

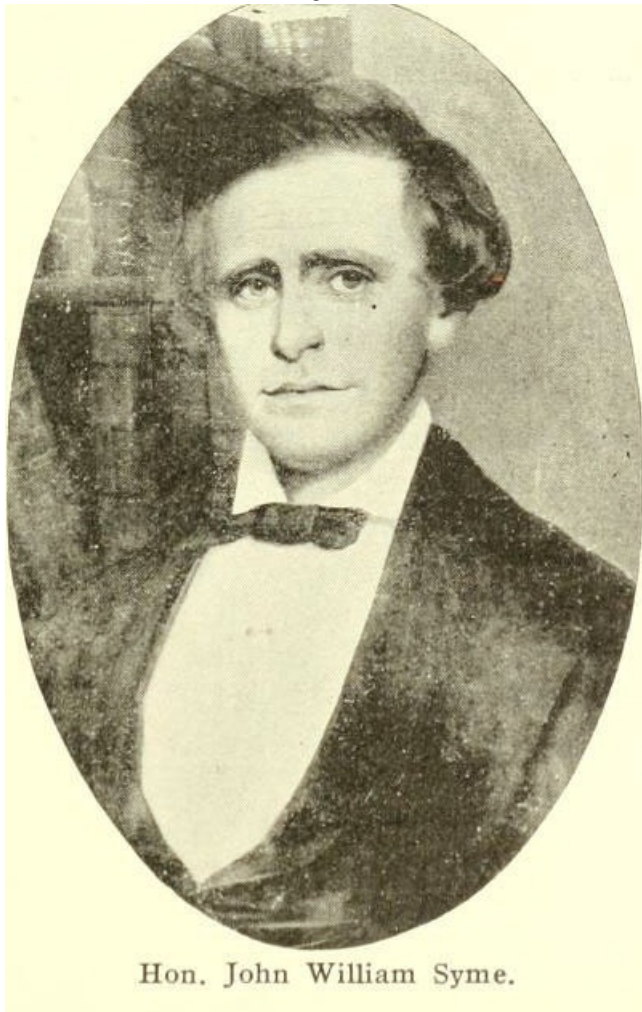
## Syme [Pronounced Sim ], John William <sup>[1]</sup>

### Syme [Pronounced *Sim* ], John William

by William S. Powell, 1994

**6 Jan. 1811–26 Nov. 1865**

John William Syme [Pronounced *Sim* ], newspaper editor and legislator, was born in Petersburg, Va., the only child of the Reverend Andrew Syme, rector of St. Paul's Church, and his wife, Jean Matherson Cameron, the sister of [Duncan Cameron](#) <sup>[2]</sup>. His grandfather was the Reverend John Cameron, rector of Bristol Parish. Young Syme was educated at Partridge's Military School in Middletown, Conn., and attended the [College of William and Mary](#) <sup>[3]</sup> during the period 1827–29. He studied law in [Hillsborough](#) <sup>[4]</sup> under Judge [Frederick Nash](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and began to practice in Petersburg, but after a short time he became editor of the *Petersburg Intelligencer*, a leading Whig paper. On 9 July 1838, as a printer, he was elected a member of the Petersburg Benevolent Mechanic Association.



The Capital City Press. Presented on Internet Archive.

<sup>[6]</sup>

Syme served five consecutive terms in the [Virginia Assembly](#) <sup>[7]</sup> (1845–50), where he was a strong advocate of [internal improvements](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, particularly railroads. He was a popular public speaker and an editor of firm convictions. In December 1856 he purchased the [Raleigh](#) <sup>[9]</sup> *Register* and in late January moved to Raleigh from Petersburg. He pledged to continue to support Whig policies and to promote the prosperity of the state. Moreover, he bought new equipment and improved the format of the newspaper.

During these pre–Civil War years Syme expressed Union sentiments, but with the threat of Federal coercion of a state, he changed completely. From 1861 his was an intense voice supporting the South. He was the official printer to the Secession Convention in Raleigh in 1861, and the journal of that body was issued from his press. The scarcity of paper in 1863 and the need for a newspaper in Petersburg persuaded Syme to move his press and the *Register* to his native city. He maintained that his interests would now be divided, but that North Carolina would still have his support. His family, in fact, remained in Raleigh. Finally in August 1864 he was obliged to cease publication because of the scarcity of supplies, and thereafter he divided his time between Petersburg and Raleigh. He lived for only a little over a year after his paper

was shut down.

Syme's wife was Mary C. Madden, a native of North Carolina (probably [Orange County](#) <sup>[10]</sup>). They were the parents of seven children: Jean Cameron (died in infancy), Elizabeth Battle, Mary Louise, Andrew, Duncan Cameron, Mildred Cameron, and John Cameron.

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## Authors:

[Powell, William S.](#) <sup>[20]</sup>

## Origin - location:

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[Hillsborough](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

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[Raleigh](#) <sup>[24]</sup>

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