



The Smithfield Review

Studies in the history of the region west of the Blue Ridge

Volume 21, 2017

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“Smithfield” is an important historic property adjacent to and surrounded by the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. The manor house, constructed around 1774 on the Virginia frontier, is a premier example of early American architecture and is one of few such regional structures of that period to survive. It was the last home of Colonel William Preston, who immigrated to the Virginia Colony from Ireland in 1739. Preston was a noted surveyor and developer of western lands who served as an important colonial and Revolutionary War leader. He named the 1,860-acre plantation “Smithfield” in honor of his wife, Susanna Smith.

The Prestons’ commitment to education as well as Preston farmlands were both critical factors in the creation of Preston and Olin Institute and its subsequent conversion into Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) in 1872. VAMC has now evolved into a world-class, land-grant university—Virginia Tech.

The manor house and outbuildings are now a museum, interpreted and administered by a large group of volunteers. Historic Smithfield® is owned and operated by the Smithfield-Preston Foundation, Inc. The primary goal of the foundation is education about the Preston legacy and life in the region during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This goal is realized using both historic and contemporary venues for programming, educational activities, meetings, arts presentations, music, and commemorations.

Under the auspices of the foundation, *The Smithfield Review* was founded in 1997 with the purpose of helping to preserve often neglected history of the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and adjacent states. *The Smithfield Review* Editorial Board encourages authors to submit articles for review. Such articles should focus on important people and events; reports of archaeological discoveries; and analyses of the social, political, and architectural history of the region. Whenever possible and appropriate, the articles should incorporate letters, diaries, business papers, speeches, and other primary documents that convey a direct sense of the past to the reader. Inquiries and submissions should be directed to Co-editors Clara B. Cox and Sharon B. Watkins at *smithfieldreview@smithfieldplantation.org*.

A Message from the Editors

Volume 21 begins a new era for *The Smithfield Review*. After 20 years, Hugh Campbell, founding editor, has relinquished his duties but remains on the editorial board. The board has named two of its members as co-editors: Sharon B. Watkins, a retired history professor, and Clara B. Cox, a retired university publications director. Additionally, Peter Wallenstein, a Virginia Tech history professor who reviewed articles, has stepped aside. Daniel B. Thorp, also a Tech history professor and an associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, has filled the role of history advisor.

In another significant change, Volume 21 and future volumes will go online six months after publication, courtesy of Virginia Tech's University Libraries and library personnel Gail McMillan, director of scholarly communication, and Peter Potter, director of publishing strategy. Plans are also underway to add volumes 1–20 to the website, with the exception of articles by authors who request that their work not be included. The online address for *The Smithfield Review* will be <https://smithfieldreview.org/>. This move to the Internet will give the journal an international presence.

This volume has no overarching themes, with a range of topics revealing the variety of time, place, and people in our region. In the first article, "New Maritime Records of James Patton," author Ryan S. Mays examines five previously undiscovered manuscripts about Patton located by the author. This material contributes several maritime exploits, including a daring escape from Cornish pirates, and adds to known existing biographical data of Patton.

The next article looks at "Alexander Black and His World, 1857–1935: Part I: 1857–1887." Author Sharon B. Watkins relates Black's early life through his Civil War childhood and college years. She also examines the familial and community influences that shaped his life, leading to his significant contributions as an adult, which will form Part II of the biography.

The third article, "True Friends of the Confederacy" by John Hildebrand, recounts the unsuccessful peace efforts of several members of the Confederate Congress, including a number of regional politicians. Hildebrand relates the barriers, particularly Confederate President Jefferson Davis, faced by these men who could foresee Southern defeat and wanted to halt the loss of lives in battle.

“‘The Nigh and Best Way’: The Early Development of Roads in Montgomery County,” the fourth article, provides an in-depth examination of the development of routes in the county, travelers using those routes, and factors—economic and topographical, for example—that influenced their location. It was co-authored by Jim Page and Sherry Joines Wyatt.

The tuberculosis sanatorium in Catawba provides the focal point of the final article. Written by Grace Hemmingson, “Catawba Sanatorium: Its Founding and Early History” covers conditions leading to establishment of the hospital by the Commonwealth of Virginia, its early operations, different medical personnel, and factors affecting its successes—and failures.

One Brief Note, “Possible Scottish Baptismal Records of James Patton’s Children” by Ryan S. Mays, looks at birth records from registry books in Dumfries, Scotland, likely to be those of Patton’s children.

The editors thank these authors and extend appreciation to Barbara Corbett, graphic designer, and to the anonymous reviewers who provided feedback on the articles.

Co-editors: Clara B. Cox and Sharon B. Watkins

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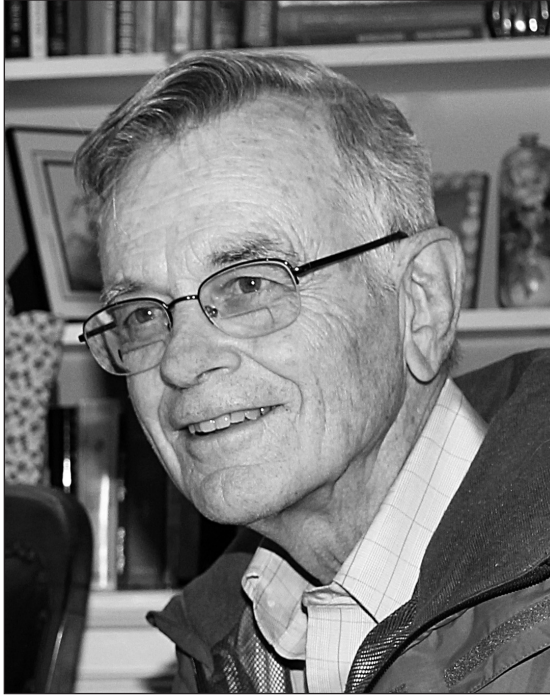
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A Tribute to Hugh Campbell



One fine day, about 1996, Hugh Campbell suggested that we talk. He had in mind a journal that would highlight the Scotch-Irish and German history of Southwest Virginia. Why don't you join Lon Savage and Charlie Modlin, he asked, in helping me edit such an endeavor? Well, hey Hugh, you are a good friend and I love history and I like living in Southwest Virginia, but that's a heck of a lot of work. I do have classes to teach and research to do. Hugh was not in the least impressed. He may be mild and mannerly and very well educated, but the concept of "no" apparently has never been among his facilities.

Over the years, I have been glad that it isn't. All of us have thoroughly enjoyed our interactions with Hugh. It's wonderful working with him. We make the suggestions and he does the work. He has a way of putting no pressure on us, and yet we feel compelled to get on with the reviews and the editing.

For some time, members of the Smithfield branch of what was then known as the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities had talked of the need for a journal devoted to our local region. It should provide an interesting and enlightening presentation of the history of the area west of the Blue Ridge in Virginia and adjacent states.

What the conversation needed was Hugh. He gave shape to the ideas and went into action. He set about to find competent and interesting authors. He pursued contributions relevant to the journal's purposes. He sought a variety of foci. He edited material to make submissions fit requirements of content, grammar, syntax, spelling, expression, and sheer logical connection. He engaged a wide variety of writers who could help him produce a coherent and well-composed set of interesting articles and research notes.

For 20 years now, the *Review* has contained the stories of both important personages and people of no particular fame. They have focused upon significant events and everyday activities. Authors have reported upon archaeological discoveries, old letters, speeches, and other documents. Topics have included social, political, economic, artistic, and architectural matters. Maps and pictures have enlivened many presentations.

The vision was Hugh's. He brought others along, but the ideas and the brunt of the work have been his. Truly, he put his heart and soul into *The Smithfield Review* over the past two decades, and it will stand as a monument to him. We thank him for letting us ride along.

Hugh will continue to serve as a member of the editorial board, but he has chosen to leave the *Review* in the hands of two co-editors, Clara B. Cox and Sharon B. Watkins, who will continue—and perhaps expand—Hugh's vision.

Charles L. Taylor
Charter Member
The Smithfield Review Editorial Board

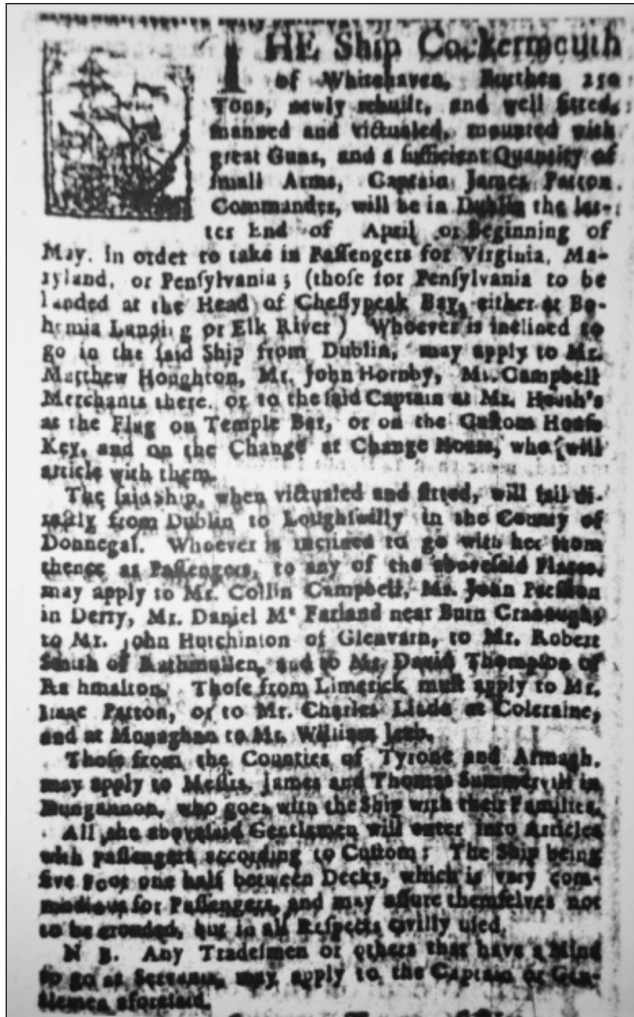
New Maritime Records of James Patton

Ryan S. Mays

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James Patton (c.1690–1755) was one of the most important frontier leaders in Virginia between 1741, when he took up permanent residence in the colony, and his death at the start of the French and Indian War. He played a pivotal role in the exploration, settlement, governance, and military leadership of western Virginia during that period. After settling in what was then Orange County (now Augusta County) near present-day Waynesboro, Patton became a colonel in the county militia, a justice of the peace, and a member of a company of men who had received a grant from the Virginia Council of 100,000 acres on the James and Roanoke rivers. In 1743, Col. Patton organized his own land company and was granted 100,000 acres in 1745 on the New, Holston, and Clinch rivers—the Western Waters. Through his land speculation ventures he helped open the frontier to settlement and further exploration, while at the same time serving in prominent magisterial positions in the Augusta County government, achieving the rank of county lieutenant by the year of his death.¹

Records of James Patton's early life are very sparse, and there is only circumstantial evidence supporting the long-held though plausible tradition that he was born in County Donegal in the north of Ireland.² Between approximately 1734 and 1740, Patton apparently lived in the royal Burgh of Kirkcudbright in southern Scotland, where he was named a Burgess of the port town of Kirkcudbright in late 1734.³ It is well-established that he was a merchant ship captain by at least the early 1730s, and he seems to have been heavily involved in transatlantic smuggling of tobacco and other goods for the merchant Walter Lutwidge, who operated from Kirkcudbright and from just across the Solway Firth in Whitehaven, England. Ships owned by Lutwidge included the *Basil* and the *Walpole*.⁴ While working for Lutwidge, Patton transported immigrants to America⁵ (Figure 1, Appendix A), and he may have been involved in the slave trade,⁶ though no primary evidence of the latter has yet been found. During the 1730s, he is also known to have visited the Scottish port town of Dumfries,⁷ where he or his family seems to have lived around 1730 (Figures 2–3, Appendix B).⁸



THE Ship Cockermouth
of Whitehaven, Northern 250
Tons, newly rebuilt, and well fitted
manned and victualled, mounted with
great Guns, and a sufficient Quantity of
small Arms, Captain James Patton
Commander, will be in Dublin the last
End of April or Beginning of
May. In order to take in Passengers for Virginia, Ma-
ryland, or Pennsylvania; (those for Pennsylvania to be
loaded at the Head of Chesapeake Bay, either at Be-
hemia Landing or Elk River) Whoever is inclined to
go in the said Ship from Dublin, may apply to Mr.
Matthew Houghton, Mr. John Hornby, Mr. Campbell
Merchants there, or to the said Captain at Mr. Heath's
at the Flag on Temple Bar, or on the Custom House
Key, and on the Change at Change House, who will
assist with them.

The said ship, when victualled and fitted, will sail di-
rectly from Dublin to Loughswilly in the County of
Donnegal. Whoever is inclined to go with her from
thence as Passengers, to any of the above said Places,
may apply to Mr. Collin Campbell, Mr. John Fecillon
in Derry, Mr. Daniel M^r Farland near Burn Craughy
to Mr. John Hutchinson of Glencarn, to Mr. Robert
Smith of Rathmullen, and to Mr. David Thompson of
Rahmalton. Those from Limerick must apply to Mr.
Isaac Patton, or to Mr. Charles Lisle at Coleraine,
and at Monaghan to Mr. William Jobb.

Those from the Counties of Tyrone and Armagh,
may apply to Messrs. James and Thomas Sumner in
Bungannon, who goes with the ship with their Families.

All the above said Gentlemen will enter into Articles
with passengers according to Custom; The ship being
five foot one half between Decks, which is very com-
modious for Passengers, and may assure themselves not
to be crowded, but in all respects civilly used.

N^b. Any Tradesmen or others that have a Mind
to go as Servants, may apply to the Captain or Gen-
tlemen aforesaid.

Figure 1. James Patton's advertisement of April 1738 for recruiting immigrants to America, published in George Faulkner's *Dublin Journal* newspaper. This record was found by historian Richard K. MacMaster, who transcribed it in his 1980 article on James Patton. However, a facsimile of the original document has not hitherto appeared in the literature, so it is shown here for the first time with the present author's transcription in Appendix A.

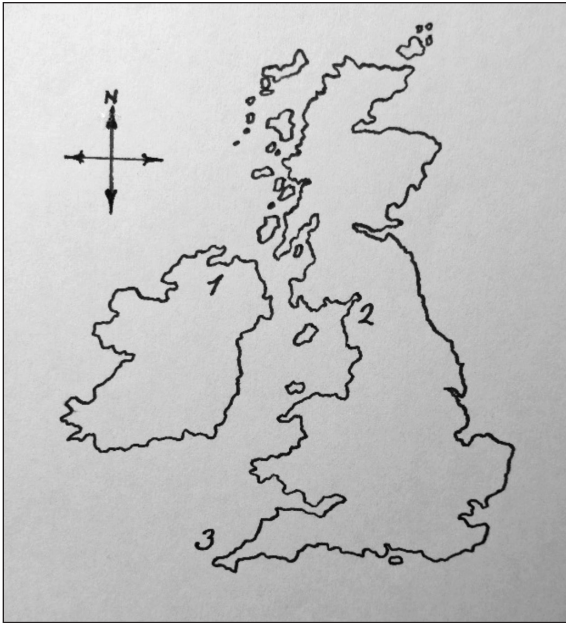


Figure 2. The British Isles, showing the locations of (1) County Donegal in the north of Ireland, (2) the Solway Firth inlet between Scotland and England (see also Figure 3), and (3) the County of Cornwall, England.

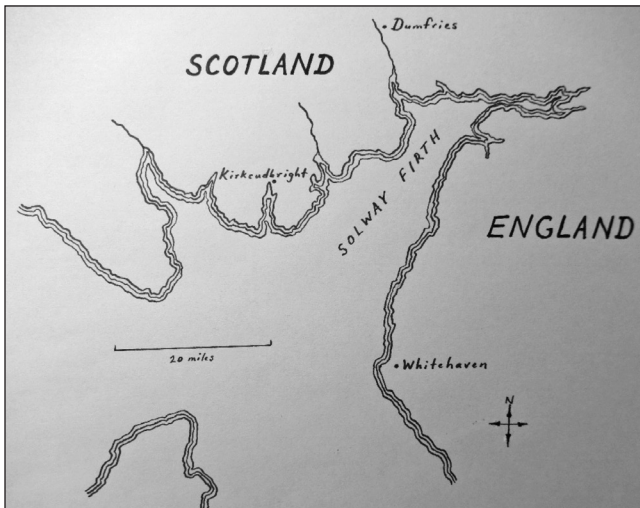
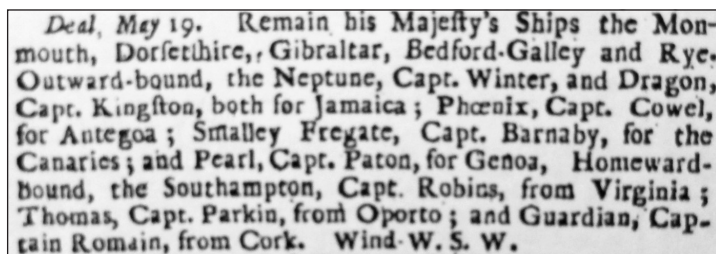


Figure 3. The Solway Firth region, showing the towns of Kirkcudbright and Dumfries in southern Scotland and Whitehaven on the English coast.

