

## **Johnson, Ann Swepson Boyd Hawkins Russell** <sup>[1]</sup>

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by Helen R. Watson, 1988

**6 Jan. 1788–1861[?]**

Ann Swepson Boyd Hawkins Russell Johnson, proprietor-manager for seventeen years of the famous Warren County <sup>[2]</sup> spa, Shocco Springs, was born in Mecklenburg County, Va. Her parents were Alexander Boyd, a well-known Scottish merchant and landowner of that county, and his wife, Ann Swepson, the daughter of Richard Swepson. The children of Alexander Boyd were William, Robert, Richard, Alexander, James, David, John, Jane Anderson, Ann Swepson, Mary Frances, and Susannah.

Ann Swepson Boyd's education was provided for until age sixteen by the terms of her father's will. Shortly before reaching that age she married, on 24 Dec. 1803, William Hawkins <sup>[3]</sup>, a member of the illustrious Hawkins family of Granville <sup>[4]</sup>–Warren <sup>[2]</sup>–Vance <sup>[5]</sup> counties, N.C., and later governor of North Carolina (1811–14). After Hawkins's untimely death in 1819, she married, on 8 Apr. 1824, Richard Russell, a wealthy planter of Warren County. Russell died in 1825, and on 9 June 1826 she married Robert R. Johnson, a socially prominent entrepreneur also of Warren County.

Johnson lived less than a year after their marriage. He had recently bought Shocco Springs, and within three months of his death his widow opened it for the season. Allotted the resort by her husband's administrators on condition that she relinquish all other claims to his estate, she finally purchased Shocco Springs at the auction of his land. In less than seven years Ann Johnson more than doubled the accommodations. Until 1844, when she sold the spa, she continued to develop the facility and to build its reputation for hospitality, excellent cuisine, and fashionable amusement. Season after season wealthy and prominent families returned for the frequent balls, supper parties, concerts, and social mingling as well as for the curative waters. In 1832, she also opened a girl's school there. Her achievements, known as far as New York, supplied the basis for later additional expansion of Shocco Springs.

Ann Johnson had nine children: Emily, Celestia, Matilda, Lucy, William, Henrietta, and Mary Jane Hawkins; Louis (or Lewis) Henry Russell; and Roberta D. Johnson. She is said to have died in 1861 in Holly Springs, Miss.

#### **References:**

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*Warrenton Reporter*, 16 Aug. 1825.

#### **Additional Resources:**

Hawkins Family Papers, 1738-1895, UNC-Chapel Hill Libraries: [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Hawkins\\_Family.html](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Hawkins_Family.html) <sup>[6]</sup>

#### **Subjects:**

Biographies <sup>[7]</sup>

Women <sup>[8]</sup>

#### **Authors:**

Watson, Helen R. <sup>[9]</sup>

#### **Origin - location:**

Warren County <sup>[10]</sup>

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