, a custom that has met with great difficulty through the years. In 1961, David E. Turner, Director of the Carnegie Public Library discarded a large collection of Athenaeum papers though great effort has been made to retain them since 1980. Another motion was made at the first meeting that ices and cake should be served at 10 p.m. in place of the usual dinner. Supper was served in the hotel ordinary at 7:30 p.m.

Traditions grew in the early years. A thirty-minute time limit was placed on each paper on February 5, 1903. On September 7, 1905, motion was made that a program committee appoint programs for an entire year and to have them printed. Election to membership by secret ballot with three adverse votes being sufficient to exclude from membership was set on February 1, 1906.

The first "Open Session" though it was called the "Second Anniversary Dinner" meeting was held on May 5, 1904; the 99th was observed on May 2, 2002. The first menu included:

MENU

Salted Peanuts,
Frozen Tomatoes Radishes,
Crem-d-Victoria,
Baked Fish – Manhattan Sauce,
Pommes Gastromme,
Vol-au-Vent-De ris-al Villeroi,
Supreme of Chicken – Champignons,
Potatoes Asparagus,
Gingerbre-Sorbit Frappe,
Egyptian Salad,
Pistacio Ice Cream Assorted Cake,
Coffee

Six papers were delivered at this event:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| W.T. Fowler | The Queen of Hearts |
| Rev. W. L. Nourse | Things Worth While |
| Ira L. Smith | Such Stuff as Dreams |
| J. T. Hanbery | Young America |
| J. W. Downer | The Reading Habit |
| Charles M. Meacham | Adam and Eve |

The annual dinner proved to be so well accepted that Charles M. Meacham moved on February 2, 1905, that the May meeting be an "Open Session." Once each year an annual meeting has been held, one to which each member could bring a lady and two additional guests. Cost of the meal was \$1 per person.

There, in best bib and tucker, the members would demonstrate how programs were to be conducted. Two members were to present programs, though in the early years as many as six presenters appeared. Following a brief intermission, members and guests would tear them apart with witty criticism and heated debate.

The annual open meeting, always conducted on the first Thursday in May, was a gala social event. In the years before World War II, when these sessions were held in the main dining room of Hotel Latham, the guests gathered in the second floor parlor and formed a "Grand March" to the step of orchestra music. The procession descended the main stairway to the first floor dining room where multi course meals melted the pallet, friendly conversation whetted the spirit, and the papers delivered brought forth a battle of the wits, all for information and entertainment.

The society was highly honored at the attendance of invited guests, John C. Latham and his wife, at the 1907 open meeting. This Hopkinsville native and New York cotton brokerage banker was the town's first great benefactor.

Cost of the meal was still \$1 when, at the "Open Session," held at the Ninth Street Christian Church, 1910, the membership debated the best musical offer: Lebkuecher's Orchestra, would offer a 7 piece brass ensemble for \$15, or Blakemore's Orchestra would provide a 4 piece group for \$8.

On two occasions the elements of nature almost stopped the high social event. As Sam Blakemore's Orchestra preformed at open session, May 6, 1915, a severe windstorm hit Hopkinsville, the hotel lights went out and a portion of the roof was blown off. Comments were made relating the wind below being out done by the wind above. Again, on May 2, 1935, a cyclone removed a part of the hotel roof as Circuit Judge Ira D. Smith was delivering a paper entitled "Orchids and Onions." That storm also demolished the Hopkinsville M & F College on North Vine Street.

The "Open Session" in 1918 was quite unusual – no food – the war was in full swing with much patriotic commitment to President Wilson's Food Administration – wheat-less days – meat-less days – so members, to aid the war effort, with money given to the Red Cross, ate at home on May 2 and feasted on presenters topics:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Grover C. Koffman | War and Education |
| J. W. Downer | Handling A Bad Case |
| Dr. Gant Gaither | Gassed |
| Tom C. Underwood | Generally Speaking |
| Ira L. Smith | A Biteless Bite |

Four years later the Latham open meeting dinner cost rose to \$2.50, so the membership voted to dine at the Chamber of Commerce dining room for \$1.50 a plate.