This article presents five previously unknown maritime records of a ship's captain presumed to be the James Patton who eventually settled in Virginia, found by the author in 2010 and 2015. Four of these new records are from early British newspapers (three being duplicated in different papers) dating from 1719 to 1739; an additional report comes from a 1723 letter in the British National Archives.⁹ A careful search of the early British newspapers and early American newspapers¹⁰ for the surname Patton/Paton/Patten/Patoun/Pattin, etc., in connection with seafaring activities, has so far revealed only one contemporary Capt. Patton. This was a Capt. William Paton (Paton, Patten), who sailed at least two ships (the *Davy* and the *Andrew & Betty*) across the Atlantic, visiting ports on the American coast and in the West Indies, British Isles, and Europe between at least 1728 and 1741.¹¹

The records of Capt. James Patton provide fleeting new insights into the early life and career of this remarkable man. They are here listed together in chronological order and are afterwards shown in full:

- (1) A **May 1719** newspaper shipping report from Deal, located in the English county of Kent: "Outward-bound ... *Pearl*, Capt. Paton, for Genoa" (Figures 4a–4b).¹²
- (2) A letter from Lisbon, Portugal, dated **18 February 1723** from British Consul Thomas Burnet to Lord John Carteret, secretary of state for the Southern Department, mentioning "James Paten," master of the ship *Pearl* Galley.¹³
- (3) A **November 1729** newspaper report describing the stranding at Padstow, located in the English county of Cornwall, of the *William* of Dumfries, Capt. James Patton (Figures 5a–5b).¹⁴
- (4) A **December 1735** newspaper report of the arrival at Kinsale, located in County Cork, Ireland, of the *Basil*, Capt. James Patton, from Virginia (Figure 6a–6b).¹⁵
- (5) A **July 1739** newspaper report of the return at Kirkcudright of the *Walpole*, Capt. James Patton, from Virginia (Figure 7).¹⁶



Deal, May 19. Remain his Majesty's Ships the Monmouth, Dorsetshire, Gibraltar, Bedford-Galley and Rye. Outward-bound, the Neptune, Capt. Winter, and Dragon, Capt. Kingston, both for Jamaica; Phoenix, Capt. Cowel, for Antegoa; Smalley Fregate, Capt. Barnaby, for the Canaries; and Pearl, Capt. Paton, for Genoa, Homeward-bound, the Southampton, Capt. Robics, from Virginia; Thomas, Capt. Parkin, from Oporto; and Guardian, Captain Romain, from Cork. Wind-W. S. W.

Figure 4a. Shipping News: "Deal, May 19 [1719] ... Outward-bound ... *Pearl*, Capt. Paton, for Genoa." (*The Post Boy*, 19–21 May 1719, No. 4652)

Deal, May 18. All the Outward-bound are under sail Westward. since came done the Neptune, Capt. Winter, for Jamaica; Phenix, Capt. Cowel, for Antegoa; Swanfwick, Capt. Hopkins, for New-York; Onslow, Capt. Peacock, for Smyrna; Success, Capt. Moody, for Ireland. Homeward-bound, the Maidstone, Capt. Jewel, from Fial; Margaret, Capt. Swindford, and the Pearl, Capt. Paul, both from St. Ubes. *May 19.* Remain his Majesty's Ships the Monmouth, Dorsetshire, Gibraltar, Bedford-Galley, and Rye. Outward-bound, the Neptune, Capt. Winter, and Dragon, Capt. Kingston, both for Jamaica; Phenix, Capt. Cowel, for Antegoa; Smalley Frigate, Capt. Barnaby, for the Canaries; and Pearl, Capt. Paton, for Genoa. Homeward-bound, the Southampton, Capt. Robins, from Virginia; Thomas, Capt. Parkin, from Oporto; and Guardian, Capt. Romain, from Cork. *May 20.* His Majesty's

Figure 4b. Shipping News: "Deal ... May 19 ... Outward-bound ... Pearl, Capt. Paton, for Genoa...." (*The Weekly Packet*, 16–23 May 1719, No. 359)

Letters from Padstow in Cornwall, of the 17th of Nov. advise, that the William of Dumfries, Capt. James Patton, was drove on a sandy Bank there, on the 14th, after having suffered much Damage at Sea, and for some Time was without any Hopes of saving their Lives; and the Tide ebbing, and leaving the said Bank dry, the Inhabitants seeing this Prize, sallied out in great Numbers, and began to cut and hew the Ship and Tackle, till the Captain being well provided with Fire Arms, by an uncommon Bravery threatned to discharge them among the Rabble; whereupon many of them dispersed, till he got Time to secure Part of his Cargo, which was much damaged, but was still in Fear of being overpowered by the Mob, and without any Hopes of saving his Ship.

Figure 5a. "Letters from Padstow in Cornwall, of the 17th of Nov. [1729] advise, that the William of Dumfries, Capt. James Patton, was drove on a sandy Bank there, on the 14th, after having suffered much Damage at Sea, and for some Time was without any Hopes of saving their Lives; and the Tide ebbing, and leaving the said Bank dry, the Inhabitants seeing this Prize, sallied out in great Numbers, and began to cut and hew the Ship and Tackle, till the Captain being well provided with Fire Arms, by an uncommon Bravery threatned to discharge them among the Rabble; whereupon many of them dispersed, till he got Time to secure Part of his Cargo, which was much damaged, but was still in Fear of being overpowered by the Mob, and without any Hopes of saving his Ship." (*The Weekly Journal: or, The British-Gazetteer*, 6 December 1729 No. 236)

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Figure 5b. "Letters from Padstow in Cornwall of the 17th of November [1729] advise, that the William of Dumfries, Capt. James Paton, was drove on a sandy Bank there, on the 14th, after having suffered much Damage at Sea, and for some Time was without any Hopes of saving their Lives; and the Tide ebbing, and leaving the said Bank dry, the Inhabitants seeing this Prize, sailled [*sic*] out in great Numbers, and began to cut and hew the Ship and Tackle, till the Captain being well provided with Fire Arms, by uncommon Bravery threatned to discharge them among the Rabble; whereupon many of them were dispersed, till he got Time to secure Part of his Cargo, which was much damaged and greatly damnified, but was still in Fear of being overpowered by the Mob, and without any Hopes of saving his Ship." (*The Eccho: or, Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, 17 December 1729, No. 50)

The Bassel, Capt. Pattin, from Virginia, is arriv'd at Kinsale, having lost all her Sails, and Main-Top-Masts, in bad Weather.

Figure 6a. "The Bassel, Capt. Pattin, from Virginia, is arriv'd at Kinsale, having lost all her Sails, and Main Top-Masts, in bad Weather." (*The General Evening Post*, 23–25 December 1735, No. 349)

The Basil, Pattin, from Virginia, is arriv'd at Kinsale. She had very bad Weather, and suffer'd pretty much in her Sails and Rigging.

Figure 6b. "The Basil, [Capt.] Pattin, from Virginia, is arriv'd at Kinsale. She had very bad Weather, and suffer'd pretty much in her Sails and Rigging." (*The London Daily Post, and General Advertiser*; 25 December 1735, No. 358)

The Walpole, Patton, from Virginia; and the Nelly, Forbes, from Oporto, at Kirkcudbright.

Figure 7. The Walpole, [Capt.] Patton, from Virginia; and the Nelly, Forbes, from Oporto, at Kirkcudbright." (*The Daily Gazetteer*; 7 July 1739, No. 1262)

James Patton and the Wreck of the *William* at Padstow, Cornwall

The most outstanding of the above records is that of Capt. James Patton's shipwreck in November 1729 that describes in detail a harrowing and previously unknown event in Patton's life. If Patton had been lost at sea or killed on the coast of Cornwall in 1729, the history of western Virginia would have differed in many ways.

Patton's ship, the *William* of Dumfries, evidently stranded on a large sandbank in the outer Camel River estuary, located on the northern coast of the County of Cornwall, England, about a mile north of the harbor at the town of Padstow (Figure 8). This sandbank was formed by the shifting and accumulation of sand and silt consisting of large quantities of seashell debris. Since at least the sixteenth century, it has been a major hazard to ships entering the Camel Estuary and was commonly known as the "Doom Bar" by at least the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁷ The *William* may have been a fairly small vessel to be able to navigate the River Nith to reach the harbor at Dumfries,¹⁸ but the Doom Bar was extremely hazardous, even for smaller ships.

Cornwall has an extensive history of piracy, privateering, and smuggling all along its forbidding coastline.¹⁹ The plundering of James Patton's ship near Padstow in November 1729 is but one of many examples of "wrecking" through several centuries on the Cornish coast.²⁰ As defined by Cathryn Pearce in *Cornish Wrecking 1700–1860: Reality and Popular Myth*,²¹ local wreckers engaged in at least one of the following activities: (1) "the attack and plunder of a vessel, which includes a form of deliberate wrecking—the cutting of the ship's cables—but it also includes the opportunistic assault on

a vessel and her cargo once she lay aground”; (2) “the taking or ‘harvesting’ of wrecked goods” from a vessel; and (3) “the harvesting of goods that had been washed ashore after the shipwreck event,” sometimes “in the absence of a clear shipwreck.” In reviewing information about the plundering of two recent shipwrecks in Cornwall in the 1650s, including one at Padstow, the English Council of State declared that “the cruelty and inhumanity of the people inhabiting the maritime coasts” and “the dishonest and savage practices of the common people” were a grave threat to shipping.²²

Numerous records identify a ship called the *William* importing tobacco and other goods from Virginia to Whitehaven circa 1717–1720 in the Whitehaven port books.²³ A ship by this name was reported arriving in the Isle of Man from Kirkudbright in 1720.²⁴ The best supporting evidence that this James Patton from Dumfries is the Patton who later settled in Virginia comes from an original letter preserved in the Lyman Draper Manuscript Collection. The letter (see Appendix C) was written by merchant Robert Macky of London²⁵ and addressed to Capt. James Patton at St. Columb,²⁶ Cornwall, located only 10 miles from Padstow. It was dated 7 April and the year has since been torn away, but Mabel Clare Weaks, who cataloged the Preston Papers in 1915, dated the letter to circa 1730.²⁷ In his letter, Robert Macky asked Patton how he had surmounted his “present misfortunes,”²⁸ which may have been a reference to the consequences of his having wrecked at Padstow. It now appears that the letter could have been written as early as April 1730.

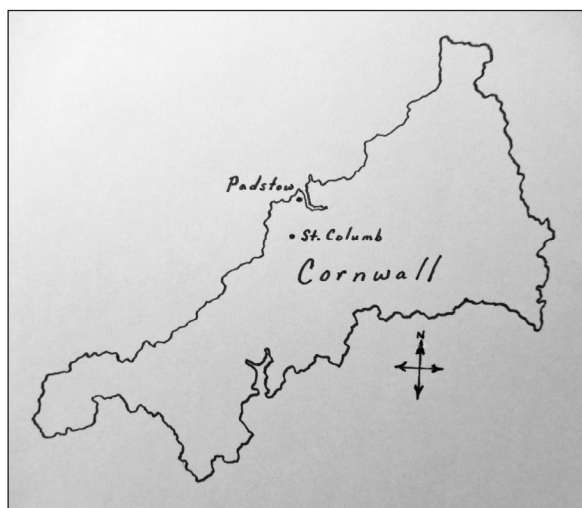


Figure 8. The County of Cornwall, England, showing the towns of Padstow and St. Columb (St. Columb Major).

The 1723 Burnet to Carteret Letter

On 13 June 1879, Mrs. Letitia Floyd Lewis (1814–1886), the wife of Col. William L. Lewis of Sweet Springs, West Virginia, wrote a letter to the Hon. Robert W. Hughes describing her family history. Mrs. Lewis was the daughter of Letitia Preston Floyd (1779–1852), who was the daughter of Col. William Preston (nephew of James Patton). Although the original letter appears to be lost, a transcription was printed in *The Richmond Standard* newspaper on 18 September 1880.²⁹ In the letter, Mrs. Lewis wrote that

Colonel [James] Patton was a man of education, ability, and of considerable wealth. He had served as a soldier in the wars of William, Prince of Orange, and afterwards in the British navy. He owned several ships with which he traded to Spain and the Mediterranean, and was highly successful in his enterprises.

There is yet no primary evidence that James Patton was a soldier or served in the Royal Navy, but the possibility certainly exists that he was a mariner during the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713). His biographer, Patricia Givens Johnson, found no records of him as a naval officer, so she assumed he became a captain in the merchant service.³⁰

The very interesting 1723 letter in the British National Archives at Kew now provides compelling evidence of James Patton's shipping activities in the Mediterranean. This letter from Sir Thomas Burnet, British consul in Lisbon,³¹ to John Carteret, secretary of state for the Southern Department in London,³² mentions a captain "James Paten." The online catalogue description of this letter reads as follows: "James Patten [*sic*], Master of the Pearl Galley, and his reluctance to surrender his Mediterranean pass, as ordered, which Burnet procured only with great difficulty. Many Jacobites misbehave in this way and he would like Carteret's assurance that he is justified in taking a hard line with them."³³ However, after examining a photocopy of the original handwritten letter,³⁴ it becomes clear that there is no mention of Jacobites. The following is the author's transcription of this remarkable letter, which may be the earliest surviving written record of James Patton:

Lisbon, 18 Febry. 1723 N. S. [New Style] My Lord, In my last of the 3d Instant, I had the honour to acknowledge the Receipt of Your Lordship's letter of the 29th of November O.S. [Old Style] enclosing his Majesty's Order in Council of the 14th of June last, containing several Rules prescribed to his Majesty's Consuls abroad, with relation to Mediterranean Passes. In obedience to that Order, having demanded of *James Paten [sic], Master of the Pearl Galley* [emphasis

added], lately sold here, his Passport, & having received assurances from him, that he would deliver it up; but being convinced at the same time, that he was clandestinely endeavoring to go from hence, without any Intent of Surrendring his Pass; I did on the 15th Instant, stop the Ship *Victory*, where his Effects were embarked, & whereon he was engaged to go as a Passenger, till I could obtain an Order for seising [seizing] on his Person, which I procured within two hours after that; Upon the knowledge of which, & seeing it was impossible for him to escape, he thought fit to deliver up to me his Mediterranean Pass. As I was threatened with many Protests upon this Occasion, & as this case may frequently happen, many of the British Factors being concerned in Ships that Navigate under Passes, which by Law they are not intitled to, I must intreat the Favour of Your Lordship to acquaint me if this Method of proceeding be such as I am for the future to observe. For as I know of none by which I can effectually obey his Majesty's commands, I shall very little regard the Ill [ill] will it may draw upon me, or the Lawsuits I may be engaged in, if I have once the honour to be assured by Your Lordship that his Majesty is Satisfied with my conduct in this Particular.

The defiant behavior of the Capt. "James Paten" mentioned in this letter is similar to that of the James Patton whom we know had similar arguments with his employer, Walter Lutwidge, in the 1730s; Lutwidge became so incensed by Patton that he said Hell itself could not outdo him.³⁵ This record may corroborate Mrs. Lewis's family tradition that James Patton traded in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the 1719 shipping report cited earlier of "Capt. Paton" of the ship *Pearl* outward bound for the port of Genoa was probably referring to the same person and presumably the same ship—in this case a galley, or oared vessel.³⁶ The Mediterranean passes noted in the letter were provided to all English ships by the British Admiralty after about 1660 to protect them from attack by the corsairs (pirates) of the Barbary Coast of North Africa.³⁷

Conclusion

The records reported in this article reasonably extend the primary source history of James Patton's life back at least to November 1729 and perhaps as early as May 1719. The two newspaper records from 1735 and 1739 are undoubtedly references to the James Patton who settled in Virginia because he was noted as sailing ships owned by Walter Lutwidge. Although an attempt has been made to substantiate each of the other records, more work must be done to absolutely authenticate them as references to our James Patton. For instance, further investigations will be necessary to confirm the identity

of the “James Paten” mentioned in the 1723 letter and the “Captain Paton” sailing from Deal to Genoa, possibly beginning with a study of port book records in Europe and the British Isles from this period. A continued study of early English, Scottish, and Irish newspaper records could uncover additional shipping or domestic reports of James Patton and his relatives. Examining the early life of Walter Lutwidge may also be helpful since the author has found reports of Lutwidge commanding ships in the first two decades of the 1700s in the Mediterranean and the West Indies. It is unknown when Patton and Lutwidge first met, but there could be some chance of finding a record of Patton sailing with Lutwidge.³⁸ In learning more about the fascinating maritime career of James Patton, we learn more about a man whose courage and determination eventually helped shape the history of Virginia.

Acknowledgments

I thank Jim Glanville for his previous collaboration on James Patton and for purchasing a copy of the Burnet to Carteret letter from Ms. Tina Hampson, who photocopied it for us in the National Archives at Kew. I also thank Mary B. Kegley for reviewing an earlier draft of the manuscript and Hugh Campbell for his helpful suggestions.

