

Beckwith, John Watrus ^[1]

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by [William S. Powell](#) ^[2], 1979

1 Feb. 1831–23 Nov. 1890



John Watrous Beckwith. Second Bishop of Georgia, 1868-1890. Archives of The Diocese of Georgia An Episcopal Diocese of Georgia site.

^[3]John Watrus Beckwith, [Episcopal](#) ^[4]bishop, was born in [Raleigh](#) ^[5], the son of Margaret Stanly and [John Beckwith](#) ^[6]. In 1852 he was graduated from [Trinity College](#) ^[7], Hartford, Conn., and a short while later was admitted a candidate for holy orders in North Carolina. Ordained to the diaconate by Bishop [Thomas Atkinson](#) ^[8] in May 1854, he was assigned to Calvary Church, Wadesboro. A year later he was advanced to the priesthood and soon moved to Anne Arundell County, Md. After serving parishes in Mississippi and Alabama, he became a chaplain in the [Confederate Army](#) ^[9], serving for a time on the staff of [General Leonidas Polk](#) ^[10], who had been bishop of Louisiana. By his eloquence, Beckwith is said to have exerted great influence over the soldiers who came in contact with him. In 1865 he became rector of Trinity Church, New Orleans, where he was serving when elected bishop of Georgia in 1868. He was consecrated on 2 Apr. at St. John's Church, Savannah, and later in the year both his alma mater and the [University of Georgia](#) ^[11] conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology. A conservative churchman, he was described as "one of the most eminent men the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South has produced." He was a modest man and is said to have declined to preach before [Queen Victoria](#) ^[12] on one occasion and on another to have declined an invitation to preach in [Westminster Abbey](#) ^[13]. He frequently visited his native state and often preached there, however.

He married Ella Brockinborough of Virginia, and they were the parents of John F., Ella, and Bessie. He was buried in Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta.

References:

B. C. Beckwith, *John Bailey Beckwith, M.D.* (1893).

Paul Beckwith, *The Beckwiths* (1891).

New York Times, 24 Nov. 1890.

Additional Resources:

John Watrous Beckwith sermons, Hargrett Manuscripts, University of Georgia Libraries:
<http://hmfa.libs.uga.edu/hmfa/view?docId=ead/ms50-ead.xml> ^[14]

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Beckwith Family Papers, 1852-1889 (collection no. 01267-z). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/b/Beckwith_Family.html ^[15] (accessed April 3, 2013).

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Beckwith, Paul (Paul Edmond). *"The Beckwiths"*. Albany, N.Y. : J. Munsell's Sons. 1891.
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