

## Sketch of the Life of Dr. Harvey Black

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Ass't. Phy. (Assistant Physician), Southwestern Lunatic Asylum

*[Transcription and Endnotes by Clara B. Cox]*

*[Note: This article is a transcription of a hand-written tribute to and biography of Dr. Harvey Black, a nineteenth century physician whose skill was known across the Commonwealth of Virginia and whose contributions to education in his hometown of Blacksburg, Virginia, provided the genesis of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).<sup>2</sup> Dr. John Samuel Apperson, a physician who worked with Black and, after Black's death, married his daughter, penned the tribute/biography not long after Black died in 1888.<sup>3</sup> The original manuscript can be found in the Black, Kent, and Apperson Families Papers in Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, and is published here with the permission of Aaron D. Purcell, director of Special Collections.]<sup>4</sup>*

Dr. Harvey Black,<sup>5</sup> son of Alexander and Elizabeth (née McDonald) Black, was born at Blacksburg, Montgomery Co. [County], Va., on the 27th day of August 1827 and died at St. Luke's Home, Richmond, Va., on the 19th day of October 1888.

He was the second child of a family of twelve children, several of whom are still living. His father being a farmer, like most boys similarly situated at that day, he was brought up working on the farm and attending the common schools of his neighborhood. Evidently, for his opportunity, he made good progress in the acquisition of knowledge, because at about eighteen years of age, or soon thereafter, we learn that he taught school for a while. About this time, too, he undertook the study of medicine, first with Dr. McNutt, and afterward with Dr. Edie of Christiansburgh.<sup>6</sup>

In the year 1847, he enlisted as a soldier for the Mexican War, and went with Capt. James F. Preston's Co. 1st Reg't. [Regiment], Va. Vols [Volunteers] (Col. Hamtramck).<sup>7</sup> After three months service in the ranks, he was appointed Hospital Steward, and remained as such until mustered out of service.

Returning from Mexico in 1848, he continued in the study of his chosen profession, entering the medical class of 1848–9 at the University of Virginia, and graduated at the close of his first session. Immediately after this he took an excursion trip as far west as Iowa, travelling mainly on horseback through several of the three comparatively new Western states. Finding no location suited to his taste, he returned to his native town and began the practice of his profession amongst the friends and companions of his youth, those who knew him best, and who in after years were proud to accord to him the highest place in their estimation, not only as a thoroughly practical and reliable physician, but as a man endowed with the loftiest attributes of his race.

On the 15th day of September 1852, he was united in marriage to Miss Mary Irby Kent.<sup>8</sup> This alliance proved in every way felicitous, and by the never flagging devotion and encouragement she gave him, contributed a great deal to his success; and when in the last years of his life, physical suffering came to his bedside, her constancy and faithfulness in [during] his affliction more precious and sweet to his soul.

Four children, three sons and one daughter, were born to them, all of whom, with the mother, are still living.<sup>9</sup>

From this date, 1852, until the breaking out of the civil war in 1861, he applied himself closely to the practice of his profession, and it should be added, studied also because he was always a student and kept fully abreast with the advances in his profession, as well as with the general topics of the day.

When the alarm of war [the Civil War] was sounded and Virginians asked to contribute their share, he responded at once and was assigned duty as surgeon of the 4th Va. Reg't. of Infantry (Col. James F. Preston, his old Mexican war captain) at Harper's Ferry. The brigade, afterwards known as "Stonewall" and as such will ever be known in history, was here organized, and the 4th Reg't became a part of it. This gave Dr. Black a close relationship as official aide with General Jackson, and with Dr. Hunter McGuire,<sup>10</sup> and was the basis of a lifelong friendship between them.

Though technically surgeon of the 4th Va. Reg't, he not infrequently acted in the capacity of brigade or division surgeon until that most sanguinary engagement, second battle of Manassas,<sup>11</sup> where he was placed in charge of its hospitals at Aldie<sup>12</sup> and vicinity. After this he was not again on duty with his old regiment.