A random sampling of some of the early program topics reveal a great variety of viewpoints, especially considering the timing of some of the subjects. Some were historical, or may be hysterical, others were timely, as some saw the social changes coming in the early 20th Century. A few may be considered:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Ira L. Smith | Lonz Powers and The Regulators |
| W. W. Ray | More About Mother Goose |
| J.W. Downer | Edwin Booth |
| F.M. Brown | Radium – 1904 |
| R. L. Woodard | The Sanitary Needs of Hopkinsville - 1904 |
| John Stites | Alaska - 1905 |
| Jack Hanbery | Aaron Burr - 1906 |
| Barksdale Hamlette | Radio Activity - 1906 |
| L. McCartney | Peter, the Great - 1906 |
| T. J. McReynolds | Good Roads - 1906 |
| Ira L. Smith | The Automobile - 1907 |
| John Stites | Moving Pictures - 1911 |
| H. Clay Smith | The Income Tax - 1913 |

The society entered the electronic age when a microphone was used at the open meeting, May 2, 1929. In some recent years several members have been convinced that this same equipment is still in use.

On two occasions club members invited out of town groups to the annual meeting. In 1928, 25 members of Clarksville's Philomathean Society were present. Five years later that group returned along with the Forum Society of Princeton.

Many Athenaeum members have provided keen wit, biting sarcasm, brilliant use of the language, hilarious humor, and unusual feats and talents. Wit and wisdom have often been attempted, sometimes accomplished. A few examples follow.

Charles J. Petrie, longtime H.H.S. Principal, was delivering his first paper in 1934, "You, The Other Fellow, & I," when Charlie Meacham went to sleep. One member rebutted that Meacham was

snoring, another retorted that he was sneering at the paper.

A classic case of agitation occurred when Emmett Haydon resigned his membership in a huff. 'Twas December, 1939, and noticeably upset over some matter, he stormed from the Hotel Latham Club Dining Room. As he reached the door, Haydon turned to fellow members and said, "Gentleman, as I leave, will you take note of the item pinned to my coat tail, and act accordingly." The members looked and there was a sprig of mistletoe pinned to the gentleman's coat.

Attorney J. Waller Downer, a member for forty years, prepared his hour long discourses, thirty minutes over the limit, committed the entire document to memory and delivered it without a slip. This display of talent became a regular tradition.

Some members recall the brilliant sarcasm delivered in equal doses between Jack Henard and Bud Hudson. With raised voices to the shouting level these two minds would come forth to attempt destruction of the other. Neither ever succeeded.

On another occasion Gladstone Major delivered a lengthy discourse on Mahatma Gandhi. The biographical treatment droned on and on. Finally concluded, rebuttal time came. Arose Bob Fairleigh to state that the group had heard much about the life of Gandhi; in fact, more than they cared to know. Fairleigh went on to state though we had heard so much about the life and times of this famous Indian, strange it was that nothing was related about the Indian custom of cremation. No information had been given about the disposal of Gandhi's body. Fairleigh wistfully sighed, "sad that Major's paper was not on the funeral pyre with Gandhi's body."

Once Major's cousin, Brooks, gave a paper on Causes and Prevention of Boilers and Pressure Vessel Accidents. It was obvious to the group that the paper deliverer knew nothing about his subject. Knowledge of the subject is not a requirement.

Tom Roney once read a paper delivered in eloquent style, colorful language and brilliant vocabulary, but proved the point that these features were useless, when as he concluded, the members

realized he had treated no subject.

For one hundred years the Athenaeum Society has met in many interesting landmarks and has been favored with many delicious meals.

Hotel Latham, located on Virginia Street, between 6th and 7th, was the society's home for 38 years, from April, 1902, through the Open Session in May, 1940. Hosts there included; Capt. Lloyd W. Whitlow, George W. Thompson, and J. N. Brewer. In 1908, Sebree Springs Hotel operator, Albert D. Noe Sr. leased the Latham, bought the hotel in 1912, and with his daughter, Mrs. Nora Noe, served as genial host to the society for over thirty years. Many compliments came their way, especially at the Open Session.