Appendix A

James Patton’s 1738 Advertisement (see Figure 1)

The Ship *Cockermouth* of Whitehaven, Burthen 250 Tons, newly rebuilt, and well fitted, manned and victualed, mounted with great Guns, and a sufficient Quantity of small Arms, Captain James Patton Commander, will be in Dublin the latter End of April, or Beginning of May, in order to take in Passengers for Virginia, Maryland, or Pensylvania; (those for Pensylvania to be landed at the Head of Chessypeak [Chesapeake] Bay, either at Bohemia Landing or Elk River). Whoever is inclined to go in the said Ship from Dublin, may apply to Mr. Matthew Houghton, Mr. John Hornby, Mr. Campbell Merchants there, or to the said Captain at Mr. Heath’s at the Flag on Temple Bar, or on the Custom House Key, and on the Change at Change House, who will article with them. The said Ship, when victualed and fitted, will sail directly from Dublin to Loughswilly in the County of Donnegal. Whoever is inclined to go with her from thence as Passengers, to any of the abovesaid Places, may apply to Mr. Collin Campbell, Mr. John Preston in Derry, Mr. Daniel McFarland near Burn Cranough, to Mr. John Hutchinson of Glenvain, to Mr. Robert Smith of Rathmullen, and to Mr. David Thomspson of Rathmalton. Those from Limerick must apply to Mr.

Isaac Patton, or to Mr. Charles Linde at Coleraine, and at Monaghan to Mr. William Jeeb. Those from the Counties of Tyrone and Armagh, may apply to Messrs. James and Thomas Summervill in Dungannon, who goes with the Ship with their Families. All the abovesaid Gentlemen will enter into Articles with passengers according to Custom; The Ship being five Foot one half between Decks which is very commodious for Passengers, and may assure themselves not to be crouded [crowded], but in all respects civilly used. N. B. Any Tradesmen or others that have a Mind to go as Servants, may apply to the Captain or Gentlemen aforesaid. (Source: *George Falkner: The Dublin Journal*, 18–22 April 1738, No. 1229)

Appendix B

Transcription of Major Miller's Letter to Rebeca Davis

Ballicasy 17th Janry 1731

Cosn. Daviss

I recd yours of the 13th instant last poast [post] and in answer can only say that I thought my Cosn. [cousin] James had taken cair [care] to provide for his sister Katherine. I believe he is now in Dublin and whether he is or not I think he is the Proper person to consult, and you being an aunt is a very good Judge how fit its for a young woman to learn to Earn hir Living. I have done severall acts of frinship [friendship] to her mother and brother and sisters wch I think suficient for my pt [part]. You and she must excuse me that I tell you I wont make my self a dradge [drudge] to suport those that ought to doe for themselves or inply [employ?] wth their friends. I h[e]ard yt. she was settled wth yur [your] nevys [nephew's?] wife in Drumfrees [Dumfries] but she thought not fit to stay there. but all that is nothing to me. I'le not give myself any farther trouble and am satisfied wt. [what] you think fit to do wth her. She is yur bro. [brother's] daughter. I know that there was remed [remitted?] to her in Scotland six pounds[,] besides her Bro: [brother] James['] favers (as Ive h[e]ard)[,] wch if managed discreitly might have been laid out as you say to learn that[?] way of living. I think it is strang[e] you or she Either wu'd send to me any such [illegible] her brother being there and if he were not its Equabl[e] to me for I thank god[?] I have grand childering [children] and infants to provide for that cant help themselves soe that you need not give yourself or me any more trobl of this kind. who am

Your most hual [humble] servt.

JO Miller

To Mrs. Rebeca Daviss in ffishambl street [Fishamble Street] Dublin

F[ra?] E[] Taylor
Useful Papers
*Major Millers Letter*³⁹

(Source: Draper Manuscripts Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Preston Papers, 1QQ1, Microfilm reel 110)

Appendix C

Transcription of Robert Macky's Letter to James Patton in Cornwall

*Mr. Donaldson's Letter*⁴⁰

To Capt. James Patton to the care of the Post maestr. Of St Collome [St. Columb] In Cornwall
London 7 April [torn]

Sir,

I have unanswered [*sic*] your favour of the 20th ult. [ultimo] and you may assure yourself it is a pleasure to me to have it in my power to render you any manner of Service here and shall not at any time Scruple the charge of Postage to hear of your welfare, and as for the tender trouble or expenses I have been at on your Accot. [account] it do's not deserve the great measure of thanks you are pleased to compliment me with in yours.

Your letter to Mr. Wm. Stewart is not yet delivered, not having seen him for some time before the Rect. [receipt] thereof, on your recomendation of him I wo'd have done him all the Service in my power, but truly it was next to an impossibility to get him any business in a Counting House as he expected; he afterwards resolved to go to the East Indies, and as I had only one Aiquaintance that cou'd be of Service to him that way (who unfortunately was out of Town while Mr. Stewart was here) he dropt that Project, so I Judge he's gone on Board some Merchant Man. he appears to be a sober young Lad and I doubt not but will behave himself handsomely in whatever Station of Life his Lott may be.

My Uncle and Mr. Craghead who are Partners together chiefly Deal in Commissions from Ireland, Holland, and Sweden, and that either in Goods of any Kind or Bills of Exchange, in getting Insurances made or the like and as they have tolerable good business this way, so I dare venture to say they are not only as capable, but do actually serve their friends with as much Honour, Honesty & Fidelity as any in London.

[I] have not the least word [torn] thats valuable of late from Ireland. Coz: Jos Ewin[g] [lat]ely come here from thence and brings little more [torn] here than [torn] he has settled his own affairs wth his Brotr [Brother]: in an amicable manner; and that the rest of his friends were well and further says that Bread was plenty & cheap there and but few people going to America this Season.

I shall be glad to hear from you before you proceed further and to know how you have Surmounted yr. [your] prent [present] misfortunes.

I am Sir your assured friend and most obedt. [obedient] Serv. [Servant]
Robt. Macky

(Source: Draper Manuscript Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Preston Papers, 1QQ2, Microfilm reel 110)

Endnotes

1. Patricia G. Johnson, *James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists* (Pulaski, Va.: Edmonds Printing, Inc., 2nd ed., 1983, first printed 1973); Albert H. Tillson Jr., "James Patton" in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography* 17 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 153–154; and Jim Glanville and Ryan Mays, "William Beverley, James Patton, and the Settling of the Shenandoah Valley," *Essex County Museum and Historical Society Bulletin* 55 (2010), 1–5.
2. Jim Glanville and Ryan Mays, "Mysterious Origins of James Patton, Part 1," *The Smithfield Review* 15 (2011), 35–64.
3. Glanville and Mays, "Mysterious Origins of James Patton, Part 1." This 1734 record was considered in 2011 to be the earliest known unambiguous documentary evidence of James Patton.
4. Johnson, *James Patton*, 11–13, and David R. Collin, *Kirkcudbright Shipping 1300–2005* (Kirkcudbright, U.K.: Stewartry Museum), 55.
5. Johnson, *James Patton*, 6–15; Richard K. MacMaster, "Captain James Patton Comes to America 1737–1740," *Augusta Historical Bulletin* 16 (1980), 4–13; *George Falkner: The Dublin Journal*, 18–22 April 1738, No. 1229 in *Irish Newspapers Prior to 1750 in Dublin Libraries* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1950), Reel 16, Indiana University.
6. Collin, *Kirkcudbright Shipping*, 220: "A company was formed in Kirkcudbright in 1734, ostensibly to undertake foreign trade from the Burgh, but actually to profit from Mr. Lutwidge's dubious dealings. Those dealings included slave trading, and there is evidence that some of Mr. Lutwidge's ships sailed from Kirkcudbright for this purpose." See also Frances Wilkins, *Dumfries, Galloway, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Kidderminster, U.K.: Wyre Forest Press, 2007).
7. Dumfries harbor is located on the River Nith a short distance from the coast of southern Scotland and about 25 miles east of Kirkcudbright. Lutwidge wrote to Patton on 10 January 1739/40 saying, "You Did go partly to Dumfreize to look for saylors [sailors] but your main End was for more valuable reasons," Walter Lutwidge, Letter Book 1739–1740, Cumbria Archive item YDX 79/1, Microfilm from Rockefeller Library of Colonial Williamsburg, 158; and Glanville and Mays, "Mysterious Origins of James Patton, Part 1," 54. The history of smuggling activities in Dumfries is reviewed by John A. Thompson, *The Smuggling Coast: The Smuggling Port of Dumfries, Forty Miles of the Solway Firth* (Dumfries: T. C. Farries & Co. Ltd., 1989), and W. A. J. Prevost, "The Solway Smugglers and the Customs Port at Dumfries," *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* 51 (1975), 59–67.
8. Major J. O. Miller of "Ballicasy [Ballycassidy]," Ireland, letter to "M[r].s. Rebeca Daviss" of Fishamble Street, Dublin, Ireland, 17 January 1731, Draper Manuscripts Collection,

- Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Preston Papers, 1QQ1, Microfilm reel 110. This letter appears to indicate that a relative of James Patton had lived with him or his wife in Dumfries. See Glanville and Mays, "Mysterious Origins of James Patton, Part 1," 44.
9. The newspaper records were discovered by the author in November 2015; the 1723 letter was found by the author in September 2010. The early British newspapers held at the British Library in London are now available online in the *17th–18th Century Burney Collection of Newspapers* database published by Gale (Cengage Learning). Nearly 1 million pages of microfilmed material, laboriously produced over many years, have been digitized. The 1723 letter was found by searching the online Catalogue of the National Archives in Kew, London.
10. *America's Historical Newspapers 1690–1922* (Readex), online database.
11. For example: *New England Weekly Journal*, 15 April 1728, No. 56; *American Weekly Mercury*, 2–9 November 1738, No. 984; *London and Country Journal*, 23 September 1740, No. 91; and *American Weekly Mercury*, 11–18 June 1741, No. 1120. It should be noted that there was great variation in the spelling of the surname Patton during the eighteenth century.
12. *Post-Boy*, 19–21 May 1719, No. 4652, and *Weekly Packet*, May 16–23, 1719, No. 359. Genoa is Italy's largest seaport.
13. Thomas Burnett to Lord Carteret, from Lisbon, 18 February 1723 N. S. (New Style/Gregorian Calendar dating), The National Archives, Kew. Reference: SP (State Papers Foreign, Portugal) 89/30/73, fol. 160. Letter not online, but described at *discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7764068*. See also endnote 33.
14. *Weekly Journal: or British-Gazetteer*, 6 December 1729, No. 236, and *Eccho: or Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, 17 December 1729, No. 50.
15. *General Evening Post*, 23–25 December 1735, No. 349, and *London Daily Post, and General Advertiser*, 25 December 1735, No. 358.
16. *The Daily Gazetteer*, 7 July 1739, No. 1262.
17. D.S. Brew and B. B. Gibberd, "Geomorphological Change and its Impact on Habitats in the Camel River Estuary, Cornwall, U.K.," *Geoscience in South-West England* 12 (2009), 95–100; J. B. Hill, "Geology," 1–46, in William Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of Cornwall* 1 (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1906); F. M. P. Howie and A. Gwynn, "The Sub-fossil Assemblage From a Holocene Calcareous Palaeosol in Daymer Bay, North Cornwall," *Geoscience in South-West England* 13 (2013), 191–201; and J. R. Merefield, "Modern carbonate marine-sands in estuaries of southwest England," *Geological Magazine* 119 (1982), 567–580.
18. A. Graham and A. E. Truckell, "Old Harbours in the Solway Firth," *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, Series 3, 52 (1976–1977), 109–142, see especially pages 123–126.
19. Michael M. Oppenheim, "Maritime History," 475–511, in William Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the Counties of England*; Richard Platt, *Smuggling in the British Isles: A History* (Stroud, U. K.: The History Press, 2011), see especially pages 90–95; and John Rule, "Smuggling and Wrecking," in Philip Payton, Alston Kennerley, Helen Doe, eds., *The Maritime History of Cornwall* (Exeter, U.K.: University of Exeter Press, 2014), 195–208.
20. Cathryn J. Pearce, *Cornish Wrecking 1700–1860: Reality and Popular Myth* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010). These records of the William wrecking at Padstow were overlooked by Richard Larn and Bridget Larn in their comprehensive *Shipwreck Index of the British Isles, Volume 1: Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset* (London, U.K.: Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1995).
21. Cathryn J. Pearce, *Cornish Wrecking 1700–1860*, 5.
22. Quoted in Michael M. Oppenheim, "Maritime History," *Victoria County History*, 502.
23. Whitehaven Shipping Records, Public Record Office E190/1460/5, Exchequer, King's Remembrancer Port Books, Library of Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilm reel 930.
24. Collin, *Kirkcudbright Shipping*, 261.
25. Robert Macky, merchant, is cited as living at Budge-Row, London in the following: *London Evening Post*, 4–6 January 1739, No. 1739; and *Daily Advertiser* 28 February 1743, No. 3779.

- “Mess. Macky and Craghead, Merchants, in Budge-Row, London” cited in the *London Gazette*, 24–28 June 1729, might be a reference to Robert Macky’s uncle and his business partner, Mr. Craghead, mentioned in his circa 1730 letter. Mackey’s will is printed in Lothrop Withington, “New York Gleanings in England,” *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 35 (1904), 119–121. In his will, Macky made a bequest to his nephew’s son, who was “late of Coleraine, Ireland.”
26. Presumably the town of St. Columb Major.
27. Robert Macky, letter from London to Capt. James Patton, April 7 [c1730] at “St. Collome Cornwall” [St. Columb, Cornwall, England], Draper Manuscript Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, 1QQ2, Microfilm reel 110; and Mabel Clare Weaks, *The Preston and Virginia Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts* (Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1915).
28. Johnson, *James Patton*, 6. Patricia Johnson misread the wording of this part of the letter as “great misfortune.”
29. Robert A. Brock, “Colonel James Patton, the Virginia Pioneer, and His Descendants; An Interesting Letter From Mrs. Colonel William L. Lewis to Hon. Robert W. Hughes,” *Richmond Standard*, 18 September 1880.
30. Johnson, *James Patton*, 5.
31. Thomas Burnet (1694–1753) was appointed consul to Lisbon and served in that capacity from 1719 to 1728. In 1712 and 1713, he published pamphlets accusing Tory leaders of being Jacobite sympathizers (David Lemmings, “Thomas Burnet” in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography in Association with the British Academy From the Earliest Times Through the Year 2000* 8 (Oxford U.K.: University Press, 2004), 933–934.
32. John Carteret (1690–1763) served as secretary of state for the Southern Department 1721–1724: John Cannon, “John Carteret, second Earl Granville,” in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography in Association with the British Academy From the Earliest Times Through the Year 2000* 10 (Oxford, U.K.: University Press, 2004), 381–387.
33. “Thomas Burnett to Lord Carteret. James Patten, Master of the *Pearl* Galley, and his reluctance to surrender his Mediterranean pass, as ordered, which Burnett procured only with great difficulty. Many Jacobites misbehave in this way and he would like Carteret’s assurance that he is justified in taking a hard line with them. Naval news. Portuguese help for Malta more likely to take form of money than ships. Date and place: 1723 Feb 18, N. S. [New Style/Gregorian Calendar dating] Lisbon,” SP 89/30/73 (State Papers Foreign, Portugal), footnote 160, online citation and letter description at discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C6843186. See also endnote 13.
34. Photocopied by Ms. Tina Hampson in the National Archives of the United Kingdom in 2015, copy in author’s files.
35. Glanville and Mays, “Mysterious Origins of James Patton, Part 1,” and MacMaster, “Captain James Patton,” 1980.
36. Galleys were swift, oared fighting vessels originally developed centuries ago in the Mediterranean. By the early eighteenth century, they had sails and oars and were frequently used by merchants. However, there is some evidence that not all “galleys” of this period actually used oars. See, for example, Peter Kemp, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 335–336, and Julian Corbett, “Galleys and Runners,” *Mariner’s Mirror* 7 (1921), 133–135.
37. David Richardson, *Mediterranean Passes in the Public Record Office, London* (East Ardsley, U.K.; E. P. Microfilm Ltd., 1981).
38. The early maritime records of Walter Lutwidge are as follows: “*Stranraer* [a port town in Wigtownshire, Scotland] Oct. 29. Yesterday came into our Loch the *Whitehaven* Galley, Burden 150 Tuns, carrying 16 Guns, Walter Lidwig Master, bound for Jamaica, laden with Beef, Butter, and Tallow, from Dublin, with 40 Servants on board, and will proceed in her Voyage with the first fair wind, they coming here for that intent, this Loch being the best Outlet to the Westward in Britain.” (*Supplement*, 16–18 November 1709, No. 288); “*Whitehaven*, March 24. On the 19th Instant the *Whitehaven* Galley, laden with Sugar and Indigo, Captain Lutwidge Commander, arrived at Ramsey Bay in the Isle of Man; She sailed from Jamaica on the 6th of February last

without any Company, and left three of her Majesty's Men of War, viz. the Kingston, Portland and Coventry, and four Guinea Ships, at Port-Royal...." (*London Gazette*, 28–30 March 1710, No. 4671); "*Whitehaven*, May 31. This Morning arrived a Fleet of Light Colliers, being twenty six Sail, from Dublin, under Convoy of the Seaford; And this Evening the *Whitehaven* Galley, Captain Walter Lutwidge Commander, returned hither. In his Passage from hence to the West Indies, he met with a Sloop call'd the *Anne* of Liverpool, bound home from Fial [Faial (Fayal) Island in the Azores of Portugal] with Brandy, Wine and Sugar; which Sloop had been taken a little before by a Privateer, and mann'd with Frenchmen; he retook her, and brought her in here. The Privateer had put on Board several valuable Parcels of Goods more than her own Cargo, which she designed for France." (*London Gazette*, 3–6 June 1710, No. 4700); and "*Bristol*, Jan. 4 ... the *Whitehaven* Galley of Whitehaven, Walter Lutwich Master, from Viana [Viana do Castelo, Portugal], with Wine" (*Evening Post*, 5–8 January 1712, No. 376).