The activity displayed by both the Federal and Confederate armies in numerous pitched battles following each other in rapid succession during the year 1862 and the large numbers of wounded falling to the care of the medical officers of the line had impressed the fact upon the commanding



Dr. John S. Apperson worked during and after the Civil War with Dr. Harvey Black and wrote a biography of and tribute to him following Dr. Black's death. He also married Dr. Black's only daughter, Elizabeth Arabella Black, known as "Lizzie" or "Lizzie Belle," after Dr. Black died. Pictured above are the Appersons with their children. Left to right are Kent, Lizzie, Alexander, John, Mary E., and Harvey Black. Used courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, the photograph is part of the Black, Kent, Apperson Families Papers, Ms1974-003, held in Special Collections.

officers that other facilities were necessary for the better care of the sick and wounded. This [illegible] want was supplied by the establishment of a receiving hospital, intermediate in position and work, between the regimental surgeons in the field and the general hospital.

Near Guiney's [Guinea], in Carolina Co. [Caroline County], a few days before the battle of Fredericksburgh, the plan was put into effect and the Field Hospital 2nd Corps A.N.V. [Army of Northern Virginia] was organized with Dr. Black in charge.

One word of digression here intended to show not only the importance to the army of this organization, but also to recount a testimonial in behalf of the sagacity, foresight, and thoughtful care for the sick and wounded by the Commanding General and medical staff of the Confederate army. This hospital of the 2nd Corps was the first separate department of this character established by either army, and notwithstanding the meager supply of

medical stores and hospital supplies at any time available to the Confederate army, was as thoroughly equipped and as complete in arrangements as any of its kind afterwards.

With its Corps of Surgeons, assistant surgeons, hospital stewards, nurses, quartermaster and commissary departments; wagons, ambulances, teams, tents, stores, etc, even to the extent of an efficient matron and a small herd of dairy cows, it followed the army in all its campaigns, looking after and caring for the wounded and when marching or in winter quarters took charge of and provided for the sick whenever this could not be done by the regimental surgeons. Over all this until the scene closed at Appomattox, Dr. Black presided with a sagacious fidelity and impartiality that won for him the approval of his superiors and the love and esteem of all with whom he came in contact.

The war over, he returned to his family at Blacksburgh and resumed his private practice, looked after the education of his children, doing cheerfully and faithfully whether for public or private good whatever his hands found to do.

By an act of Congress a donation was made to the States and territories of public lands to enable them to provide colleges for the benefit of agricultural and mechanic's art.<sup>13</sup> Virginia accepted the donation and allowed competition for the location of these schools.<sup>14</sup> Always on the alert for the good of his people, with others he went at once into the work of getting that valuable improvement for his native county, and succeeded in carrying a vote sufficient to secure by purchase the Preston and Olin Institute with a farm attached.<sup>15</sup> Somewhere in the transaction there were difficulties in making transfers of title, and it became necessary, and he and his friends took upon themselves a personal responsibility for a considerable sum of money, and the Agricultural and Mechanical College<sup>16</sup> was established at Blacksburgh.

Dr. Black was made Rector of the Board of Directors,<sup>17</sup> and gave the work of erecting additional buildings much valuable time from his own private affairs, and had the satisfaction of seeing the college organized and under way.

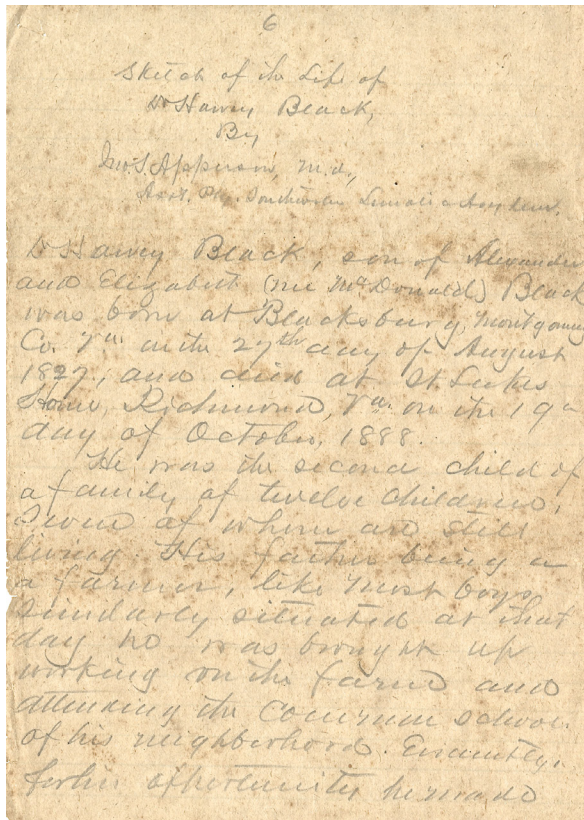
In 1872, he attended a meeting in Staunton of the Medical Society of Virginia and received the merited compliment of being elected President. At the meeting in Norfolk the ensuing year, he presided with dignity and grace, and delivered an instructive address on Irregular Practitioners and Proprietary Medicines.<sup>18</sup>