The loss of Hotel Latham by fire, August 4, 1940, left the society without a home. Since that time, the Athenaeum has met in eighteen different locations. Landmark meeting places have included: Ninth Street Christian Church, the War Memorial Building, 41-Inn, Coach & Four, Bethel College, Log House and Lone Oak.

Reflections on the life and times of Athenaeum's 305 members across 100 years have given insights into the strength of this society. A brief observation into the lives of the eighteen charter members may reveal some dimension for the future.

Four members were lawyers; three doctors and one dentist; three were educators; journalists numbered three, two were bankers, and one merchant and one insurance agent rounded out the group. Ten were university graduates; three from the University of Virginia; five from Vanderbilt; and two from the University of Louisville. Five members had military experience; one in the Confederate Army; three were members of Co. "D" Latham Light Guards," and served in the Spanish-American War; and two members served in the army in France during World War I. In 1902, the youngest was 22, the oldest 66, and the average age was 35. The charter member record of year's membership was Charles M. Meacham, 41 years, and the last surviving charter member was Dr. Preston Thomas, who

died in 1961. Circuit Judge Ira D. Smith holds the longevity membership record. He joined in 1915, and died in 1988, 73 years a member of The Athenaeum Society.

CHARTER MEMBERS

William H. Harrison

William H. "Will" Harrison, society founder and a member for eighteen months, was Vice-President and a professor at Bethel Female College. He was born in March, 1869, in Richmond, Virginia, a son of another Athenaeum charter member Dr. Edmund Harrison and his wife, Kate Steger Harrison.

Will Harrison received the B.A. degree in 1888; the M.A. degree in 1889, both from Richmond College. He was principal of Franklin Academy, Isle of Wight County, Virginia, 1889 – 1893; professor of Natural Science, Locust Dale Academy, Madison County, Virginia, 1893 – 1894; and professor of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Brownsville College, Tennessee, 1894 – 1896. He was Professor of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at Bethel Female College here, and then served as President of Bethel (Male) College, Russellville, 1903 – 1907, before moving to Louisville where he became General Agent in Kentucky with the Connecticut Mutual Insurance Co. Later he became Superintendent of Agencies with headquarters in Hartford, Connecticut.

Will Harrison was one of the founders of Optimist International, and at its formation in Louisville, Kentucky, in June, 1919, he was elected the first International President of Optimist International and served until 1921. He was a member of the Commonwealth Club, the Rotary Club, and the Country Club of Virginia.

In 1926, Will Harrison became Vice-President of Atlantic Life Insurance Co., and moved to Richmond, Virginia, retiring from that position in 1941. The society founder visited the Athenaeum meeting in March, 1935.

The insurance executive died at his home, 1904 Hanover Avenue, Richmond, Virginia, October 9,

1944, and was buried in Hollywood Cemetery there. He and his wife, Rosa H. Harrison, 1874 – 1934, had four children: Katherine, Randolph, William H. and Benjamin Harrison.

Dr. Edmund Harrison

Dr. Edmund Harrison, President of Bethel Female College, 1896 – 1909, was a member of Athenaeum for seven years. He was born February 17, 1837, at “The Oaks,” the Amelia County, Virginia home of his grandparents, Edmund and Martha Wayles Skipwith Harrison. His early education was received at “The Wigwam,” home of his parents William H. and Lucy Anne Harrison. At the age of 16, Dr. Harrison joined “Old Mt. Tabor Baptist Church,” in Amelia County.

In 1858 he read law with an uncle, Judge Nat Harrison, at Salt Sulphur Springs, Virginia; taught school in 1855 in Cumberland County, Virginia; and he received the A.M. degree in law from the University of Virginia, in January, 1861. He taught at Southern Female Institute, in Richmond, that spring. That year he married Kate Steger, also of Amelia County. They had eight children, three of whom lived in Hopkinsville for a number of years.