39. These last three lines, printed here in italics, do not appear to have been written by Major Miller. The words "Major Millers Letter" were written in a handwriting matching that of "Mr. Donaldson's Letter." See endnote 40.
40. These words, printed here in italics, do not appear to have been written on the document by Robert Macky. They were probably written some years later by another person.

Alexander Black and His World, 1857–1935

Part I: 1857–1877

Sharon B. Watkins

Introduction

The name Alexander Black may elicit positive but somewhat vague associations among many people familiar with Blacksburg, Virginia, or the large university there now known as Virginia Tech. Hesitancy is understandable since the town was officially founded and named in 1798 by pioneer members of the Black family. That family followed the custom of reusing earlier names, including Alexander, to celebrate the memory of previous ancestors both maternal and paternal.

The subject matter of this two-part study is the Alexander Black who was born in Blacksburg on April 30, 1857, and died there on March 27, 1935, after a long business career in his hometown. Widely known as Alex Black, this genial businessman left behind him two notable and highly visible results of his labors that remain viable contributions to the local community today. One is the banking institution known since 1922 as the National Bank of Blacksburg. It was founded by Alexander Black and several fellow businessmen under a state charter granted in 1891 and bore the name Bank of Blacksburg. It was the first publicly owned bank to open in Montgomery County since the Civil War. Black was selected the first president of this bank and continued to hold that office until his death in 1935.¹ The second thriving memorial to his life and work is the Alexander Black House, which since 2015 has housed the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation. The building itself was erected in the 1890s after fire destroyed Black's earlier house. This impressive home, built on South Main Street in the heart of the town business district, was an unprecedented multistory Queen Anne Victorian structure, complete with a rounded tower on one end and many decorative elements. While it was basically a wooden house on a stone foundation, it was an eye-catching departure from prevailing architectural styles in Blacksburg. Previous buildings ranged from utilitarian one- or two-story wood frame buildings to brick or wooden structures, some quite elegant, imitative of colonial, federal, or ante-bellum styles.²

These two tangible testimonies to the enduring contributions and influence of Alexander Black in his home region both took visible form in the 1890s. The intangible formation of the man himself began much earlier, in his birth to an influential and comfortable middle class family, his childhood experiences overshadowed by the Civil War, and his years of education at institutions that his own father had a major role in creating. The present article, dealing with his family background, childhood, and youth through the end of his student years at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, forms Part I of a study of Alexander Black and the world he knew. Part II, to be published later, will discuss his long career in business, banking, and community involvement, in addition to elements of his personal and family life until his death in 1935.

Family Background and Early Influences

If the boy is to some extent father to the man, then it is worthwhile to explore the formative elements surrounding the young Alexander Black, particularly with regard to his family and community environment. Alex Black was the son of Dr. Harvey Black (1827–1888) and his wife, Mary Kent Black, known to her family as Mollie (1836–1911). They were married on September 15, 1852, and settled into a pleasant house with a large garden on North Main Street in a small town of approximately 400 people in Montgomery County in the Allegheny Mountains west of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Yet to think of them as products of a closed, in-grown local society would be erroneous.

Harvey was born in Blacksburg to the family of Scottish descent who had been very early settlers, large landowners, and official founders of the town in the last half of the 1700s.³ Many family members, especially those engaged primarily in agriculture, readily pushed onward along the expanding American frontier, leaving Blacksburg hundreds of miles behind. Harvey Black's own parents, Alexander and Elizabeth MacDonald Black, followed this path as they departed in the late 1840s, with several of the younger of their 12 children, to settle on the Wisconsin frontier. By then Harvey, the second born child, was an adult and had chosen a middle-class profession best based in a town and was completing his medical studies. He had volunteered and served in the U.S. Army medical branch during the Mexican War and afterwards toured Midwestern states to locate military bonus lands due him for his service. Altogether he visited more than a half-dozen other states, including Illinois and Ohio. Having explored other possible locations, he chose Blacksburg and Virginia for his home and career.

Mollie Black, too, had traveled before settling down; in fact, she was born in northern Illinois in the frontier settlement of Rockford. Her mother, Arabella Amiss Kent, belonged to the Amiss family of Montgomery County and Blacksburg; her family had both large landholdings and important business interests in town (including a hotel on Main Street). While visiting other relatives in Alabama, Arabella Amiss met her future husband. He was Germanicus Kent, who was born in Connecticut and had studied at Yale; however, he decided that economic opportunities and jobs lay southward.⁴ He became a cotton broker in Huntsville, Alabama, where the couple met and married. Subsequently they moved northward to join his brother, Aratus Kent, near the booming lead mining town of Galena, Illinois, and later helped found the town of Rockford. Their daughter, Mary Kent, was the first child of European descent known to have been born in that area; two sons followed soon after. The native peoples had been removed west of the Mississippi River through a disputed treaty process shortly after the Louisiana Purchase. Their last attempt to occupy their Illinois lands, under the leadership of Sauk chieftain Black Hawk, met defeat in 1832 at the hands of the U.S. Army and local militia.

Unfortunately the nascent business endeavors of Mollie's father collapsed as the expanding waves of the economic crisis begun in 1837 brought an end to easy credit and additional settlement. Within a few years, Arabella and Germanicus found refuge for their little family with the Amisses and new business opportunities in Blacksburg. Mollie made summer visits to other branches of her mother's far-flung family and may have visited her uncle and brothers in Illinois. Her father participated along with her Amiss relatives in founding the first bank in Montgomery County, the Blacksburg Savings Institution.⁵

Through their marriage, Harvey Black and Mary Kent Black brought together hitherto widely separated families and heritages based in northern as well as southern states and business as well as agriculture. Within nine years of their wedding, they had four lively children. First born was Kent Black (1853–1909); next came the only girl, Elizabeth Arabella Black (1855–1948), often called Lizzie or Lizzie Belle. Alexander Black was born in 1857 and two years later arrived the third son, Charles W. Black (1859–1925), usually called Charly (or Charley). One adult was added to their household in 1856 when Germanicus Kent, widowed for some five years, went to live with his daughter and his grandchildren until his death in 1862.

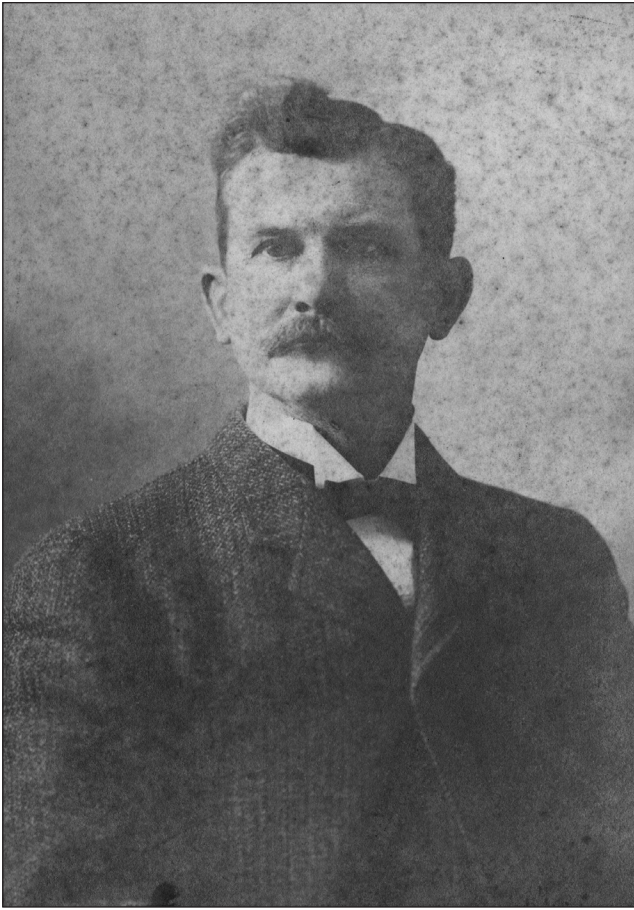
The census of 1860 showed another person living in the home, a young enslaved woman in her upper teens named Adeline. She did the cooking and most of the kitchen work, freeing Mollie to spend much of her time with the

children. Adeline had apparently been the property of Harvey Black's father, Alexander Black, who did not take her to Wisconsin with him because her extended birth family lived locally. Had Adeline gone to Wisconsin to live, she might have become a free person by virtue of the Northwest Ordinances passed in the early 1780s by the United States Congress operating under the Articles of Confederation, the first U.S. constitution. However, it might well have been difficult, especially for a young single woman, to assert her freedom in Virginia or Wisconsin.⁶

The Black children were fortunate to be born into an extended family who supported education for their own children and others, both female and male. The men in their family were among the supporters for creation of the Blacksburg Female Academy in 1840 and provided it a substantial brick building (by 1842) on town lots supplied by Black family members at a nominal price. Young Lizzie Black was a student there just before the Civil War began.⁷ A similar effort on behalf of an academy for boys and young men also developed and, in unison with local Methodists, gained support from the next-higher church level, the Baltimore Conference. The result was the Olin and Preston Institute, which opened in 1851.⁸ Kent Black pursued formal education here until the school closed shortly after the beginning of the Civil War. Harvey and Mollie Black were active members, teachers, and leaders in the local Methodist congregation; Alex Black remained a member of the same congregation for his entire life.

In many ways, Blacksburg and its surrounding area of Montgomery County were becoming a more vigorous and prosperous community in the 1850s, with good prospects for growth and economic progress. The area enjoyed a natural environment enabling production of varied products necessary and useful for human life. Mature original growth Appalachian forests abounded in the countryside outside town, which lay at an altitude of approximately 2,200 feet. Between the higher mountain ridges lay numerous fertile valleys and abundant sources of water. The climate was temperate and the growing season long enough for production of a variety of food crops for humans and livestock, particularly cattle. Hemp was once cultivated for fiber, but by 1860 had ceased to be a significant crop. The forests provided wood and animal products and the soil was underlain by stone for building and milling, accessible deposits of coal, and smaller amounts of metals and other minerals (including iron, manganese, sulfur, and salt).

On the other hand, disappointment had historically met those who attempted to replicate the eastern Virginia economic model of very large landholdings worked by a labor force of enslaved Africans to produce a single cash crop for shipment to distant markets in more populous areas of



Alexander Black as a young man (Papers of the Black, Kent, and Apperson Families, Mx1974-003, Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech).

America or Europe. There was no difficulty in producing valuable products in Montgomery County, as historian Daniel Thorp has succinctly noted, but it was impossible to move bulky agricultural and forest products to distant markets reliably and at costs low enough to preserve profits. The geography simply forbade such movement of large amounts of goods.⁹ The major roads were well maintained, but the need to ascend multiple slopes and then restrain heavy loads while descending, or to take long meandering routes to avoid obstacles, added time and required extra draft animals. Water transportation, so easily available in Tidewater Virginia, was out of the question; the streams were rapid, rocky, and shallow. Near Blacksburg the largest river, the New, turned north to cross even more mountainous terrain and emptied into the Ohio River rather than a convenient ocean. As

a result of these multiple factors, many families of European descent owned and worked their own small farms; large landowners typically practiced mixed agriculture and left many acres in forest or pastureland. The number of slaves was small in absolute terms, but they composed about one-fifth of the county's population.

The preceding scenario began to change rapidly in the 1850s, when businessmen in Lynchburg and local investors combined to extend a major rail line westward into and across Montgomery County and onward to Bristol, Virginia/Tennessee. This line, the Virginia and Tennessee, was completed in 1856 and linked these western areas by reliable, affordable transportation to Richmond and the Atlantic Ocean via Lynchburg's existing railroads. The effects upon the local economy were immediate, and ominous. Planters from exhausted lands to the east moved into the county and brought their enslaved workers with them. Local landowners, too, began to use more slaves to produce larger amounts of goods now easily marketable in eastern areas with larger populations. Local leaders who had previously resented and fought the political dominance of eastern slave owners over state government began to feel less antagonistic, especially since the reformed state Constitution of 1857 allowed, for the first time, almost universal suffrage for adult white males.¹⁰

The National Political Scene

Nationwide the increasingly strident political quarrel surrounding slavery and its expansion into new states grew apace, even as it seemed slavery might become a dominant factor in Blacksburg economic life. Local people were doubtless shaken in 1859 by the armed attempt of John Brown of Kansas to seize the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry (then still a part of Virginia) and to begin a rebellion there among slaves and their sympathizers, using seized government weapons. Brown's intentions and the support given him by many citizens in Northern states accelerated the impetus for some political leaders in states of the Deep South to move toward secession and creation of a new, independent country. Nationwide, the impending presidential election of 1860 seemed to increase political polarization between sections of the U.S. In contrast, local residents showed no immediate rush to extremism, and at the polls they exhibited a desire for a political solution to be worked out.¹¹ Sadly, normal political discourse and activities were dissolving, as four parties presented presidential candidates in 1860.

The Republican Party organization could find no Virginians to serve as a slate of electors for Lincoln and thus voters there effectively had only three choices. In simplified terms, the Northern Democratic candidate,

Stephen Douglas of Illinois, favored allowing individual states to decide the question of slavery (a position called “popular sovereignty”). The Southern Democratic candidate, John Breckinridge of Kentucky, was clearly in favor of a Union which protected property rights as expressed in slavery and countenanced secession if an alternative became necessary. And John Bell of Tennessee represented the newly organized Constitutional Union Party composed of moderates and former Whigs. Bell and his supporters advocated “enforcement of the U.S. Constitution, the union of the states, and the enforcement of the laws.” Their major hope was to work out issues through the political process, chiefly through several amendments to the U.S. Constitution that would require some concessions on both sides.

Bell was the clear winner in Montgomery County, with 58.8 percent of the votes cast; Douglas received 6.1 percent, and Breckinridge won only 35.1 percent. Turnout was relatively high among the adult, white, male voters and could reasonably be considered representative. In fact, Bell won the popular vote across the entire state, albeit by a much smaller proportion, and he received all 15 of Virginia’s electoral votes.

Nationwide, of course, the result of the presidential election of 1860 was quite different. Lincoln achieved victory in the Electoral College, but he won just under 40 percent of the popular vote. Upon learning of this result, seven states of the Lower South immediately seceded and by early February 1861 had organized the Confederate States of America with Montgomery, Alabama, as its (temporary) capital. They chose a name—the Confederacy—that reminded Americans of the period of the Confederation, when each state could effectively veto acts of the U.S. government and there was no executive officer at its head. Extremists on both sides had carried the day in their own geographic regions, and those in the middle, politically and geographically, had little realistic hope of averting disaster.

Within weeks of his March 1861 inauguration, Lincoln launched a flotilla of naval vessels toward South Carolina. In response, Confederates in Charleston fired upon Fort Sumter (early April 1861) to compel its surrender before the U.S. naval vessels could resupply or reinforce the fortress, which commanded the city’s harbor. The U.S. president then called upon the individual states, including Virginia, to raise military forces to fight against the Confederacy, whose name he avoided using but whose acts of resistance to the U.S. he targeted. It was at this point that Virginia seceded from the United States in a decision ratified by the majority of the state’s voters. Three other “upper South” states did likewise. This special ballot showed a marked change in direction in Montgomery County, where the vote in favor of secession was recorded as unanimous. The later appearance of considerable

Unionist or anti-war sentiment in the county suggests this unanimity did not accurately reflect the considered opinion of all white males living there; some may have acted from momentary anger or intimidation.

A Civil War Childhood, 1861–1865

When the Civil War began, Alex Black was not quite 4 years old yet; his siblings were aged 8, 6, and 2. His father, Dr. Harvey Black, enlisted as a military surgeon along with troops from the western part of the state, and ultimately this regiment fell under the command of Col. Thomas Jonathan Jackson, soon to be a general and known as Stonewall. Dr. Black's visits home were rare, including one absence of over two years. Harvey and Mollie were forced to depend upon irregularly delivered letters and verbal messages passed by travelers to maintain some sense of home and family, while seeking solutions to mounting practical problems spawned by war. Some of their Civil War correspondence has survived and these letters, viewed in the context of Civil War events in Montgomery County and nearby counties, provide some insight into the home front as young Alexander Black and his siblings came to experience it. As in other cases, the number of surviving letters from the soldier by far outnumbered those surviving from his wife at home.¹²

The wartime experience of Alex Black was probably not so harsh as that of many Southern children; nevertheless it must have been stressful and dangerous. Fortunately for Blacksburg civilians, the most frequent local targets of United States Army attacks were located at least 15 miles or more from the town. The town's small size, lack of manufacturing, and its distance from railroad service were, for three years, sufficient reasons for the Federal forces to ignore Blacksburg. Ironically, the primary target of the U.S. military was destruction of the newly completed Virginia and Tennessee Railroad—the symbol of a modern industrialized economy—which ran through Montgomery County via the county seat of Christiansburg (south of Blacksburg) and crossed the New River on a 600 foot long bridge at nearby Radford to the southwest. A second priority of this U.S. strategy was to prevent salt produced at Saltville (approximately 95 miles west from Blacksburg by road) from reaching more populated areas, where it might become an ingredient in inferior gunpowder—or supply basic human and animal nutrition needs. Ultimately, Saltville became the single major source of salt for most of the Confederacy, a fact that intensified Federal attacks on Saltville itself and on the railroad.