On the 19th day of November 1875, without applying for it or doing anything whatsoever to secure it, in fact without his knowledge, he was elected Superintendent of the Eastern Lunatic Asylum. This was a new field

of labor for him, and he hesitated to accept the place. After visiting the asylum and duly considering the matter in all its phases, he did accept and with his family moved to Williamsburg where the asylum was located and entered upon the discharge of his duties there Jan'y [January] 1st 1876, and remained in charge until March 10th 1882.

In this as in every other line of duty to which he was called he measured fully up to the requirements.

This new field of labor, however, taxed him severely. Administrative ability he possessed in a remarkable degree but he had no experience as an alienist.<sup>19</sup> He assumed the responsibilities of the position without flinching, and by unremitting assiduity rapidly gained both a theoretical and practical



Dr. John S. Apperson's hand-written biography of Dr. Harvey Black is part of the Black, Kent, Apperson Families Papers, Ms1974-003, held in Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg. This scan of the first page of the biography is used courtesy of Special Collections.



knowledge of mental diseases. With no prejudices to gratify, and no extreme views to press, always carefully deferential to the opinions of others, yet firm in what he believed to be right, he grew in influence and popularity, so that when an adverse administration caused his removal there was a deep feeling of regret throughout the state. Political spoilsmen indifferent to the welfare of the institution or the relief of the poor unfortunates whom the law had taken in charge, demanded his place, and he returned to his native county, and like the true citizen he was, applied himself again to his private practice.

Several years previous to this date, the necessity for another lunatic asylum to be located somewhere in the southwestern part of the state had been urged. A few years later it was proposed, and by an act of the General Assembly appointed March 29th, 1884, a Board of Commissioners was appointed for the purpose of establishing a site for "another lunatic asylum to be known as the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum for the accommodation of white lunatics, such site shall be selected in this state west of New River." Dr. Black was made a member of this Commission.

In compliance with the act the Commissioners met at Central Depot<sup>20</sup> on the 4th day of June 1884 and organized. Several counties entered the lists in competition.<sup>21</sup> When the Commission reached Marion, and the County Committee of Smythe<sup>22</sup> had shown the property offered by their county, Dr. Black, upon whose judgment the Commission in a great measure relied, saw at once the extraordinary advantages of the site tendered, and after visiting several other counties, the Commission selected the one in Smythe Co., on which the asylum was subsequently built. The last meeting of the Commission was held at the residence of Dr. Black, he being there confined to his bed because of sickness.

By another act of the General Assembly approved Nov. 29th, 1884, all the preliminary arrangements as to transfer of titles etc. having [been] made, the building committee was appointed with Dr. Black as chairman (made so by the act) to carry into effect all the provisions of the act providing for the erection of the building.<sup>23</sup> Dr. Black convened this committee at Marion, Jan'y 13th 1885, and it was organized, and under his direction went to work getting up plans. Plans were adopted, a visit made to a number of other asylums, plans changed in accordance with suggestions received by examination of other asylums and conversing with other asylum men. [On] June 9th, '85 [the] building [was] let to contract and [its] completion [was on] Feb'y [February] 10th 87 [1887] and [it] opened to receive patients [the] 17th day of May following.

During this period, notwithstanding Dr. Black's health was much impaired, he never stopped work or complained. He was a leading spirit

in it all. A few times [Dr. Black] was unable to attend the meetings of the building committee, but never failed to show that he was there in spirit and interested in the work. [He was w]atchful always that the business should be carefully attended to, even in its minutest details.