When war was declared, young Harrison enlisted in the “Powhatan Troop,” Co. H, Fourth Virginia Cavalry, C.S.A.; later served on detached duty in Gen. J. E. B. Stuart’s Headquarters; and fought throughout the war. He was paroled with the rank of Major of Cavalry at the surrender of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston near Durham Station, North Carolina, April 26, 1865.

After the war, Dr. Harrison taught one year at Richmond Female Institute. In 1866, he assumed a chair of Latin in Richmond College, now the University of Richmond, where he taught for 29 years. During that time he was minister of West Main Street Baptist Church, later renamed Grove Avenue Baptist Church.

During Dr. Harrison’s tenure at Bethel, the college experienced a high standard for scholarship; its enrollment increased and its affiliation with the Baptist Education Society of Kentucky developed a more sound financial foundation. In 1904, the degree LL. D. was conferred on him by Georgetown

College.

Dr. Harrison was a positive leader, patient and deeply committed to young people. While in Hopkinsville he was a member of the Baptist Church and taught the Men's Bible Class. Upon retirement, the couple moved to Greensboro, N.C. to live, though they visited here from October, 1914 until May, 1915. He died at the home of his son, Roger Wayles Harrison, at Greensboro, North Carolina, March 19, 1916, and was buried in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery.

Edmund Harrison, was thirteenth in descent from the first Benjamin Harrison, of Surrey County, Virginia, Clerk of Council, 1634, and a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1642, and he was related to President William Henry Harrison.

The *Hopkinsville-Kentuckian* stated: "Personally Dr. Harrison was a man of striking presence. Tall and erect as an Indian, always a Chesterfield in courtesy, highly educated and widely informed on all subjects, he was a typical old time Virginia gentleman. As a soldier he was as brave as Caesar, as a Christian he was a shining example of true Christianity, as a scholar he possessed a mind of great strength stored with a wonderful accumulation of knowledge, as a minister he was fervent and zealous in the Master's cause and in prayer he was gifted as few men are."

George Clifton Long, Jr.

George Clifton Long, Jr. a member for two years, was born in Hopkinsville, February 9, 1878, only son of George C. Long Sr. President of First National Bank and Sallie Rowlett Long. He attended Clay Street School, graduated from South Kentucky College, and from the University of Virginia in 1900, with a degree in law. He engaged in the practice of law in a partnership with Judge Douglas Bell, until 1904, when he went to Houston, Texas, to enter the insurance business.

In 1906, Long became an agent for the Home Insurance Company and three years later he was named a special agent for the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company at New Orleans. In October, 1912, he was called to the home office in Hartford, Connecticut, and became Assistant Secretary, July 30,

1913.

He was elected Secretary, January 31, 1916; Vice-President, January 29, 1923; and President, May 10, 1937, with retirement on December 31, 1950.

Active in many professional insurance groups and civic affairs, Long was a leader in the Hartford community. He married Winnie Davis Flateau, of Dallas, Texas, October 14, 1909; they had three daughters; and he died July 15, 1958, in West Hartford, Connecticut, with burial in Fairview Cemetery there.

Thomas C. Underwood

Thomas C. "Tom" Underwood, a 24-year member, was editor of the *Kentucky New Era* for nearly 30 years. He was born in Hopkinsville, April 27, 1873, son of Capt. Ben T. Underwood, owner of a coal yard, and Mattie J. Randolph Underwood.

Underwood joined the paper staff in 1894, first as a reporter and then as editor. His work attracted attention all over the state, building for him an enviable reputation. He possessed a style all his own and his sparking wit and kindly humor, especially recognized in his daily front page columns, "Daily Jots," from January 8, 1915, until his death, and as an after dinner speaker, generated great appreciation from an admiring public.

The journalist was a member of the First Baptist Church where he taught a Sunday School class; he was Exalted Ruler and Secretary of the Hopkinsville Elks Lodge; a member of the Rotary Club; a staunch Democrat; and an avid golfer.

Tom Underwood married Frances "Fan" Rust, a daughter of Dr. Jacob W. Rust, longtime president of Bethel Female College. They had one son, Thomas Rust Underwood, editor of the Lexington Herald. Mrs. Underwood was active in the state Democratic Woman's club, serving as its president in 1933 - 1934.