Fortunately for Mollie and the four children, the Black family was affluent, had friends and relatives in the countryside who could help with

food, and appeared to benefit from widespread appreciation of Dr. Black's dedicated care of the local soldiers in the Virginia First Brigade. The first extant letter from Harvey to his "dear Wife" dates from April 4, 1862, and mingles general war news with domestic matters. Mollie Black's father, Germanicus Kent, had died in early March that year; his passing increased financial and family business issues for the parents to handle at a time when financial matters were in chaos due to the multiplicity of types of money in circulation. Harvey explained to his wife that he was sending her \$300 in the form of a certificate of deposit, which a friend stationed in Richmond in a clerical department had managed to obtain for them on an unnamed bank, thereby assuring her access to funds for family needs.¹³ For the children, Germanicus's death meant losing the only male authority figure remaining in the home at a time when their father had been absent for a year.

In a letter of April 23, 1862, Dr. Black revealed how thoughts of his family weighed on him. He confided it was difficult to write because his colonel (a lawyer and acquaintance from Montgomery County, Charles Roland) "has just been discussing what a boy Alex is, and some of them are trying to plague me about having so many children and so fast . . . I feel mighty proud of them. I don't think I would be half so good a soldier if I did not have so many little fellows to fight for."¹⁴ Alex would have been a week short of his fifth birthday at that point and perhaps impressed Ronald with his energy and exuberance. Harvey thought too of his youngest, declaring: "I know Charly is a smart little fellow. How I would like to hear him talk."¹⁵

Harvey must have been aware of the fear of invasion among the women and other civilians at home with his "little fellows," for on April 28, 1862, he began a new note addressing matters close to home. He had given instructions to "take care of business" to a relative escorting some discharged soldiers. "I also gave him the same instructions which I did you in case there should be an invasion of our county, which I have more hope now than heretofore will not be the case, for the [Federal] forces are needed at more important points that they may pass us by." His instructions may have been disquieting to his wife, alone and responsible for their four children's safety, to "burn everything that the enemy can appropriate" as an act of patriotism and devotion.¹⁶

The tone and topics of Dr. Black in his letter of May 2, 1862, indicate he had received a letter from his wife reporting that their youngest, 3-year-old. Charly, had been very ill and for a time unable to swallow. Harvey wrote, "I hope he may yet recover and that an operation may be performed that may relieve him." Yet he agreed with Mollie's sentiment that she could give him up if that were "the will of Providence, . . . believing that he would

be a little angel in a better land.”¹⁷ The editor of the correspondence, Glenn L. McMullen, speculates that Charly had suffered a severe strep infection or tonsillitis. Harvey also reassured her that an actual attack upon Blacksburg was unlikely and that the rumor evidently going around town that the Confederacy would abandon the defense of Virginia entirely and withdraw southward to concentrate on saving its core area was untrue. He suggested that Virginia would never be abandoned and concluded that “I don’t hesitate to say that whip them we can and whip them we will.”¹⁸

In a letter of August 31, 1862, after the Battle of Second Manassas, Harvey wrote that the Stonewall Brigade had played a major role and “suffered severely” with “near 100 killed and wounded.” He supplied specific names of three Montgomery County men dead and two wounded. This enabled Mollie to pass on the names if families had not been officially informed, a service others must have appreciated and perhaps reciprocated in concrete ways, such as gifts of fresh food or needed services.¹⁹

A letter from Martinsburg a month later (September 26, 1862) found Harvey worried about the condition of many soldiers; he enjoined his wife to urge local farmers to produce all they could for the army. He then devoted a passage to each of his children, addressing good and bad behaviors and possible illnesses that Mollie must have shared with him in a letter subsequently lost. He praised Kent, 9 years old, for “standing head of his class.” Since the Olin and Preston Institute had ceased operation as its teachers and older students went to war, Kent may have attended classes conducted part-time by a clergyman, such as Rev. Charles Martin, whose school operated until 1872.²⁰ The other three children drew admonitions about less laudable behavior. One senses that, beyond acting like normal children, they were responding to the tension and fear that adults must have constantly exuded around them. Lizzie, age 7, was chided for talking “ugly” and told she “must learn to talk right” if she wanted people to like her. Alex, age 5, had apparently been having difficulty in concentrating on his lessons, whether from feeling ill in the summer heat or from a boyish tendency not to sit still for very long is uncertain. Harvey stated, “I am sure Alex will try to learn. The weather is getting cool now, and he can probably manage to sit up long enough to learn his lessons.” And lastly, young Charly, age 3, had, it seems, recovered from his serious illness and been rather unruly, for he complained that “Ma whips him too much.” Altogether it seems as if Mollie, who was essentially a “single mother” with four children and no other adult relative to assist her, had her hands full trying to uphold proper standards of behavior in a time of uncertainty and strain.

In a lost letter of March 1863, Mollie reported that she had been ill and that, luckily, her cousin Lizzie (Elizabeth Amiss Palmer, who lived a short walk away) had been able to stay with her and the children. In such ways the women and children of Blacksburg, especially those bound by family ties, managed while the men were gone. Harvey, replying on April 1, bemoaned the fact she had been ill and told an amusing story, perhaps intended to divert her.²¹ It ended with his passing out treats to his numerous smallpox patients, an inadvertent reminder that the scourge of war was not limited to military weapons but posed less visible dangers to everyone, particularly children and the aged. The resurgence of smallpox among numerous groups of soldiers was particularly worrying because, as Civil War historian James Robertson explains, “[T]he vaccination process was then so crude that it often produced pyemia and other forms of fatal blood poisoning.”²² Subjecting children to such a process was not an attractive option.

Despite their difficult circumstances, or perhaps because of them, Mollie in May 1863 proposed that she go visit Harvey at the field hospital (Guinea Station, Virginia) where he had been located for some time. The couple had not seen each other for more than two years, not since he had left for the war zone in April 1861. Harvey raised the question of who would care for the children and thought Kent might possibly come despite the amount of disease present; he did not want the younger children to visit. He noted that Kent had already had the measles and, presumably, was already immune to that dangerous childhood illness.²³ Kent, if not Mollie, was known to have visited his father in camp.

Only three of the letters written by Mollie have survived to the present. The first of her letters was begun on November 29, 1863, and had a long postscript added on December 1 when she learned a dispatch was being taken to Christiansburg and the train soon. This letter mingles talk about normal activities such as church affairs and getting new shoes for children with reports from the countryside of Yankee raids on unprotected homes, where soldiers stole everything valuable in the house and seized or destroyed all the food available. Yet life at home went on, if not exactly as usual. On that Sunday Mollie reported, “All the children but Charly have gone to church, so I feel lonely. . . . This is the first time that Alex has gone out at night.” Possibly this was the first time the 7-year old had been sent to evening service in the care of his sister, Lizzie, and older brother, Kent. Or she may have intended to convey that Alex was no longer furiously scratching and fidgeting from an attack of lice and thus fit to go out in public again. The lice problem had been made worse because the usual remedies were unavailable

and even soap, and tallow to make it, were difficult to obtain. Things had become so difficult that Mollie concluded that “something must be done before spring to bring peace.”²⁴

When the children outgrew their shoes, replacements required a long wait. Evidently Alex had been waiting for a new pair of “boots” for some time; meanwhile, “He wears a pair of Kent’s old last winter shoes that just keep his feet off the ground.” Through diligent inquiry, she learned that a young farm boy, Jim Linkous, had begun to make shoes and had finished two pairs.²⁵ Mollie engaged him in late December to make a pair for Lizzie Belle and then, for Christmas, Alex’s new boots. Mollie expressed her gratitude and declared, “Jimmy is a young hand. He has only made three pair, but he makes them very nice.”²⁶

At first, as foodstuffs grew scarce, the missing items were not absolutely essential, such as fine granulated sugar and imported coffee. A local officer obtained and distributed “some coffee and sugar” in late December 1863, and Mollie admitted she would have gladly taken some of the coffee had she been present “for I am tired of substitutes.” Far more serious, as U.S. Army raids came closer and closer, daily necessities such as flour, salt, meat, and tallow had become very difficult to obtain by any means. Their unavailability meant that the armed forces of both sides had been taking them, whether by payment or by force, from the rural population. A church member, a farmer named Earheart, reported that his family was down to half-rations.

During November and December, Mollie received friendly deliveries of wheat (twice for a total of 13 bushels) and of tallow (over 7 pounds). She or Adeline presumably had to personally process the grain and fat into more useable forms. She had raisins for the family’s traditional Christmas mincemeat pies and was anxiously awaiting delivery of meat the next day.

Fear of direct attack reached a peak in Blacksburg in the middle of December as U.S. troop movements increased in intensity, and scattered Confederate forces and home guards proved increasingly unable to stop them. In a letter written December 18, 1863, Mollie reported days and nights filled with fear: “Last night we all slept in our clothes, expecting the Yankees every minute.”²⁷ Evidently, because of the cold, they all huddled together in the parents’ big bed, ready to fly away when their neighbors rapped on the door. It was a near miss; the object of the hostile movements led by Lt. Col. William W. Averell (1832–1900) turned out to be the Roanoke County seat of Salem (about 15 miles eastward).²⁸ The damage reported there was considerable. Mollie thought that it would be at least a month before “the cars” (the railroad cars) could run again to Christiansburg; this left most of the county more isolated than ever.

The children were showing the effects of the conditions they were enduring. According to Mrs. Black, “[W]e may expect them [the Yankees] back any time. The children were very much frightened.” The youngest, Charly, age 4, gave voice to that fear and anger as well. He reportedly had shouted in a rage, “[I]f ever he was a man, he would kill all the Yankees, soldiers & the government too, so his Pa could come home.”²⁹ The choice of “if” (not “when”) Charly made it to manhood seems telling, whether the four-year old or his mother, in writing, chose that word.

Cessation of Local Warfare and Occupation of Blacksburg in May 1864

The end of the fighting and worst privations may have come as a relief to local civilians, even though that entailed U.S. military occupation of the town and surrounding countryside in May of 1864. On May 9, 1864, another Federal military effort to permanently shut down operations on the Tennessee and Virginia Railroad led to a brief but quite bloody battle at Cloyd’s Mountain near Dublin, in neighboring Pulaski County. Lasting only about one hour, the vicious encounter produced some 1,200 combined dead and wounded. At its conclusion, the U.S. forces were able to achieve their long-term goals by marching to Radford and collapsing the railroad bridge over the New River (May 10) and then occupying the surrounding areas to prevent efforts at repairs or detours. The main body of the Federal forces then marched eastward.

Gen. George R. Crook (1830–1890) and his men arrived in Blacksburg on May 11, 1864, and began to set up an occupation headquarters and a field hospital in two large houses just east of Main Street, a few blocks from the Blacks’ home. Originally intent on creating headquarters at the home of Mollie’s Amiss and Palmer cousins (now known as Mountain View), the military staff moved to the vacant school building of the Olin and Preston Institute upon learning that only women lived at the first address. On May 12, a second wave of U.S. soldiers under Averell passed through town heading back into West Virginia. As these soldiers marched, they “visited” homes, “confiscating food and valuables from the local citizenry.” Some residents reported that they spitefully destroyed food that they could not carry with them.³⁰ To what extent Alex Black (then age 8) and his siblings understood the meaning of the soldiers taking over familiar buildings in town is today unknown, yet it must have been a memory that remained with them for many years. Fear of attack, however, was over and by slow degrees more normal life, at least as remembered by adults, returned.

Education and Young Adult Years to 1877

The war continued almost another year, and Dr. Harvey Black was present at Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April 1865. Upon his return home, he spent the years after the war continuing the career and interests he had developed earlier. He took part in the effort to reopen the Methodist school for boys and young men in Blacksburg, which had closed early in the war. Education of local children had suffered severely for the years of conflict and reopening pre-war schools was no easy matter in the postwar years of financial chaos. The Methodist school reopened in 1868 and in 1869 gained a new charter and a slightly different name (Preston and Olin Institute). Numerous students enrolled, but it was difficult to find qualified staff and the school continued to face challenging conditions.³¹

For young Alexander Black, who had his fourth birthday a few weeks after the war began, attendance at a regular school with trained teachers was not possible until he was about 10 or 11 years old. When the Methodist school reopened in 1868–1869, all three of the Black brothers entered along with several other local students; in 1870 enrollment totaled 99. However, many students were not adequately prepared for the institute's regular college preparatory courses, in which "Latin, Greek, mathematics, natural science, and moral philosophy and English" composed the five major divisions. Large numbers of students, such as Alexander and Charles Black, were necessarily placed in the "primary and preparatory division" because they lacked the level of education that had been, in pre-war times, appropriate for their ages.

After Virginia was readmitted as a state of the United States effective January 1870, it was freed from military occupation and became subject to the normal application of all federal laws. Of great interest was the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, which provided federal financial support for the creation of state college level programs or institutions especially for mechanical and agricultural education. The General Assembly lost little time in obtaining Virginia's share, which was supplied in the form of federal scrip redeemable in publicly owned lands. A state could choose the land itself and sell or develop it to raise funds. Alternatively, a state could sell the scrip representing its land claim to raise funds quickly.

With a large state debt already weighing upon the budget, Virginia apparently decided upon a quick route to the money. In Richmond, "legislators in the 1870–1871 session argued on and on about the land grant money." In 1872, the Virginia Board of Education was authorized to sell the land scrip for all 300,000 acres; a single investor in Cleveland, Ohio, purchased all of the scrip for 285,000 dollars (about 95 cents per acre).

This money was invested at 5 percent interest in state bonds, producing the annual flow of funds for the land grant colleges. The March 1872 Virginia statute designating the state's two land grant colleges describes and divides "the annual interest accruing from the proceeds of the land scrip donated to the state of Virginia by act of Congress" and further describes this money as "the said annuity" to be paid to the Blacksburg and Hampton Colleges.³² Numerous communities petitioned to receive the new college; the story has been well told elsewhere how leaders in Blacksburg and Montgomery County secured the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College. The first VAMC building was the main hall of Preston and Olin Institute, which ceased to exist and whose property was donated to the land grant college, thereby creating a ready-made campus. VAMC opened its doors for the first fall session in 1872, with Dr. Harvey Black serving as the first rector of its board of visitors. Over the decades, it underwent several name changes and is now familiarly known as Virginia Tech.³³

In this fashion and partly resulting from his father's efforts, Alex Black and many young men across Virginia gained the benefit of a major state-supported college that offered traditional college subjects in addition to its specific mission of offering more practical mechanical, engineering, and agricultural courses. Three of the students enrolled in the original session of 1872–1873 were Kent, Alexander, and Charles Black. The Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College also faced the challenging fact that many students had not already received the education young men of their age would have attained in times of peace. Many of them needed remedial coursework, while others of the same age were prepared for more advanced material. By the same token, the enrollments of the earliest years were relatively large, as a pent-up surge of young men of various ages, previously unable to continue their educations, seized the opportunities offered at VAMC. The official *VAMC Catalog*³⁴ for the first session listed 132 students enrolled, the second session (1873–1874) listed 194 students, the third session (1874–1875) counted 222, and the fourth session (1875–1876) attained a high of 255 students (including 13 from out of state). A reverse effect began in the fifth session (1876–1877) with only 224, and then a steeper decline occurred, as the sixth session (1877–1878) registered only 186 students and the seventh 160. Each session, the student body was evaluated and divided into three levels of study: junior, intermediate, and senior; students remained at each level until prepared for the more demanding work of the next level.

VAMC initially offered two concentrated courses of study, agriculture and mechanics. The courses required for each, as described in the early

catalogs, required advanced work in mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, and other fields. In the 1870s, relatively few students completed either three-year curriculum, even though each 10-month-long school year provided far more instructional time than a typical modern college year of two semesters each about four months long. Many early enrollees probably lacked the time or advanced mathematical preparation required for senior level classes.

It is also likely that a segment of the student population pursued a more general selection of courses covering course content similar to liberal arts college coursework. (By 1886, these students would have found a complete “General Course” curriculum to pursue.³⁵) For example, all students were required to study French or German; in addition, Latin and Greek instruction was available upon request. Other fields useful to careers in agriculture or other professions were offered in the middle level classes, such as bookkeeping, record keeping, surveying, common food plants and animals and their care, agricultural economics, and so forth. Indeed, every course that instructed a future farmer how to evaluate his land; to select and cultivate appropriate crops, orchards, and animals; or how to use modern equipment and chemicals also instructed the future operator of a local general store, hardware store, or “feed and seed” store what products he should stock and how to price those items. VAMC was fortunate to have an “experimental farm” of over 200 acres nearby, providing real life experience that benefitted both the farmer in training—as well as the future businessman who never had lived in the country or worked in a family business.

A closer look at Alex Black and his brothers is revealing of the complicated situation. All three of them began classes at VAMC in its first session, beginning in 1872. Alex was 15 years of age, Charles only 13, and Kent 19. Kent had the greatest educational experience already and was clearly focused on a career, to practice medicine as his father did. Studying Latin, biology, and chemistry helped prepare him for medical school. He cultivated leadership skills and self-confidence by participating in the required military exercises; the opening of the third session in 1874 found him a first lieutenant in the cadet corps. This was also his last session at VAMC as he went on to medical school the following year. Youngest brother Charles arrived at VAMC with the least formal education and a disjointed early childhood. Based on his age alone, he doubtless needed some additional preparatory classes to enable him to participate fully in the junior or intermediate college level classes. He attended classes for three years and then did not enroll again.