With his hands already full, he was, at this time, asked to undertake for the good of his state another duty. His county having a republican majority, in the election for the House of Delegates 1885, he was urged to take the field as the candidate of his party. Upon the ground of his popularity, his reputation as a physician and his large acquaintance with the people of his county, in addition his intelligent foresight and discretion in the management of whatever was entrusted to him, his party friends settled upon him as the most suitable candidate for the work before them. Because of his failing health, and because he had on hand as much work as he could conveniently do, reluctantly he undertook the race. The contest was warm and active, and Dr. Black was elected by a small majority.

The following winter he spent in Richmond, serving as a member of the House [of Delegates], and he exhibited here the same characteristic fidelity to duty that stands so conspicuously in his life's history. His presence in the General Assembly greatly aided the prosecution of the work at the Southwestern Asylum by the passage of an act appropriating money for its equipment. The next winter an extra session of the General Assembly was called, and he spent this winter in Richmond also.

The Asylum building completed and ready for occupation, the Board of Directors appointed to take charge of its affairs, met March 1, 1887, and unanimously elected Dr. Black its first Superintendent. This was not unexpected, indeed had it been otherwise, a great disappointment would have been felt in ever[y] portion of the state. It was well nigh a conceded fact on every hand that not only was a simple act of justice done by conferring upon him the [word omitted by Apperson but probably would have been "appointment"] but also, because of his peculiar fitness for the place, the Asylum was signally fortunate in being able to command his services.

In October following, his health became so much impaired that it was necessary for him to go to the city of Richmond, where under the hands of that eminent surgeon, Dr. Hunter McGuire, he underwent an operation for stone in the bladder from which he had been suffering for several years. His health did not improve to the extent his friends desired, and he was unable to leave Richmond until March following.

As the Legislature of Virginia was then in session, although he was sick and confined to his bed most of the time, yet he was in constant communication with such members of the Senate and House of Delegates

as were endeavoring to secure the passage of an act appropriating money for the enlargement of the Asylum of which he was superintendent. Besides this he gave valuable aid to the direction of the affairs of the Asylum at home.

After his return to the Asylum, although far from being well, yet he remained faithfully at his post until October 5, laboring in the interest of an institution he loved more perhaps than any other work he had ever undertaken.

He desired very much to remain until the 15th of the month in order to meet the Board and in person submit the Annual Report for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30.

The report was written almost entirely in bed, and sometimes even when in great pain, he would refer to something he wished to note, and between paroxysms of suffering would discuss what he thought would be best for the future good of the institution and its inmates. No matter how ill he was, rarely if at all, was an employee or a patient denied an audience with him, and to each he would give a patient hearing. It was not unusual for him to say, when importuned to give up work, that he desired to wear out—that employment afforded some relief to pain. He did not quite finish his report, leaving a request that he might be allowed to add his signature and a few paragraphs with reference to the different departments.

When he returned to Richmond, it was found upon examination that another operation was necessary which was performed on October 8. From this he grew weaker and gradually declined,—dying from exhaustion—“worn out” as he so often said he desired to end.

His death was calm and quiet, and as gradual as the fading light of a summer’s eve. Though surrounded by his grief stricken family, no outburst of emotion broke the mournful silence of that chamber. As in life he had been gentle so his end was tranquil and peaceful. Nearly the last words the writer heard from his lips were truly indicative of a feeling and desire that must have been present with him very often during the last two or three years of his life; pale and worn as he was at the time, they are deeply interesting in this connection.— On his last trip to Richmond, when a change of [train] cars had been made, he seemed to be uncomfortable on his seat, and was asked if it would not be better for him to lie down on a berth which was then being prepared for him. He quoted a couplet from a little poem which seems to have been a favorite:—

Brothers, I have done my best,  
I am weary, let me rest.<sup>24</sup>



His remains were taken to his native county, and by the hands of the brethren of Masonic Order, of which he was a Royal Arch member, a short distance from his birthplace, among the hills where in his youth and in his manhood he had labored, and where his memory still lives, and in the presence of a large concourse of sorrowing friends, they were laid away to await the resurrection morn.

Endowed by nature with a peculiar gift for painstaking labor, Dr. Black closed a well rounded life. No matter when, in its course, the inquiry is made, whether in his youth, or in the vigor of his manhood, or in his declining years, as every where, we find industrious activity and honest integrity.