The beloved editor died at their South Main Street home of pneumonia, January 20, 1926, and was

buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Following the death of Tom Underwood, his widow published selected writings of his columns.

The final entry in the last column serves as a fitting epitaph:

Just a Minute
“I have only just a minute,
Only sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me-can't refuse it,
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it,
But It's up to me to use it,
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it,
It is only but a minute,
But Eternity is in it.”

T.C.U.

Colonel E. B. Bassett

Colonel Erskine Birch “E.B.” Bassett, merchant and military officer, was an Athenaeum member for four years. He was born at Stephensport, Kentucky, June 23, 1867, son of James H. and Georgia Houston Bassett. The family moved to Louisville where young Bassett joined the Louisville Legion in 1883, the start of a military career which would span nearly four decades.

At the age of twenty, he moved to Hopkinsville, here to establish a dry goods business, Bassett & Co. located at Seventh and Main, the store remained in operation until about 1949.

The young military man became a 2nd Lt. in Co. D, Latham Light Guards, 3rd Ky. Inf.; served in the Spanish-American War; appointed Major in 3rd Ky. Inf.; and organized the posse which pursued the Night Riders out of Hopkinsville in 1907. Major Bassett was called into federal service, commanding the 3rd Regiment, when they were ordered to the Mexican border from September, 1916,

until March, 1917. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel in January, 1918, and was assigned to the 150th Inf., later to join the 38th Div. in France.

The merchant officer married Hallie E. Brown and they had five children. A great grandson is Judge Edwin White. Colonel Bassett died at his Cox Mill Road home, March 17, 1945, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Ira L. Smith

Ira L. Smith, bank trust officer, was a member of Athenaeum for 37 years. He was born near Fairview, March 11, 1861; attended Major Ferrell's School, in Hopkinsville, 1880 – 1881; and Vanderbilt University. Smith served as Trust Officer for old Planters Bank, 1884 – 1910; and as cashier, director, Vice-President and Trust Officer with City Bank & Trust Co., 1910 – 1939.

Community service included membership on the Hopkinsville City School Board; trustee of Carnegie Library and Jennie Stuart Memorial Hospital; and the Rotary Club. He was an active member of the Methodist Church.

In 1888, Smith married Aurine Williams, a teacher at City Street School. They had three children; Ira D. Circuit Judge, 3rd Kentucky Judicial District; Bank Cashier Tom Smith, and Evelyn Smith, wife of Judge Alvin H. Clark. David Clark is a grandson of Ira L. Smith. Banker Smith died June 24, 1939, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

John Stites

John Stites, army veteran and attorney, a thirty-year Athenaeum member, was born in Nashville, Tennessee, January 6, 1880, son of Wilson H. and Annie Salmon Stites.

After service as a Pvt. in Co. E, 3rd Ky. Vol. Inf. in the Spanish- American War, Stites obtained his law degree from the University of Virginia. He opened a practice in Hopkinsville after the turn of the century and was in partnership with Judge Joseph I. Landes.

Stites married Susan Boyd of Trigg County in 1916, and they had two children. After his death,

Mrs. Stites operated the dining room at Bethel Woman's College and at the Hopkinsville Golf and Country Club. He was a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church, a bible school teacher and an Elk. Attorney Stites died November 26, 1936, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Dr. F. Manning Brown

Dr. Felix Manning Brown, physician, an Athenaeum member for 31 years, was born in Nashville, Tennessee, April 28, 1871, son of a Methodist minister R.K. Brown D.D., and Sophia Manning Brown. After graduation from Vanderbilt University, he came to Hopkinsville in 1893, and practiced the medical specialty of ear, eye, nose, and throat treatment until he retired in 1933. He was a Methodist and a member of the Hopkinsville Golf and Country Club.