Alex Black entered VAMC at the age of 15 with less formal education than his older brother Kent but probably better prepared in terms of schooling and added maturity than Charles. Like Kent, Alex participated in the required military elements with some distinction, and by the beginning of his third session (1874–1875), he held the rank of sergeant in the cadet organization, a rank he retained for the following session. In his fourth and fifth years, his home county was listed as James City, reflecting the fact that his parents had moved the family home to be close to Dr. Black's new position as superintendent of the state's Eastern Lunatic Asylum in Williamsburg.

While Alex undoubtedly missed his parents, sister, and brothers, he had found a congenial group of friends on campus, most particularly in the local chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, which had been founded in 1874. He went on to serve the fraternity as its president in the 1876–1877 session, his fifth and last year at VAMC. As noted above, he did not follow a specialized program, pursuing instead the types of courses that would best suit him for the life of a businessman and citizen in his own hometown. After strengthening the foundation of his education, he may have discovered some of the upper level courses took a larger and more philosophical view of the interrelationship of various major types of resources and economic sectors working together. In his senior agriculture lecture class, Professor M. G. Ellzey devoted one-third of his time to "General Considerations of the business of farming and rural economy, including all important agricultural specialties . . . closing with the discussion of the relations of Agriculture to commerce, manufactures, labor, government, taxation, and etc." The course in Mental and Moral Philosophy of President Charles L. C. Minor set forth large themes and issues including political economy.³⁶ The term political economy had been used for centuries to describe what one might today label a combination of macroeconomics, public policy, social and economic systems, and global economics. Thoughtful businessmen and bankers could in future find guidance in such discussions.

Alexander Black left VAMC at age 20 with satisfaction and appreciation for his experiences there. Attachment to his college friends and his *alma mater* may have made easier his decision to live and work in Blacksburg. As the years passed, he cultivated friendships and business connections not only among other alumni but with faculty and administrators from the campus. As the campus grew and offered more activities open to the public, he enjoyed the intellectual and social stimulation of special lectures, campus dances and concerts, and other activities. Numerous young men

from Montgomery County and nearby enrolled each year at VAMC and the Catalog of Students during Alex's years there includes many familiar names of businessmen or kinsmen, including Henderson, Francisco, Hoge, Kiester, Kipps, Stanger, Thomas, Kanode, Miller, Lawrence, Lybrook, McDonald, and others. According to the obituary published in 1935 by the university's official newsletter, *The Techgram*, Alexander Black "served for several years as an officer of the General Alumni Association" and as "a member of the board of directors [visitors] for many years. He has always been prominently identified with alumni affairs."³⁷ The second part of this study of Alexander Black will explore his career as business and community leader from the conclusion of his education until his death. The upcoming second article will discuss numerous specific examples of his ongoing relationships with individual alumni, with the institution as an economic and legal entity, and with the wider community of Blacksburg and Montgomery County.

Endnotes

1. Sherry Joines Wyatt, "Business and Commerce: Community Centers and Places of Profit," in Mary Elizabeth Lindon, ed., *Virginia's Montgomery County* (Christiansburg, Va.: Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Arts Center, 2009), 396–397. Two Blacksburg men, druggist W. B. Conway and former pastor Essiah Hubbert, in 1889 had briefly opened a private bank backed only by their own resources; both men terminated this operation and joined in creation of the Bank of Blacksburg in 1891.
2. See the official website at www.blacksburg.gov/index.aspx?page=65 and associated pages. The Alexander Black House Museum and Blacksburg Cultural Center state that the home was built in 1897, based on primary documents of that date. A conflicting date of 1892 or 1893 was suggested in the decades following Alexander Black's death but seems to lack primary documentation. This conflict will be addressed later in another volume of *The Smithfield Review*.
3. For details of the early life of Harvey Black and his wife's background, see details in Glenn L. McMullen, ed., *A Surgeon With Stonewall Jackson: The Civil War Letters of Dr. Harvey Black* (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1995). The original letters of Dr. and Mrs. Black are part of the valuable holdings on the Black Family in *Papers of the Black, Kent, and Apperson Families*, Ms74-003, Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va.
4. Details on Germanicus Kent and his family are found in Taylor Decker, *Germanicus A. Kent: Founder of Rockford, Illinois, 1834* (Rockford, Ill.: Rockford Historical Society, 1981); also online at tinkercottagemuseum.wordpress.com/tag/germanicus-kent as well as similar en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germanicus.Kent.
5. Wyatt, "Business and Commerce," 387–388, 391–392. Germanicus Kent was no known blood relation to James Randle Kent, largest landowner in the county, who also participated in the creation of the bank.
6. McMullen, *Civil War Letters*, suggests this is why young Adeline remained behind. The Congress that operated under the Articles of Confederation is the government that defeated the British, signed the Treaty of Paris, and passed major legislation (called Ordinances) that created the Northwest Territory, forbade slavery there, convinced large states to give up huge land claims to the United States as a whole, provided for the creation of new states, and created the orderly survey of public lands. Under the Confederation there was no executive or judicial branch; each

state had one vote in Congress and unanimity was required on issues considered important. In 1857, the Supreme Court created by the Constitution ratified in 1789 ruled that Congress could not prohibit masters from transporting their slaves to a new state and continuing their ownership (Dred Scott decision).

7. Clara B. Cox, "Blacksburg Educates Its Children, 1740s–1990s," *A Special Place for 200 Years: A History of Blacksburg, Virginia*, ed. Clara B. Cox (Roanoke, Va.: Town of Blacksburg, Va., 1998), 82–83.
8. Cox, "Blacksburg Educates Its Children," 83–85.
9. Daniel Thorp, "'Learn your wives and daughters how to use the gun and pistol': The Secession Crisis in Montgomery County, Virginia," *The Smithfield Review* 17 (2013), 76.
10. The impact of a major railroad line entering the mountainous counties of what is now Southwest Virginia and its attendant stimulus to the production of cash crops and the expanded use of enslaved workers have been explored for the region as a whole by Kenneth W. Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis in the Civil War* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1994, and later edition by University of Alabama Press, 2003). Thorp, "Secession Crisis," demonstrates that in many ways Montgomery County fits well with Noe's overall thesis.
11. Thorp, "Secession Crisis," 78–83, gives a clear overview of the election and its aftermath.
12. James Robertson, ed., "A Floyd County Family in Wartime," *The Smithfield Review* 16 (2012), 29. Robertson notes that not only did few soldiers' letters survive, but "[e]ven more rare in Civil War literature are letters to soldiers from wives. They either tended to be lost in the chaos of army life or else destroyed by addressees for the sake of privacy." Unfortunately for historians, the Blacks' correspondence follows this prevalent pattern.
13. *Civil War Letters*, 23; letter dated April 4, 1862, Harvey to Mollie.
14. *Civil War Letters*, 27; letter dated April 23, 1862, Harvey to Mollie.
15. *Civil War Letters*, 28; letter dated April 23, 1862, Harvey to Mollie.
16. *Civil War Letters*, 29, 30; letter dated April 23, 1862, Harvey to Mollie.
17. *Civil War Letters*, 31; letter dated May 2, 1862, Harvey to Mollie.
18. *Civil War Letters*, 33; letter dated May 2, 1862, Harvey to Mollie.
19. *Civil War Letters*, 38–39; letter dated August 31, 1862, Harvey to Mollie.
20. *Civil War Letters*, 40, 42; letter dated September 26, 1862, Harvey to Mollie. Cox, "Blacksburg Educates Its Children," 85, 83.
21. *Civil War Letters*, 47, 49; letter dated April 1, 1863, Harvey to Mollie.
22. Robertson, "A Floyd County Family in Wartime," 32, note 20.
23. *Civil War Letters*, 53; letter dated May 31, 1863, Harvey to Mollie.
24. *Civil War Letters*, 75, 76; letters dated November 29, 1863, and December 1, 1863, Mollie to Harvey.
25. The Linkous family were descended from German soldiers who served as British mercenaries during the Revolutionary War. They had been held as prisoners of the Americans near Charlottesville, Va., for a time and then released to make their way westward to become agricultural settlers in Montgomery County. Their story is recorded by descendant Clovis Linkous in volume 5 of the *The Smithfield Review*.
26. *Civil War Letters*, 78; letter dated December 22, 1863, Mollie to Harvey.
27. *Civil War Letters*, 77–78; letter dated December 18, 1863, Mollie to Harvey.
28. Averell was promoted to full colonel for his actions in this raid. *Civil War Letters*, 81; letter dated December 22, 1863, Mollie to Harvey.
29. *Civil War Letters*, 80, December 22 addition to letter dated December 18, 1863, Mollie to Harvey.
30. The account of troop movements and of the battles is drawn primarily from The Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, "Battle of Cloyd's Mountain," accessed August 20, 2016, www.civilwar.vt.edu. For events in town, see Dorothy H. Bodell and Mary Elizabeth Lindon, "Blacksburg during the Civil War," *A Special Place for 200 Years: A History of Blacksburg, Virginia*, ed. Clara B. Cox (Roanoke, Va.: Town of Blacksburg, 1998), 26–29.

31. Details of Harvey Black's later life from editor Glenn McMullen's explanatory material in *Civil War Letters*, 9–11. Cox, "Olin and Preston Institute and Preston and Olin Institute: The Early Years of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: Part II," *The Smithfield Review* 20 (2016), 10–11.
32. Descriptions of legislative battles over the money and the quotation from the March 1872 statute are given in Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History* (Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas Press, 2007), 224, 226. Discussion of sale of all of the scrip to an Ohio businessman at on-line archive site spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/databook/text/chap1/1-2htm.
33. Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 221–28, discusses the controversy over land grant colleges on the state level and the inclusion of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in a share of the public funds. Later, the black land grant college designation was moved to Virginia State when it was founded. For the planning and personnel from Blacksburg's viewpoint, see Cox, "Olin and Preston Institute and Preston and Olin Institute," 1–26.
34. The official *Catalog* for each session offers valuable information, such as the number of total enrollments, a Catalog of Students listing their names and counties of family residence, and a description of requirements for each specialization and for each classification level. Photocopies of the early *Catalogs* are available at Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech.
35. *Catalogue [sic] of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1886–1887*, 15.
36. As described in the *Catalog* each year 1873 through 1876.
37. Details given in the obituary published in the university newsletter, *The Techgram*, May 1935; clipping in Papers of Black, Kent, and Apperson Families in Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech. Alexander Black's continued association with other alumni and college staff, as well as attendance at campus events, will be shown in Part II of this study in a forthcoming volume of the *The Smithfield Review*.

True Friends of the Confederacy

John R. Hildebrand

Many citizens of the Confederate States of America were unaware of the peace movement during the final years of the Civil War. Long after the war was over, Jehu A. Orr, who had organized and commanded the 31st Mississippi Regiment and later served in the Second Confederate Congress, described the effort to reconstruct the Union:

The men in the Congress who favored re-construction were not the enemies of the Confederacy. They had been convinced that a further prosecution of the War would be far worse for the people of the South than re-construction. They believed that persistence would only result in a greater loss of life, and destruction of property, and end in disastrous consequences for the people of the South, the magnitude of which could not be measured.¹

Foreword

The work of Jehu Orr and other Confederate Congressmen who supported efforts to negotiate with the United States to end the war received little attention from nationally known writers on the war for many decades. This began to change with the 1957 article “The Peace Movement in the Confederate Congress” by Wilfred Buck Yearns Jr. in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly* and then, three years later, the 1960 appearance of a full-scale study in *The Confederate Congress*. The latter work depicted President Davis as the most powerful force in the Confederate government. In 1972, Thomas Alexander and Richard Beringer produced a study of voting behavior and influences in the Congress with *The Anatomy of the Confederate Congress: A Study of the Influences of Member Characteristics on Legislative Voting Behavior 1861–1865*. Some of their conclusions help explain why the peace movement never led to congressional success at direct peace negotiations. The conscious decision among Confederate leaders to avoid formation of political parties and the perceived negative effects of partisanship was explored by George C. Rable in *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution against Politics*; in practice the refusal to form strong factions or parties also strengthened Davis’s leadership position. “True Friends of

the Confederacy” is a more focused view of the activities of the Second Confederate Congress, which met May 1864–March 1865, and its members who had concluded that the Confederacy was incapable of winning the war. These men, a number who had served in the Confederate army during the first two years of the war, believed that the Confederacy was incapable of winning the war and that the time to reconstruct the Union had arrived. The article describes their efforts to accomplish this end through congressional approval of legislative initiatives for peace negotiations and the rejection of any peace proposal by a president unable or unwilling to accept the reality of the military situation and obsessed by an unwavering commitment to an enduring Confederacy.

Introduction

During the first two years of the Civil War, very few Congressmen advocated peace negotiations with the Lincoln administration. Nevertheless, some well-known men hoped to capitalize upon the Confederacy’s early victories and strong position to end the war and assure Confederate independence rather than risk possible later reversals. Vice President Alexander H. Stephens and Congressman Henry Foote of Tennessee urged that a peace commission be dispatched to Washington, D.C. At the time, such actions did not seem pressing to the great majority in the First Confederate Congress.²

When the Second Confederate Congress convened in Richmond on May 2, 1864, for its first session, many Southerners had come to believe that the Confederacy would be unable to attain its independence. During 1863, Confederate armies had suffered devastating defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July and at Lookout Mountain-Missionary Ridge in late November. The Confederate states had been divided into two parts when Federal forces established control of the Mississippi River; Grant had assumed command of the Union armies. The Union armies in Virginia and Georgia under Grant and Sherman were poised to begin final offensives that would end the war.

On the diplomatic front, France and Great Britain had declined to officially recognize the independence of the Confederate States of America. The two countries had, however, maintained their economic ties with the Confederacy by declaring their neutrality in the conflict, a position usually applied to two warring nations rather than to a domestic rebellion within a single nation. The likelihood of foreign financial or material aid seemed small.

On the home front, shortages of food, goods, and forage; unpopular taxation, financial regulations, and conscription and impressment laws; and

the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus had led to doubts in some parts of the South that Jefferson Davis's leadership was capable of carrying the war to a successful conclusion.

But it was the never-ending casualties that had affected many families and communities, leading many otherwise patriotic citizens to question the wisdom of war as a means of attaining Southern independence. An Augusta County, Virginia, farmer likely spoke for many in his day journal entry for Christmas 1863: "There are many who were alive one year ago who are now in their graves, many of whom died of disease, others were killed in battle and were denied burial, in this unrighteous and desolating war."³

The results of the 1863 elections for the Second Congress reflected this growing unease among the voters, particularly in North Carolina and Georgia. In the Second Congress, 47 of the 107 House members were first-time representatives; in the Senate, three of its 26 members were newly elected. Twenty of the newly elected House members and the three new Senators held views that reflected the concerns of many voters that Southern independence would not be realized. They joined four or five incumbent House members and four sitting senators who shared their concerns.⁴ Together they constituted a loosely knit peace coalition whose members believed the time had arrived for the Confederacy to initiate peace negotiations with the Lincoln administration. Their position on the need for peace negotiations would receive little support, and they were viewed with suspicion by Davis, their congressional colleagues, and the general public.

The Peace Coalition

The Peace Coalition faced a nearly impossible task, for a large majority of the members of both houses opposed peace negotiations, supporting President Davis's unyielding policy that peace negotiations to end the war would have to be initiated by the Lincoln administration and be based on Southern independence. Most newspapers ridiculed the peace advocates and accused them of favoring reconstruction of the Union—which Jehu Orr openly discussed in his later writings—and believed they were traitors to the Southern cause. As the military situation worsened during the course of the Second Congress, support for peace negotiations grew but never to the level where a specific proposal received majority support.

The coalition's members made up slightly more than 20 percent of the total membership in each house of the Second Congress. Their limited numbers and the lack of a leader to organize the peace advocates into a disciplined political unit compromised their ability to craft, introduce, and effectively debate peace legislation. Vice President Alexander H. Stephens

was capable of providing the needed leadership, but because of his personal animosities and policy disagreements with Jefferson Davis, he had elected to remain at home in Georgia throughout the Second Congress's first session.⁵ The philosophical decision to avoid formation of political parties and factions inside the Confederacy, the "revolution against politics," prevented a stronger peace coalition.⁶ Despite this constraint, the majority of the peace advocates shared a common political philosophy based on their prewar Whig and Unionist beliefs.

Identities of the Peace Advocates

The peace advocates in the Senate⁷ were William A. Graham, North Carolina, whose five sons served in the Army of Northern Virginia; Richard W. Walker, Alabama, a former state legislator and justice of the Alabama Supreme Court; and John W. C. Watson, Mississippi, who had two sons killed in battle. They were joined by incumbent Senators James L. Orr (brother of Jehu Orr), South Carolina; Benjamin H. Hill, Georgia; and Herschel V. Johnson V, Georgia. Senator R. M. T. Hunter of Virginia joined the peace advocates following Davis's February 9, 1865, public speech condemning Lincoln for the failure of the Hampton Roads Peace Conference.