Unselfish and conservative at all times, still he was unflinching in his fidelity to his convictions of right and wrong. He will be missed. In his profession as a general practitioner of medicine, few men possessed a clearer perception of diseases than he, and none won more on the confidences of his patrons.

An Honorary member of his State Medical Society, and member of the State Medical Examining Board, he never ceased his watchfulness of its interests and the welfare of the medical profession. In public service, whether for his county or state, he was always on the alert, and prompt in the advocacy of measures looking to the good of his people.

At the head of an institution for the relief of the unfortunate insane, we know the value of his judgment and ability to govern smoothly and without friction, subordinate officers, employees, attendants and patients.

As a private citizen, he was liberal, generous and above reproach; and his place will not soon again be filled.

As a Christian for more than forty years he had been a consistent member of the Methodist church, and through them all he was faithful, growing in grace and in a faith which carried him triumphantly to the end.

A few days before his death, speaking to his pastor of the probability that he was nearing the close of his life, he was asked how it affected his faith. He replied promptly and with an expression of unshaken confidence, "It only intensifies it."

This strong confidence in the very presence of death was the natural outgrowth of a life of consistent faith and practice. His intense devotion to every work was supported by a strong Christian consciousness, each day his life became grander, nobler and more beautiful in duty done.

In his religious life, Dr. Black presented a strong contrast to many eminent public men who seem to have no time or inclination for the

discharge of Christian duties. He always placed such duties first, and in all his plans or his work, he stands before the world not only as a true man but as a Christian man, “the<sup>25</sup> noblest work of God.[”]

His friends, those who knew him best and loved him, will miss him, but most of all will he be missed from the bosom of his devoted family, where his affection and tenderness found their widest range and reaped their richest reward. For this sorrowing household there is a balm in this reflection.

All pain and grief are over,  
Every restless tossing passed;  
I am now at peace forever,  
Safely home in Heaven at last.<sup>26</sup>

### Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to Aaron D. Purcell and Special Collections at Virginia Tech, not only for giving permission to *The Smithfield Review* to publish a transcription of the hand-written manuscript, but also for providing graphics for the article and information that appears in several endnotes.

### Endnotes

1. Born in Orange County, Virginia, in 1837, John Samuel Apperson helped his father on the family farm until he became a store clerk at the age of 17. Dissatisfied with that occupation, he moved to Smyth County, Virginia, where he cut railroad ties until a doctor successfully encouraged him to study medicine, and he served a medical apprenticeship. Apperson enlisted in the Confederate army at the beginning of the Civil War. In 1862, he was assigned to the 2nd Corps, known as the “Stonewall Brigade,” Army of Northern Virginia, as a hospital steward. His supervisor was Dr. Harvey Black. After the war, Apperson attended the University of Virginia (1866–1867), earning a doctor of medicine degree. He returned to Smyth County, married Ellen Victoria Hull (1840–1887) in 1868, and practiced medicine for 20 years. He and his wife had seven children. He was named to the building committee for the Southwestern Asylum for the Insane in Marion in the late 1880s and served on the hospital staff as assistant physician from 1887 to 1889. Dr. Black supervised the facility until his death in 1888. In 1889, Apperson, whose wife had died two years earlier, married Elizabeth “Lizzie” Arabella Black (1855–1942), the only daughter of Dr. Black and his wife, Mary Kent Black (1836–1911). The Appersons had four children. Dr. Apperson left medicine in 1890 and helped found the Staley’s Creek Manganese and Iron Company. He was the business executive commissioner of Virginia to the World’s Fair 1892–1894 and vice president, secretary, and treasurer of the Marion and Rye Valley Railway 1894–1904. He expanded operations of the Marion Foundry and Company into the Marion Foundry and Machine Works in 1906. He died in Marion (Smyth County) in 1908 (“John Samuel Apperson (1837–1908)” *WikiTree, Where geneologists collaborate*, [www.wikitree.com/wiki/Apperson-121](http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Apperson-121), accessed September 12, 2017; “John S. Apperson, M.D.” *New River Notes, Historical and Geneological Resources for the Upper New River Valley of North Carolina and Virginia*, [www.newrivenotes.com/topical\\_history\\_biographies\\_apperson\\_johns.htm](http://www.newrivenotes.com/topical_history_biographies_apperson_johns.htm), listing the source as *Confederate Military History* 3, 704–705; “John Samuel Apperson

