

131 DAWSON, SAMUEL G. – [SAMUEL GAINES DAWSON]
Editor & Publisher Lynchburg

Publisher of the *Lynchburg Press* (1817-19) in partnership with Jacob Haas (196).

Dawson was primarily a physician in his short life, with a brief period as a journalist coming early in his adulthood. At just sixteen, he left Amherst County as a surgeon's assistant in a militia brigade at the start of the War of 1812; he returned in 1815 as a practicing doctor following the death of his attending physician during the war. He settled in the market town of Salem in Roanoke County in private practice and married a descendent of the powerful colonial-era Burwell family from adjacent Botetourt County.

In October 1817, Dawson began his journalism career by joining with Jacob Haas, a New Market-trained printer who married his maternal aunt, as a partner in and the editor of the *Lynchburg Press*, succeeding another physician in that role, Samuel K. Jennings (236). After a fairly placid tenure in the editorial chair, Dawson gave up journalism and returned to his practice in Salem. Though family lore reports that he sold his interest in the paper to John Hampden Pleasants (330), the later proprietor of the *Press*, in fact, Dawson sold his interest in April 1819 to William Duffy (150), a printer from Philadelphia by way of Georgetown, D.C.; Duffy then bought Haas out a month later, taking full ownership of the newspaper at that time; it was in April 1820 that Pleasants bought into the *Press* as Duffy's partner, before he then bought him out that September, seventeen months after Dawson's withdrawal.

Dawson kept up his Salem practice until 1831 when he evidently used the bounty-warrants earned in his military service to acquire a farm near Zanesville, Ohio, in Putnam Township. Once again, he took up a medical practice to support his family of ten children. But he did not long enjoy the new situation; he died in Putnam in late 1835.

Personal Data

Born: In 1796 Amherst County, Virginia
Married: Jan. 25 1816 Maria Burwell @ Botetourt County, Virginia
Died: Dec. 7 1835 Putnam, Muskingum County, Ohio
Children: Edmonia, Edwin, Fannie, Nelson, Rosalie, Thomas, Martha, Lucy,
Mary, Samuel Jr.

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Federal Decennial Census, 1820-30; Dawson, *Collection of Family Records*.