Dr. Brown married Elizabeth Long in 1897, and they had three children: Dr. Manning Brown, Dr. Robert K. Brown, and Madeline, wife of Capt. McFarland W. Wood, U.S. Navy. Mrs. Brown died in 1908, and Dr. Brown married Carlotta Gregory in 1922. He died January 25, 1938, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

The Kentucky New Era said of Dr. Brown, "Some doctors wear themselves out in great service, as did this noble man. In life he exemplified the highest tradition of his great profession. His integrity and honor were beyond question, and his high code of ethics might have been used as a standard. He was gentle and kind and no man stood higher in this community."

Dr. Frank M. Stites

Dr. Frank Montgomery Stites, physician and 17 year member Athenaeum member, was born north of Hopkinsville, February 27, 1868, son of John and Elizabeth Hunt Stites. After graduation from the University of Louisville in 1889, he opened a general medical practice in Hopkinsville and at a meeting in his Summers Building office, southwest corner of Main and Court Streets, the Athenaeum Society name was adopted. Dr. Stites was President of the Southern Kentucky Medical Association in 1902. He practiced for 53 years.

Dr. Stites married Mary Rodman Gant in 1891 and they reared their eight children in the historic Western-Gant-Stites Greek Revival home on East Seventh Street. He died at home January 26, 1943, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery. The home was destroyed by fire on November 28, 1945.

The *Kentucky New Era* eulogized Dr. Stites:

“Throughout the long years of his service, Dr. Stites has become the embodiment of the qualities that characterize the finest type of Christian physicians. He was a conscientious citizen, a devoted father, a consecrated Christian, unfailingly loyal to his ideals.”

William T. Tandy

William T. “Will” Tandy, banker and 13 year member of Athenaeum, was born in Trigg County, February 27, 1858, son of John D. and Bennetta Howell Tandy. The family moved to Hopkinsville in 1866 where young Tandy attended South Kentucky College, located on Belmont Hill.

Will Tandy’s work experience included serving as a clerk in the City Engineer’s Office, bookkeeper with J. K. Gant and Buckner & Wooldridge Tobacco Warehouses and then in 1888 he became Cashier at City Bank, and was chosen President in 1911. When City Bank and First National Bank merged in 1930; Mr. Tandy became the new First-City Bank & Trust Co. President and served until his death, March 28, 1937. Banker Tandy was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Tandy first married Ermine Stoner and they had one son, Clarke Howell Tandy, the first Rhodes Scholar from Kentucky to Oxford. His second wife was Mattie Hickman. Among their four children was Houston banker William L. “Bill” Tandy, who with his wife, was the public library benefactor.

Charles M. Meacham

Charles M. “Charlie” Meacham Sr., journalist, mayor, and historian, was a member of Athenaeum for 41 years. He was born near Gracey, June 14, 1858, son of Baptist Minister A.W. Meacham and Mariam Lander Meacham. He was admitted to the Hopkinsville Bar in 1879, but turned his attention to the publication of the *Hopkinsville-Kentuckian*, a newspaper he published from 1879 until 1920.

The journalist was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1892; President of the Kentucky Press Association in 1893; Mayor of Hopkinsville, 1906 – 1914; board member at Western Kentucky Lunatic Asylum; moderator of Bethel Baptist Association and the Christian County Baptist Association; trustee of Bethel Woman's College; and compiler of a History of Christian County in 1930. He wrote the Daily Tabloid column in the Kentucky New Era from the late 1920's until the early 1940's.

Meacham married Lizzie Tandy and they had three children. He died in Hopkinsville, February 2, 1943, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Livingstone McCartney

Livingstone McCartney, city school superintendent, was an Athenaeum member only a few months before he left Hopkinsville. Born in Green Springs, Ohio, in September, 1860, he served as Superintendent of Schools at Hannibal, Missouri, 1889-1891, and he served as Hopkinsville Public Schools Superintendent, 1895 –1902. During his local tenure the Virginia Street School was constructed in 1901. His family resided in a home on the site of the present First United Methodist Church.

Professor McCartney was elected Superintendent of the Henderson, Kentucky, city schools in 1902 and served until 1909. He returned to Hannibal, Missouri, where he was superintendent from 1909 until 1931, and then he became associated with Lyon & Carnahan, a Chicago textbook publishing firm, remaining 8 years.