- (21 Aug. 1837–9 Aug. 1908),” *Students of the University of Virginia, 1825–1874*, [uvastudents.wordpress.com/2011/08/19/john-samuel-apperson-21-aug-1837-9-aug-1908/](http://uvastudents.wordpress.com/2011/08/19/john-samuel-apperson-21-aug-1837-9-aug-1908/), accessed January 4, 2018; Pat Sullivan, “Dr. John Samuel Apperson,” *Spotsylvania Memory*, [spotsylvaniamemory.blogspot.com/2017/08/](http://spotsylvaniamemory.blogspot.com/2017/08/), accessed January 4, 2018; and Sharon B. Watkins, “Alexander Black and His World, 1857–1935, Part I: 1857–1877,” *The Smithfield Review* 21 (2017), 20).
2. The hand-written original manuscript can be found in the Black, Kent, and Apperson Families Papers, Ms74-003, Box 2, Folder 8, Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg. Another transcription, which obviously used the same manuscript but is not always verbatim and does not credit the author, can be found in “Sketch of His Life,” *Annual Report of the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum at Marion, Virginia, to the General Assembly of Virginia for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1888* (Richmond, Va.: J. H. O’Bannon, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1888), 35–41, [books.google.com/books?id=g3dDAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA12-PA35&lpg=RA12-PA35&dq=dr:+john+s/+apperson+southwestern+lunatic+asylum&source=bl&ots=08a9ebGbTf&sig=hd7TOrXEqrNKATiZ70AAzEgflw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwibkbgz\\_p\\_WAhXhsFQKHQkMalc4ChDoAQgIMAA#v=onepage&q=Southwestern&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=g3dDAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA12-PA35&lpg=RA12-PA35&dq=dr:+john+s/+apperson+southwestern+lunatic+asylum&source=bl&ots=08a9ebGbTf&sig=hd7TOrXEqrNKATiZ70AAzEgflw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwibkbgz_p_WAhXhsFQKHQkMalc4ChDoAQgIMAA#v=onepage&q=Southwestern&f=false). This source was used to complete the transcription since the last page or pages of the handwritten manuscript are missing.
  3. Dr. Apperson’s professional association with Dr. Black began as early as the Civil War. In April 1861, Apperson enlisted with the Smyth Blues of Smyth County, Virginia, and in March 1862, he was appointed a hospital steward under the command of Black, a regimental surgeon for the 4th Virginia, 1st Brigade. The two doctors worked in that setting until late 1862. When Black received an appointment as surgeon of the field hospital for the Second Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, he took Apperson with him, and they worked in that capacity until the war’s end. (Cheryl A. Veselik, *Superintendents and Directors of Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute* (Marion, Va.: Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute, 2012), 1, 2, published online at [www.swmhi.dbhds.virginia.gov/swmhi/about-us/superintendents-and-directors-of-swmhi.pdf](http://www.swmhi.dbhds.virginia.gov/swmhi/about-us/superintendents-and-directors-of-swmhi.pdf)).
  4. Black, Kent, and Apperson Families Papers, Ms74-003.
  5. Dr. Black was a grandson of John Black, who helped his brother, William, found the town of Blacksburg, Virginia, by donating land to the project. John served as one of the original town trustees (“Dr. Harvey Black: Surgeon In-Charge 2nd Corps Field Hospital, Army of Northern Virginia, Civil War Historical Impressions,” [www.civilwarhistoricalimpressions.com/dr-harvey-black.html](http://www.civilwarhistoricalimpressions.com/dr-harvey-black.html), accessed September 10, 2017; Veselik, *Superintendents and Directors of Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute*, 1; and Peter Wallenstein, “Early Blacksburg, 1740s–1840s, and Special Celebratory Years,” *A Special Place for 200 Years: A History of Blacksburg, Virginia*, ed., Clara B. Cox (Roanoke, Va.: Town of Blacksburg, Va., 1998), 14).
  6. The “h” at the end of the town’s name was used in the original spelling (“Christiansburg, Virginia,” *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christiansburg,\\_Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christiansburg,_Virginia), accessed March 7, 2018. Apperson added an “h” to “Blacksburg” intermittently and also added it to “Fredericksburg.”
  7. According to historian Lee A. Wallace Jr., on May 19, 1846, the federal government called on Virginia to raise three regiments of infantry to fight against Mexico. “By proclamation on May 23, Governor William Smith announced that he would receive the tender services of 30 companies of volunteers, which were to be organized into regiments after their muster into service (Lee A. Wallace Jr., “The First Regiment of Virginia Volunteers 1846-1848,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 77, no. 1, part one (Virginia Historical Society, January 1969), 46, [www.jstor.org/stable/4247453?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4247453?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents), accessed September 8, 2017). Governor Smith appointed John Francis Hamtramck as colonel of the 1st Virginia Volunteer Regiment (“Historic Shepherdstown & Museum,” [historicshepherdstown.com/portfolio-item/john-francis-hamtramck/](http://historicshepherdstown.com/portfolio-item/john-francis-hamtramck/), accessed September 8, 2017).