In the House of Representatives, there were 20 first-term peace advocates and incumbents.⁸ They were Warren Akin Sr. (minister), Georgia 10th; Hiram Parks Bell (Confederate Army veteran), Georgia 9th; Marcus H. Cruikshank, Alabama 4th; Joseph H. Echols (minister), Georgia 6th; Thomas C. Fuller (Confederate Army lieutenant), North Carolina 4th; Rufus K. Garland (Confederate Army veteran), Arkansas 2nd; John Adams Gilmer, North Carolina 6th; J. T. Lambkin (Confederate Army captain), Mississippi 7th; James Madison Leach (Confederate Army veteran), North Carolina 7th; James Thomas Leach, North Carolina 3rd; George N. Lester (Confederate Army captain), Georgia 8th; George W. Logan, North Carolina 10th; Humphrey Marshall (Confederate Army general), Kentucky 8th; Jehu A. Orr (Confederate Army colonel and brother of Senator Orr of South Carolina), Mississippi 1st; James Graham Ramsey, North Carolina 8th; William E. Smith (Confederate Army lieutenant), Georgia 2nd; J. M. Smith (Confederate Army colonel), Georgia 7th; G. W. Triplett (Confederate Army major), Kentucky 2nd; Josiah Turner (Confederate Army captain), North Carolina 5th; and Williams Wickham (Confederate Army general), Virginia 3rd, elected to the second session. They were joined by incumbents Henry S. Foote, Tennessee 5th; Augustus H. Garland, Arkansas 3rd; William Nathan Harrell Smith, North Carolina 2nd; William Russell Smith, Alabama 2nd; and possibly William W. Boyce, South Carolina 6th.

Five of the newly elected peace advocates in the House were from congressional districts located in the Great Appalachian Valley: Akin, Bell, Cruikshank, Lester, and Logan. They would be joined in later votes by several other congressmen whose districts were also located west of the Blue Ridge and where slave populations were significantly smaller than in other House districts⁹: Baldwin and McMullin from Virginia's 11th and 13th Districts; Moore and Elliott from Kentucky's 10th and 12th Districts; and Heiskell, Swan, and Coylar from Tennessee's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Districts.

These western men believed their votes were diluted and legislative influence compromised by the constitutional requirement that representatives be apportioned by adding to the total number of free persons three-fifths of all slaves, effectively offsetting the political influence of white majorities in many districts west of the Blue Ridge. Many resented this requirement and had opposed leaving the Union. Despite misgivings and a distaste for secession, they had remained loyal to their states and cast their lot with the Confederacy and the cause of Southern independence. They would later provide significant support for the January 12, 1865, unsuccessful vote for peace and reconstruction of the Union.

Peace resolutions were offered during the Second Congress by James T. Leach, Henry S. Foote, Josiah Turner, and Jehu A. Orr from the House; jointly by Foote and Senator James L. Orr on behalf of a group convened by Senator John W. C. Watson; and by Senator William A. Graham.

Graham was a past governor of North Carolina, had represented the state in the United States Senate, and had served as secretary of the navy in the Fillmore administration. Foote had represented Mississippi in the United States Senate and had defeated Jefferson Davis for the governor's office in 1851. He represented Tennessee in the Confederate Congress, where he renewed his political rivalry with Davis. His intense dislike of Davis and his policies ultimately led him to abandon his House seat in an unsuccessful attempt to cross Union lines and meet with Lincoln to effect a peace agreement.¹⁰

The only peace resolution that received serious consideration during the first session was crafted by a small group of peace advocates from the House and Senate convened by Senator Watson in the early days of the first session. Their proposal reflected a consensus response to the dire military situation facing the Confederacy.¹¹

First Session Peace Resolutions May 2–June 14, 1864

James T. Leach's May 23 Proposal

Three peace resolutions were considered during Congress's first session. The first, presented by James T. Leach of North Carolina, was an appeal to President Davis to appoint commissioners who would propose an armistice of 90 days preliminary to peace negotiations based on state sovereignty and independence. The terms of peace agreed to by the commissioners would be endorsed by the president and Senate and submitted to the people for their ratification or rejection. His resolution was tabled 62 to 21, his support coming from the peace advocates.¹²

Henry S. Foote's May 28 Proposal

The second peace proposal was presented by Foote on May 28 as an amendment to a resolution offered by W. C. Rives of Virginia, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and a supporter of the Davis administration. The Rives resolution provided for a joint committee to prepare a manifesto stating the principles and purposes for which the war was being fought and the nation's desire to see an end to the conflict.¹³ By introducing a non-controversial call for peace, a stronger peace proposal being prepared by Senator John W. C. Watson's group would be rendered moot. Foote, a member of both the Rives committee and the Watson group, supported the manifesto's objective. He believed, however, that a provision for initiating peace negotiations with the Lincoln administration should be included. To accomplish this goal, he proposed an addition to Rives's resolution, leaving to President Davis the responsibility of determining if Lee's defeat of Grant at the battles of the Wilderness (May 5–6) and Spotsylvania Courthouse (May 10–12) had sufficiently influenced Northern public opinion to warrant sending commissioners to Washington to discuss peace negotiations based on Southern independence. The House adjourned without taking action on either Foote's amendment or Rives's manifesto.¹⁴

Senator John W. C. Watson's Peace Proposal

Senator Watson and several members of the Peace Coalition shared Foote's view that Lee's success was an opportunity to present a peace proposal. They believed the time was right for negotiations to end the war.¹⁵ In late May, they met in Senator Watson's quarters to craft peace legislation. The Watson group included Senators Graham, Johnson of Georgia, and

James Orr of South Carolina and Representatives Boyce, Jehu Orr, and several others. Foote was likely one of the unidentified House members.¹⁶

Jehu Orr reported that “a resolution was agreed on, in which the sentiment was expressed, that the time had arrived for the true friends of the Confederacy to take measures looking to the reconstruction of the Union, in which the institution of slavery was to be secured by compact with the Government of the U.S.”¹⁷ The formal resolution stated:

That it is now the *deliberate judgment of the Congress of the Confederate States* [emphasis added] that whenever the two armies of the enemy [Grant in Virginia and Sherman in Georgia] ... have been subjected to signal defeat, it will be ... wise and expedient on the part of our Government to send commissioners to Washington City for the purpose of opening negotiations for peace upon the basis of Southern independence, ... setting on foot ... a temporary armistice [that] it is ... believed would eventuate in the restoration of peaceful and amicable relations.¹⁸

The most significant feature of the Watson proposal was its challenge to President Davis’s constitutional authority for conducting foreign affairs, leaving to the Congress rather than the president the responsibility for sending peace commissioners to Washington. The Watson proposal was introduced in both houses on June 2. Members from the foreign relations committees of each house were selected to present the joint resolution, Foote from the House and James Orr from the Senate, chair of its Foreign Relations Committee.

Consideration of the Watson Proposal

In the House, Foote offered the proposal as an amendment to the resolution Rives had introduced on May 26. It was rejected on June 10 without a recorded vote.¹⁹ In the Senate, James Orr introduced the Watson proposal as a joint resolution “in relation to the opening of negotiations for peace between the Confederate States and the United States.”²⁰

On June 10, Senator Johnson of Georgia, one of the Senate’s peace advocates, proposed an amendment to leave to the president rather than the Congress the responsibility to determine the appropriate time to initiate peace negotiations. Johnson’s amendment was defeated, with the other peace advocates voting against his proposal, indicating their unwillingness to change the resolution’s requirement that left to the Congress the decision to decide when it was time to open negotiations.²¹ They had concluded that the president would have to be excluded from the peace process for negotiations

with the North to succeed, even if based on Southern independence. The Senate then rejected the Watson Peace Proposal 14 to 5.²²

Final Days of the First Session

The Second Congress completed its first session on June 14, 1864. All efforts to pass a peace resolution had been rejected. President Davis and a congressional majority believed the Confederacy was winning the war and there was no justification for making peace overtures. It was their view that the Northern people were war-weary and that the Democrats would win the 1864 presidential and congressional elections, making possible the negotiation of a peace treaty based on Southern independence.

The Summer and Fall of 1864

The May successes of Lee's and Johnston's armies continued into the summer. Grant suffered a devastating defeat at Cold Harbor on June 7, forcing him to abandon his effort to take Richmond. He then moved his army to the south side of the James River below Richmond and Petersburg, initiating what became a 10-month siege of the two cities that also blocked any effort by Lee and Johnston to join forces.

Sherman entered Atlanta on September 2, despite having suffered a defeat by Johnston's small army on June 27 at Kennesaw Mountain. Following the occupation of Atlanta, Sherman continued his advance to the sea, devastating a wide swath of the countryside before reaching Savannah on December 22.

The outnumbered Confederate armies had suffered irreplaceable losses of men and material. Many were ill-clothed and shoeless. Morale had begun to suffer, and Davis and Congress were proving incapable of providing the armies with adequate food, forage, and munitions.

On the political front, there were no indications that the people of the North were tiring of the war. Lincoln had been re-elected by a substantial majority, strengthening his resolve to suppress the rebellion and reconstruct the Union. There was no longer any possibility that Lincoln would be receptive to a peace proposal based on Southern independence.

Second Session of the Second Congress November 7, 1864–March 18, 1865

These were the circumstances facing President Davis when he addressed the Second Congress when it convened for its second session on November 7, 1864. His message was an unrealistic view of the nation's future and failed to offer any military strategy that would offset the North's

overwhelming advantage in the resources of war. That Davis was ignoring or was incapable of accepting existing realities was evidenced by the following excerpts from his message:

Repeatedly during the war have formidable expeditions been directed by the enemy against points ... supposed to be of vital importance to the Confederacy. ... If we had been compelled to evacuate Richmond as well as Atlanta, the Confederacy would have remained as erect and defiant as ever. Nothing could have been changed in the purpose of its Government. ... The baffled and disappointed foe would have scanned the reports of your proceedings ... for any indication that progress had been made in his gigantic task of conquering a free people. The truth ... must ere long be forced upon the reluctant Northern mind. There are no vital points on the preservation of which the continued existence of the Confederacy depends. There is no military success of the enemy which can accomplish its destruction. Not the fall of Richmond, nor Wilmington, nor Charleston, nor Savannah nor Mobile nor of all combined, can save the enemy from the constant and exhaustive drain of blood and treasure which must continue until he shall discover that no peace is attainable unless based on the recognition of our indefeasible rights.²³

Davis had made clear that there would be no peace without Southern independence.

Despite his uncompromising message, Davis and the majority of Congress continued to ignore military and political realities, believing that independence could be attained. For the peace advocates, negotiations with the Lincoln administration were now more critical than ever.

Those in the Watson group were convinced that the Confederate armies would be unable to withstand another campaign year like 1864. They found little comfort in Davis's view that "[w]hen we contemplate the results of a struggle apparently so unequal we cannot fail ... to recognize the protection of a kind Providence in enabling us to successfully withstand the utmost efforts of the enemy for our subjugation."²⁴

The peace advocates were determined to continue the effort to craft a plan for peace negotiations that would receive majority support in the Congress. Preferably the plan would be based on Southern independence, with reconstruction of the Union an acceptable alternative. President Davis would be excluded from the negotiations.

There was also a growing dissatisfaction with Davis's leadership among other members of the House and Senate. John Baldwin, a member of

the influential House Ways and Means Committee, had concluded that the rejection of the peace advocates' proposals during the first session required a different approach which would attract majority support.

Baldwin, from Augusta County, represented Virginia's 11th District. Much of his Shenandoah Valley district was occupied by Union forces, a situation faced by many members of Congress. He believed that if it could be shown that the Confederacy did not have sufficient resources to win the war, a congressional majority would demand that Davis initiate peace negotiations.

John B. Baldwin's Special Joint Committee Proposal December 28, 1864

On December 28, Baldwin submitted a resolution calling for a joint committee of three senators and five representatives to "conference with the President and by such other means as they shall deem proper, to ascertain our reliable means of public defense, present and prospective, and to report thereon without delay, such suggestions they may deem to be required by the public interest."²⁵ The resolution creating the Select Joint Committee on the Means of Public Defense was adopted. Baldwin chaired the House group and Allen Caperton chaired the Senate group. Caperton was from Monroe County in Virginia's 12th district, which had become a part of the newly formed state of West Virginia in 1863. The committee began its work immediately, interviewing Gen. Lee and several of his general officers, concentrating on the military situation on the Richmond-Petersburg front and the condition of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Baldwin submitted the committee's written report to the House on January 25, 1865, during the time when Davis was preparing his plan to send peace commissioners to confer with the Lincoln administration. The House tabled the report without a recorded vote; motions to reconsider tabling and printing the report were lost, again without a recorded vote.²⁶ In the Senate, Caperton submitted the report (No.6), which was read. However, it was not included in the Senate Journal or Proceedings.²⁷ The special joint committee's report likely concluded that the Confederacy was no longer capable of defending itself, a conclusion that a majority in either house was apparently unwilling to accept.

Second Session Peace Proposals

Concurrent with the work of the Select Joint Committee on the Means of Public Defense, J. A. Orr and the other members of Senator Watson's group had developed in the first days of the second session a series of peace resolutions that were introduced in the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The committee initially rejected the resolutions, but Orr continued to work for their approval.²⁸ In the interim, Representatives Henry Foote and Josiah Turner, also on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, proposed separate peace resolutions, neither contingent on Southern independence.

Foote's proposal was likely in response to reports that the legislatures of Alabama and North Carolina had discussed the advisability of discussing separate peace proposals with the Lincoln administration. There were also rumors that Governor Brown of Georgia had discussed his state's return to the Union with General Sherman.²⁹ Foote's resolution, introduced on November 30, 1864, stated that such action was "unwise and unpatriotic" but was allowable if the individual states conferred together and granted to the central government the additional powers needed to end the war and restore peace. Foote's proposal was tabled 63 to 13.³⁰

Turner introduced his proposal on December 16, 1864. It requested the president to appoint 13 commissioners to propose to the Lincoln administration a conference for negotiating an honorable peace. If rejected, the commissioners were to seek an exchange of prisoners and, if possible, negotiate an understanding with the Union on how to conduct the war in a manner that would "mitigate its horrors and atrocities."³¹

Ethelbert Barksdale of Mississippi's 6th District and a Davis ally responded with a substitute proposal on behalf of the House majority, stating that peace would be possible whenever the Lincoln administration was willing to accept an independent Confederacy.³²

On December 19, LaFayette McMullin, who represented Southwest Virginia's 13th District, offered a substitute to Barksdale's proposal. It proposed that the "House of Representatives ... should dispatch ... a body of commissioners ... to meet and confer with ... the United States Government ... and to agree, if possible, upon the terms of a lasting and honorable peace."³³ McMullin, one of the 13 House members who had supported Foote's resolution, was hoping to minimize the irreconcilable differences between the peace advocates and President Davis and his allies in the Congress.

Turner's proposal and the two substitutes were referred to the Foreign Affairs Committee. On January 12, 1865, Rives, the committee's chairman, recommended that they "lie on the table," eliminating any further consideration.³⁴ This recommendation was agreed to, allowing J. A. Orr to report on a series of peace resolutions that the Foreign Affairs Committee had rejected in early November. The worsening military situation had changed the mood in the committee, and despite the opposition of Chairman Rives, six of the nine committee members voted in favor of introducing

Orr's resolutions in the House. They reflected Orr's views and were similar to Senator Watson's June 2, 1864, peace resolutions. Vice President Stephens had also assisted in crafting the resolutions following his return to the Senate in early December.³⁵

J. A. Orr's Peace Resolutions January 12, 1865

Jehu Orr's peace proposal consisted of five resolutions. Taken together they were crafted to attract support from President Davis and his congressional supporters. The first four resolutions included a demand that the Confederacy's independence be recognized; noted that there was popular support in the North for suspension of the war and peace negotiations; suggested that all issues between the two countries be resolved by a national convention of commissioners from all the states, Union and Confederate; and included a statement emphasizing Congress's responsibility to its soldiers and citizens to initiate negotiations with the United States government.

The fifth resolution was the most important. It challenged the president's constitutional authority to conduct foreign policy by delegating that authority to three commissioners, allowing them to consider any other terms offered by the Lincoln administration that would lead to a peaceful settlement. It stated:

That the President of the Confederate States be informed of these resolves, and that he be requested to grant permission to three persons selected by this House ... to cross our lines, who shall immediately proceed to ask and obtain ... an informal ... conference with the authorities at Washington ... to see if any such plan for inaugurating negotiations for peace, upon the basis set forth, can be agreed; and *if not, to ascertain any other or what terms, if any, of a peaceful settlement may be proposed by the authorities at Washington* [emphasis added]; and the said commissioners shall be authorized to bring into view the possibility of cooperation between the Confederate and United States in maintaining the principles and policy of the Monroe Doctrine in the event of a prompt recognition of the independence of the former (the Confederacy) by the latter (the United States) and should this effort fail, we shall have the consolation of knowing that we ... have done our duty. . . . [T]he rejection of the overture by the President of the United States ... will demonstrate to our people that his object as to them is nothing short of an unconditional subjugation or extinction.³⁶

The House of Representatives faced a far-reaching and difficult decision. Would it continue to support President Davis and his supporters' unyielding insistence on peace based on Southern independence, or would it support the Orr resolutions and the all-important provision authorizing the commissioners to determine any terms for peace that might be proposed by the Washington authorities?

Davis's supporters moved immediately to defeat Orr's resolutions. Perkins of Louisiana, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, presented a minority report, which was tabled, but Staples of Virginia's 12th District then moved that the resolutions be postponed "until the bill to amend the act to organize forces to serve during the war be disposed of."³⁷

Consideration of the Orr resolutions had reached a critical point, and the vote on the Staples amendment would be the Second Congress's most important and critical decision. The vote would determine, at least from the Confederate side, if the war would continue to a tragic conclusion or if there would be meaningful peace negotiations with the North.