Due to advanced age he retired in the fall of 1940, and with his wife, Mable, moved back to Henderson to live with their only daughter. He also had three sons. The professor died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Marvin L. Katterjohn, May 9, 1941. Funeral services were held at Park Methodist Church Hannibal, Missouri, with burial there.

Dr. F. Preston Thomas

Dr. F. Preston Thomas, dean of Hopkinsville physicians and a two year member of Athenaeum, was born at St. Elmo, October 24, 1873, son of Dr. Joseph P. Thomas and Louisa Radford Thomas. He attended Major Ferrell's School in Hopkinsville, 1886-1887, and he graduated from the University of Louisville, opened practice in Hopkinsville in 1894; closed his office in 1956, though he continued to treat patients in his home until 1959. Four generations were treated by the silver haired physician.

Dr. Thomas served a year as a medical officer in army hospitals in France during World War I. He was a member of Salem Baptist Church.

Dr. Thomas married Lizzie Mercer and they had three children. He died at home June 5, 1961, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

His far-reaching reputation as a specialist in childhood diseases attracted a practice extending over a wide area. People grew to cherish his advice, as a family friend on problems of every day living.

For years the physician waged a one-man campaign to gain greater display of the American Flag on patriotic days. He had seen the flag redesigned seven times in his lifetime with the addition of new states as he displayed it in front of his home on the 4th of July for over 60 years.

Dr. E. H. Barker

Dr. Elijah H. "Trump" Barker, dentist, was an Athenaeum member for eight years. He was born near Barker's Mill, May 18, 1875, son of John W. and Fannie Elliott Barker. Dr. Barker graduated from Vanderbilt University; located a practice in Trenton; and moved to Hopkinsville about 1898. His office was located in the Garnett Building above Higgins Drug Store at Ninth and Main and there he died suddenly March 10, 1948.

Dr. Barker married Robbie Carothers of LaFayette and they had one daughter. A grandson is Brooke Lawson. The dentist was a quiet unassuming man, an avid golfer and a member of the Methodist Church. He was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Tom Underwood said of his friend E. H. Barker;

“Sure as the vine grows round the stump,
In life’s game you are a “Trump.”

A. Walker Wood

Alfred Walker “A.W.” Wood, editor of the *Kentucky New Era*, was a member of Athenaeum for eight years. He was born on East Seventh Street, October 25, 1869, son of Hunter and Rosalie Nelson Green Wood. He attended Clay Street School, Major Ferrell’s School, 1880 – 1882; graduated from South Kentucky College in 1886; and attended the University of the South Sewanee, Tennessee. He then entered the office of the *Kentucky New Era*, owned by his father, and became editor in 1900. For forty years he provided leadership which built the paper into a first class small town publication.

Mr. A. W. married Madge Fairleigh and they had three children. He served as Hopkinsville City Auditor and treasurer for eight years, councilman two years; school board member 14 years; a director of the Bank of Hopkinsville; vestryman at Grace Episcopal Church; a Mason, and a member of the Knights of Pythias. He died at his East Seventh Street home September 12, 1941, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery. Three grand daughters now, live in Hopkinsville, Becky Wood, Nita Wood Shiver and Madge Wood Bragg.

Albert P. Crockett

Albert Percy Crockett, attorney and oil executive, was an Athenaeum member a few months. Born in Williamson County, Tennessee, December 3, 1868, he was educated at Trinity Church School, Webb’ Academy, and received the B. A. and L. L. B. degree from Vanderbilt University. After practice in Elkton one year, he came to Hopkinsville in 1896, practicing law eight years and also serving as City Attorney. In 1907 Crockett married Elizabeth Russell, daughter of J. D. Russell of Hopkinsville.

In 1904, Crockett moved to Oklahoma City where he established a very successful law practice in the firm of Burwell, Crockett, and Johnson. In 1913 he formed and became President of the Fortuna Oil Co. and accumulated a fortune. Crockett was a 32 Mason, a Shriner, Elk, a Democrat, and a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity. The attorney died in Nashville, Tennessee, October 29, 1919, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

John Feland

John Feland, attorney and state representative was a member of Athenaeum four years. Born in Hopkinsville, May 30, 1866, he studied law at Vanderbilt University. The Kentucky Legislature passed a special act, which permitted him to practice in the courts before he reached the age of 21.