James Francis Preston, captain of the 1st Virginia, was a Blacksburg native who had raised the company at his own expense. Preston was the youngest son of Virginia Gov. James Patton Preston (1774–1843) and a grandson of Col. William Preston (1729–1783), who had established

- a plantation he named Smithfield. Today, the manor house, which is surrounded by the Virginia Tech campus, is operated by the Smithfield-Preston Foundation and is open to the public (Laura Wedin, "A Summary of Nineteenth-Century Smithfield: The War Years, Part 2, in production, *The Smithfield Review*).
8. Mary Kent was known to her family as "Mollie" (Watkins, "Alexander Black and His World," 20).
  9. Those children were Kent (1853–1909), Elizabeth Arabella (1855–1948), Alexander (1857–1935), and Charles W. (1859–1925) (Watkins, "Alexander Black and His World," 21).
  10. Dr. McGuire was the medical director of Jackson's corps and later wrote a description of the death of the general (Dr. Hunter McGuire, "Death of Stonewall Jackson," *Civil War Gazette* 14 (Richmond, Va., 1886), [civilwargazette.wordpress.com/2012/05/10/death-of-stonewall-jackson-by-dr-hunter-mcguire/](http://civilwargazette.wordpress.com/2012/05/10/death-of-stonewall-jackson-by-dr-hunter-mcguire/), accessed March 7, 2018).
  11. The Second Battle of Manassas was fought August 28–30, 1862 ("Second Battle of Bull Run Facts," *HISTORY.NET*, [www.historynet.com/second-battle-of-bull-run](http://www.historynet.com/second-battle-of-bull-run), accessed January 8, 2017).
  12. Aldie is located in Loudoun County, Virginia (Google Maps, [www.google.com/maps/place/Aldie,+VA+20105/@38.9711756,-77.6550501,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x89b66ae2241962f3:0x15a8739d0328a1c8!8m2!3d38.9756745!4d-77.6418724](http://www.google.com/maps/place/Aldie,+VA+20105/@38.9711756,-77.6550501,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x89b66ae2241962f3:0x15a8739d0328a1c8!8m2!3d38.9756745!4d-77.6418724), accessed January 8, 2018).
  13. The act was the Morrill Act or Morrill Land Grant Act, which President Abraham Lincoln signed into law on July 2, 1862. The act provided each state with 30,000 acres of land per senator and representative in Congress. It authorized the states to sell the land and use the proceeds "to fund public colleges that focused on agriculture and mechanical arts" ("Primary Documents in American History: Morrill Act," *The Library of Congress Web Guides*, [www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Morrill.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Morrill.html), and Daniel W. Hamilton, "Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862," *Major Acts of Congress*, 2004, *ENCYCLOPEDIA.com*, [www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3407400192.html](http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3407400192.html), accessed 8 January 2016).
  14. Since Virginia had seceded from the United States, the commonwealth could not take advantage of the Morrill Act until it had been readmitted to the Union, which occurred on January 26, 1870. Less than two months later, the General Assembly voted to accept the provisions of the Morrill Act ("General Assembly of Virginia," *Staunton Spectator*, March 15, 1870, 2).
  15. The Commonwealth of Virginia purchased the "attached farm" and its house, known as Solitude, from Robert Taylor Preston (1809–1880), a brother of James Francis Preston, in October 1872 ("First Report of the Board of Visitors of [t]he Agricultural and Mechanical College," Virginia School Report 1872 (Richmond: R. F. Walker, Superintendent [of] Public Printing, 1872), 1, online at [books.google.com/books?id=C\\_IsAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA2&lpg=RA1-PA2&dq=resident+preston+and+olin&source=bl&ots=rdYunz5mt3&sig=WJNsS8piocOsnUvjIryull-bgis&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBmoVChMII4aLyPKxyAIVgho-Ch1SEg0V#v=onepage&q=president%20of%20preston%20and%20olin&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=C_IsAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA2&lpg=RA1-PA2&dq=resident+preston+and+olin&source=bl&ots=rdYunz5mt3&sig=WJNsS8piocOsnUvjIryull-bgis&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBmoVChMII4aLyPKxyAIVgho-Ch1SEg0V#v=onepage&q=president%20of%20preston%20and%20olin&f=false)). Today, the house is the oldest structure on the Virginia Tech campus.
  16. The legal name of the new land grant was Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College.
  17. The name of the college's governing board was the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College Board of Visitors. The governing body is still known as the board of visitors (Clara B. Cox and Jenkins M. Robertson, *History and Historical Data of Virginia Tech*, [www.unirel.vt.edu/history/administration/board\\_of\\_visitors.html](http://www.unirel.vt.edu/history/administration/board_of_visitors.html), accessed January 8, 2017).
  18. This underlining and all subsequent underlining appear in the original manuscript.
  19. At the time, an "alienist" was a psychiatrist or psychologist ("alienist," *Merriam-Webster*; [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alienist](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alienist), accessed January 8, 2017).
  20. Central Depot was a stop on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, halfway between Lynchburg and Bristol, Virginia; thus the name. It served an important function, a major supply line for Confederate forces, during the Civil War and became a target for Union troops. The train stop spurred growth in the area, known as Lovely Mount and since 1891 as Radford ("The History of Radford Virginia," *Find it in Radford*, [www.visitradford.com/history-of-radford-virginia/](http://www.visitradford.com/history-of-radford-virginia/), accessed January 8, 2018; Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, "Battle of New River Bridge (Radford)," [www.civilwar.vt.edu/wordpress/battle-of-new-river-bridge-radford/](http://www.civilwar.vt.edu/wordpress/battle-of-new-river-bridge-radford/), accessed