Feland became 1st Lt. of the new Co. D., organized July, 18, 1885, and was Captain when the company was ordered to Lexington, May 10, 1898, for service in the Spanish-American War. On April 29, students at Clay Street School presented the company with an American Flag. Capt. Feland responded to the students, "we will plant this flag on the sands of Cuba, or tell a just God in his heaven why not." The company traveled by train to Lexington where an intoxicated Feland was removed from command. No one knew where the flag flew.

Feland opened a law practice in Hopkinsville and entered politics, serving one term in the state legislature, 1908. He became a campaign speaker, and in time a brilliant orator, often sought after for public occasions. In 1887 he married Emma Walker, of Louisville, and they had three children. He died in Hopkinsville October 6, 1918, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

John T. Hanbery

John T. "Jack" Hanbery, attorney and Circuit Judge, 1910 – 1916, was for fourteen years an Athenaeum member. He was born at LaFayette, October 26, 1867, son of Thomas C. Hanbery and his wife Arminta. In 1880 he joined Little River Baptist Church and later First Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, where he taught the Fidelis Bible Class.

After attending South Kentucky College, he worked as a shipping clerk in the tobacco warehouse of Buckner & Wooldridge. He then studied law in the office of Judge Joseph I. Landes. In 1899 Hanbery was appointed City Attorney and in 1909 he defeated Circuit Judge Thomas P. Cook in the 3rd Judicial District. A Democrat, Judge Hanbery was reelected for a second term in 1915.

Judge Hanbery was a Mason, Elk, Knight of Pythias and a Woodman. In 1896 he married Nola Rowe and they roomed at Phelps Boarding House on South Main Street where he died of cancer, August 6, 1916. He was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

'Tis a Thursday night, the 4th of April, 2002, when 31 men are gathered for entertainment and dinner at Holiday Inn. In two weeks, the Athenaeum Society will mark the centennial of its organization.

Five score years have passed since the 18 charter members gathered to share information, thoughts and opinions. A tidal wave of events, world, national, and local have defined the era in which our 305 men have lived.

Reflections now turn to reality. The town is a city of 33,000, encompassing 18,688 acres, or 29.2 square miles. It extends 6.7 miles east to west from the intersection of Dr. MLK Way and the Russellville Road to Canton Pike and Pyle Lane; and 6.4 miles, north to south, from North 41 and Eagle Way Bypass to LaFayette Road and Lovers Lane.

Fifty-six industries employ 6,500 people. Agriculture, with 463,417 total acres, 309,615 acres in cultivation, ranks 9th in Kentucky production - \$67,818,000 in 2001. The average farm is 267 acres.

Crop income figures for 2001 include: livestock, \$21,463,000; tobacco, Burley - 3,480,100 lbs., Dark - 4,372,000 lbs.; corn, 77,200 acres, 8,183,200 Bu.; soybeans, 57,400 acres, 1,951,000 Bu. and wheat, 47,000 acres, 2,773,00 Bu.

Athenaeum membership now includes: 13 retirees; 7 attorneys; 3 doctors; 20 with military service, with four veterans from World War II, two from Korea, and four from Viet Nam. Three educators;

one journalist; 7 businessmen, one stockbroker, one insurance agent, one banker, one broadcaster; and one musician make the group.

All members are college graduates: 7 from Murray; 5 , U of L; 5, U of K; 5 from Vanderbilt; and 3 from Western. Other colleges represented in the membership are Austin Peay State University, Peabody, Middle Tennessee State University, Washington State, Northern Kentucky University, University of West Florida, Centre, University of Missouri, Kentucky Wesleyan, Stetson, Northwestern, Sussex, Purdue, Sanford, Yale, Phillips, University of Tampa, Auburn University, Indiana University, and Kansas State University.

In 2002, the youngest member is 33, the oldest is 83, and the average age is 59. What more can be said? **WHAT A GROUP!**