January 8, 2018; and “Radford, Virginia,” *Wikipedia*, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radford,\\_Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radford,_Virginia), accessed January 8, 2018).

21. According to the act that established the commission, that body would determine the site for the asylum, and the town or county selected was directed to provide material assistance in establishing the hospital since the facility would provide economic growth for the area in which it was located (Phyllis Miller, “A Brief History of Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute,” Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, May 18, 2012, [www.swvmhi.dbhds.virginia.gov/swvmhi/about-us/brief-history-of-swvmhi.pdf](http://www.swvmhi.dbhds.virginia.gov/swvmhi/about-us/brief-history-of-swvmhi.pdf), accessed September 10, 2017).
22. The county name is spelled without an “e” at the end.
23. Dr. Apperson was named to this committee.
24. These two lines come from Ebenezer Elliott’s poem “Let Me Rest” (Poetry Nook: Poetry for Every Occasion, [www.poetrynook.com/poem/let-me-rest](http://www.poetrynook.com/poem/let-me-rest), accessed January 8, 2018).
25. From this point in the manuscript, the article follows the biography of Black that appears in “Sketch of His Life,” Annual Report of the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum at Marion, Virginia, to the General Assembly of Virginia for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1888. It is not known if the remainder of Dr. Apperson’s handwritten biography has been lost or misfiled.
26. These words comprise a stanza in the poem “Safely Home” (author unknown), “Safely Home Poem,” Inspirational Christian Stories and Poems, [www.inspirationalarchive.com/278/safely-home-poem/](http://www.inspirationalarchive.com/278/safely-home-poem/), accessed January 5, 2018.

**About the Transcriber:** Clara B. Cox has served on *The Smithfield Review* Editorial Board for twenty years, has been associate editor and co-editor, and is currently editor of the journal. She retired as publications director for Virginia Tech in 2010.



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