Orr's peace resolutions were defeated when the Staples amendment was approved 42 to 38. His peace proposal was never reconsidered because the bill referred to in Staples's amendment was not disposed of until March 17, 1865, the day before the Congress adjourned.³⁸

Of the 38 members supporting the Orr resolutions with negative votes for the Staples amendment, eight were from districts west of the Blue Ridge, including two from Virginia: Baldwin from the 11th District and McMullin from the 13th.³⁹ Akin of Georgia and Ramsey of North Carolina, also peace advocates from west of the Blue Ridge, did not vote. The vote marked the final opportunity for the peace advocates in the House to advance the cause of peace negotiations based on reconstruction of the Union.

The near majority vote in favor of Orr's January 12 peace proposal and its majority support in the Committee on Foreign Affairs shocked Davis and his supporters. The substantial support for Orr's proposal, specifically the responsibility given to the three House members to determine what peace terms might be proposed by the Lincoln administration, placed his commitment to Southern independence in danger and challenged his constitutional authority. He had a festering rebellion on his hands. It was imperative that he isolate the peace advocates and assume control of the strengthening desire in Congress for peace negotiations with the Lincoln administration.

Davis moved immediately. On January 13, he had one of his supporters, Dupree of Louisiana, report to the House that the January 12 "movement for

the conference met with the approval of the President, and that he himself would appoint three gentlemen to carry out the purposes which the report had in view.”⁴⁰ Although this statement is not recorded in the House Journal for January 13, other sources indicate that many members of Congress believed Davis was ready to modify his policy on peace negotiations.⁴¹ With the exception of J. T. Leach, the uncompromising peace advocate from North Carolina, the peace advocates were willing to take Dupree’s statement in good faith,⁴² delaying any further peace proposals. Leach broke ranks however, and on January 23 introduced an uncomplicated plan for peace, leaving to commissioners the responsibility for offering an armistice to Federal authorities. If agreed to, a second group of commissioners would meet with the Federal authorities to agree on peace terms. His proposal was defeated by referral to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.⁴³

Francis C. Blair Sr.’s Shuttle Diplomacy

On January 12, 1865, at the same time the Orr peace resolutions were being considered in the House and Baldwin’s Select Joint Committee was preparing its report, Francis P. Blair Sr. arrived in Richmond. A newspaper editor and an influential Democratic Party activist, he had decided to make a personal effort to meet with Davis, an old acquaintance, and others in the Confederate Congress and suggest his personal plan for a path to peace that would end the war. It would prove to be an opportunity for Davis to gain full control of the peace process.

Blair had known Davis prior to the war and was aware of his insistence that peace negotiations be initiated by Lincoln. In early December 1864, he approached Lincoln with his plan. Lincoln was not impressed but Blair was insistent, and on December 28, 1864, after the fall of Savannah, Lincoln granted Blair a pass through the Union lines to go to Richmond. He had “no authority to speak or act for the Government” and Lincoln had no knowledge of the details of Blair’s plan or what he would say or do.⁴⁴

Blair met with Davis on two occasions and had separate interviews with J. A. Orr, Boyce, and other congressmen.⁴⁵ Following their discussions, Davis addressed a letter to Blair dated January 12, 1865, stating, “I have deemed it proper, and probably desirable to you to give you in this form the substance of remarks made by me to be repeated by you to President Lincoln.” Davis continued, “I am willing, as heretofore, to enter into negotiations for the restoration of peace. . . . I would, if you could promise that a commissioner . . . would be received, appoint one immediately, and renew the effort to enter into conference, with a view *to secure peace to the two countries* [emphasis added].”⁴⁶

Davis informed Congress of his meetings with Blair. Details of the meetings and his message were not provided, but the news elicited a generally favorable reaction. Senator Graham wrote his wife on January 14 of his surprise that Davis had communicated with Lincoln without requiring his acknowledgement of Southern independence.⁴⁷ Graham and other members of Congress were unaware that Davis had specified that negotiations were to secure peace to the two countries.

Blair promptly returned to Washington and conveyed Davis's January 12, 1865, message to Lincoln. Following consultation with Secretary of War Stanton, Lincoln prepared a reply, dated January 18, for Blair to take to Davis. In the reply, Lincoln acknowledged that he had seen Davis's letter and that Blair may say to him:

I have constantly been, ... and shall continue ready to receive any agent whom he [Davis] or any other influential person now resisting the national authority, may informally send to me with the view of *securing peace to the people of our one common country* [emphasis added].⁴⁸

Blair returned to Richmond and delivered Lincoln's message to Davis on January 21. Returning to Washington without a written response from Davis, Blair reported to Lincoln on January 28 that he had delivered his (Lincoln's) January 18 letter to Davis. To confirm delivery of Lincoln's letter, Blair dictated and authorized Lincoln to note on the back of his copy of the January 18 letter the following:

That at the time of delivering it Mr. Davis read it over twice in Mr. Blair's presence, at the close of which he (Mr. Blair) remarked that the part about our one common country related to the part of Mr. Davis's letter about the two countries, to which Mr. Davis replied that he so understood it.⁴⁹

Blair's diplomatic mission had ended. Lincoln and Davis had communicated to the other the basis on which they were willing to discuss peace, but Congress remained unaware of Lincoln's position on peace for our one country. Many members remained hopeful that Lincoln's response to Davis's January 12 letter would set forth a basis for peace and Southern independence.⁵⁰

Davis had effectively used Blair's mission to regain control of the peace process. He was now free to initiate any future peace overtures on his terms, but the deteriorating military situation required his immediate attention. By

January 21, when he received Lincoln's January 18 letter, Sherman had started his drive north from Georgia into the Carolinas, and the country's last open port at Wilmington had been closed when Federal forces captured Fort Fisher. Opposed only by Joseph Johnston's small army, Sherman's ultimate objective was to join Grant at Petersburg. Sheridan had cleared the Shenandoah Valley of all Confederate forces and was on his way to support Grant at Petersburg. Lee's army was outnumbered two to one and was being gradually destroyed by Grant's constant pressure and overwhelming manpower and equipment resources. The Confederates were plagued by irreplaceable losses of men and ordnance. Desertion was a problem and the men were undernourished, exhausted, and ill equipped. Morale was low, with discouraging news from home about the deteriorating situation in Georgia and the Carolinas leading to an increase in desertions. Cavalry and artillery operations were compromised by a lack of forage for the horses.

The South faced certain defeat. Davis decided to consult with his cabinet before proceeding with any further diplomatic initiative.

Davis's Response to Lincoln's January 18 Letter

Davis and his cabinet met on January 27, 1865. After considerable discussion, the group decided the best option was to continue the peace dialogue and accept Lincoln's offer to receive any agent informally sent to him by Davis. Davis and his cabinet decided to immediately send three peace commissioners to Washington. Lincoln would not be advised of their coming.

The peace commissioners selected by Davis were Vice President A. H. Stephens, Senator R. M. T. Hunter and Assistant Secretary of War John A. Campbell. They met with Davis on the 28th and received his verbal instructions, following which they left to prepare for their trip. Concurrently, Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin was preparing written instructions for the commissioners. The first draft of his instructions, dated January 28, was discussed with Hunter and possibly with the other two commissioners. The instructions were broad in nature and imposed no limitations on negotiating options. Benjamin's instructions included a copy of Lincoln's January 18 letter specifying his willingness to discuss peace with the "people of our one common country."⁵¹

Benjamin's first draft of the instructions was sent to Davis later that day for his review and signature. Davis found them unacceptable and instructed that they be revised to require the commissioners to "informally conference with him [Lincoln] upon the issues involved in the existing war, and for the purpose of securing peace to the two countries."⁵² Davis, by

ignoring Lincoln's position, had intentionally written his instructions to be rejected.⁵³ They were given to the three commissioners as they were leaving Richmond for City Point (present-day Hopewell).⁵⁴ The men arrived at City Point unannounced on January 29 and requested permission to pass through the Federal lines to go to Washington as peace commissioners. That they would be allowed to proceed was in doubt, but after several days of inconclusive negotiations, Grant intervened with Lincoln, convincing him of the sincerity of the Confederate commissioners and their mission.⁵⁵ Lincoln attached great importance to the meeting and agreed to meet with the Southerners, electing personally to represent the United States, assisted by Secretary of State William Seward and Gen. Grant. The two groups met on the *River Queen*, anchored in the Hampton Roads, on February 3, 1865.

The Hampton Roads Peace Conference

The Hampton Roads Peace Conference was conducted in an informal atmosphere. No secretaries were present. Lincoln's peace terms required the Confederacy to agree to reconstruction of the Union, to accept the emancipation of the slaves, and to immediately cease all military operations. There would be no armistice suspending the ongoing fighting. The commissioners' peace terms, as specified by Davis, required the United States to recognize the Confederate States as an independent nation. It was immediately apparent that each party's position was non-negotiable, precluding any agreement that would end the war.

An amicable exchange of views followed. Lincoln advised that the U.S. Congress had passed the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibited slavery, and added his personal view that the United States government might be willing to set aside \$400 million to reimburse slave owners. Lincoln also indicated that if peace were restored, private property could be returned to its owners and individuals subject to penalty under United States law might rely on his liberal use of his presidential authority to remit such penalties.⁵⁶

The meeting lasted several hours. Its most significant aspect was Lincoln's observation that while the Confederate commissioners had not yielded on their demand for Southern independence, neither had they rejected reconstruction of the Union.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, the peace commissioners had been unwilling to disobey Davis's instructions and discuss reconstruction. The last opportunity for a peace settlement had passed.

Lincoln and Seward, unaware of the peace commissioners' restricted negotiating instructions, were disappointed when they did not submit several different peace propositions during the course of the conference.

Commissioner Campbell, a former Supreme Court justice, was also frustrated by the limited discussions with Lincoln and Seward, for he believed that further peace negotiations could be fruitful.

In mid-February, Campbell shared with Senator Graham a full account of the meeting with Lincoln and Seward, his own earnest desire for peace, and his belief that another mission should immediately be sent to Washington to negotiate terms of peace based on reconstruction of the Union. His account also included the personal views Lincoln had informally shared with the commissioners during the Conference.⁵⁸

Lincoln had in fact drafted a proposal to Congress requesting authorization to pay \$400 million to the Southern states in compensation for the emancipated slaves, distributed according to their slave populations, to be paid in two increments, the first if all resistance had ceased by April 1, the second by July 1 if the 13th Amendment had been ratified.⁵⁹ Like previous efforts to find a path to peace, Campbell's hope for further negotiations and Lincoln's plan for ending the war were not to be. Campbell knew that Davis would not agree to such a mission on any basis other than Southern independence, and Lincoln's draft proposal to Congress was rejected by his cabinet.⁶⁰

Davis's Duplicity

Davis submitted the Peace Commissioners' report to Congress on February 6, 1865. The report was a straightforward and factual account of Lincoln's formal peace terms, prepared by Judge Campbell and endorsed by Stephens and Hunter. No mention was made of the matters discussed informally by either Lincoln and Seward or the three commissioners. The report failed to satisfy Davis, who wanted it to state that Lincoln had demanded immediate acceptance of abolition and insulted Southern honor. The commissioners rejected this order on two occasions. Years later, Davis would characterize the report as inadequate as his explanation for the commissioners "failure and the reasons for it."⁶¹

In presenting the report, Davis did not advise Congress that the commissioners had been instructed to negotiate solely on the basis of Southern independence, intentionally ignoring Lincoln's prior written statement to him that peace discussions were possible only on the basis of a reconstructed Union.⁶² Neither was Congress made aware of Lincoln's and Seward's informal remarks describing a reasonable basis for reconstruction of the Union or of the friendship, courtesy, and respect with which the commissioners had been received.⁶³

Congress was also unaware that Davis had not honored his January 13 promise to carry out the purposes of the Orr Peace Resolutions, specifically

the consideration of other alternatives to peace “proposed by the authorities at Washington”⁶⁴ if Southern independence was not possible.

Davis had intentionally sabotaged the peace conference to demonstrate to the Southern people the futility of peace negotiations with the Lincoln administration and to rally them to a renewed commitment to continue the war. It was a tragic, irresponsible, and unjustified decision that denied the inevitable and condemned the young nation and its armies to two further months of suffering.

What possessed Davis to make such a decision? It appears that he had become so obsessed by his vision of a Southern Confederacy that he was unable to make the wise decisions and judgments so desperately needed in the winter of 1864-1865. By all measures, the war was lost, a reality that Davis refused to accept, convinced that somehow the war would be won and Southern independence realized. A friend described Davis “as unbending in his conviction and continually sustained by the serene approval of his mind and conscience.”⁶⁵ Gen. Lee later remarked that Davis “had a remarkable faith in the possibility of still winning our independence.”⁶⁶ Davis had retreated from reality, unable to admit defeat. Senator William Graham had remarked soon after the peace commissioners had presented their report to Davis that “the situation is critical and requires a guidance beyond human ken. I have a very strong conviction that there has been very great duplicity towards a large portion of the Southern people displayed in this little drama. It is most offensive to me.”⁶⁷ The well-being of the country and its citizens and soldiers seemed to be of little concern to Davis.

The reaction to the failure of the conference was everything that Davis had intended. He was quoted in the February 7, 1865, edition of the *Richmond Times Dispatch* as being “willing to yield up everything he had on earth” before acceding to Northern demands and predicted that before another year had passed the South would be able to secure peace on its own terms, with separation [independence] and slavery intact.⁶⁸

In an inflammatory public speech on February 9, he condemned Lincoln for the failure of the peace conference, telling the country that the South had no option but to continue the war either until independence was attained or the country was utterly defeated. Many Southerners responded with renewed patriotism and a desperate determination; mass meetings and community leaders called on the people to make greater sacrifices. Many regiments adopted resolutions pledging their continued commitment to defeat the enemy, and the Richmond newspapers were strident in their support of Davis and his call for a renewed commitment to continue the war.

The Congressional Response

In the House of Representatives

Nowhere was the support for Davis more evident than in the House of Representatives. A majority of its members shared his absolute commitment to Southern independence and uncompromising opposition to reconstruction of the Union. There was no misunderstanding his position, for he had stated in the February 13, 1865, edition of the *National Republican* newspaper: "I can have no common country with the Yankees. My life is bound up in the Confederacy; and, if any man supposes that, under any circumstances, I can be an agent of reconstruction of the Union, he has mistaken every element of my nature!"⁶⁹

On February 20, the House Foreign Affairs Committee presented a joint resolution expressing the sense of Congress on the subject of the Peace Commission.⁷⁰ Its principal features were that the Congress had always desired negotiations to settle all differences with the United States; the peace commissioners had been informed that the United States would not negotiate and "complete submission to their rule" was the only basis for peace; the country was called on to support its soldiers for their service and hardships; the people were invited to renew their vows of devotion to the cause of independence; and Congress pledged the passage of "the most energetic measures" that would ensure the ultimate success of the Confederacy's fight for independence. To conclude, Congress expressed its regret that there was no alternative left to the people of the Confederate states but to continue the war, and Congress, acting on their behalf, declared its determination to prosecute the war until the United States "shall desist from its efforts to subjugate them" and the independence of the Confederacy be established.⁷¹

The House adopted the Sense of Congress Resolution on February 24, 62 members in favor with one opposed. The lone defiant voice for peace was cast by James T. Leach. Seventeen of the 38 House members who had supported Orr's Peace Resolutions, including John Baldwin, supported Leach and expressed their opposition by not voting.⁷² Despite their abstentions, the vote was an overwhelming endorsement of Davis's call for a renewed effort to continue the war.

In the Senate

There was little enthusiasm for the Sense of Congress Resolution in the Senate. It was received from the House on February 25 and referred to its Foreign Relations Committee. Although some Senators questioned Davis's fitness "for the present duties of his position,"⁷³ the resolution was reported with amendments on March 9 and, without a vote, was returned to the House of Representatives for its concurrence.⁷⁴

The joint resolution was approved by President Davis on March 13. It was an irresponsible view of the war's outcome, a meaningless political statement that offered no hope or comfort to the South's beleaguered people.

William A. Graham's Resolution for Peace March 3, 1865

Senator Louis Wigfall of Texas, one of Davis's most vocal critics, presented a resolution during a March 3, 1865, secret session to name three Senators "to confer with the President confidentially in reference to the present condition of the country, and to ascertain if possible, his plans and purposes."⁷⁵ The resolution was approved and Graham, Hunter, and James L. Orr were named to confer with Davis.

Later that day, Senator Graham reported on their conference. There is no record of what Graham reported, and a motion to present a written report failed nine to seven. There are no further references to the three Senators or their activities in the Senate Journal. Other sources indicate that Davis rejected the committee's overture.⁷⁶ The absence of any record of the committee's discussions with Davis indicates that the Senate was unwilling to violate its instruction for the committee to confer confidentially with the president. It is believed, however, that the three Senators presented a peace proposal at the confidential meeting with the president. Graham had likely prepared the proposal. He had written David Swain, president of the University of North Carolina, in late February that "[o]pinion is growing in favor of new negotiations to save the wreck of our affairs if military affairs continue adverse" and that he would be meeting with "some friends ... on that topic."⁷⁷ The result of Graham's discussions with his friends was a *Resolution for Peace*. It reads:

Resolved that the Senate do advise the President to open communications with the Government of the United States *to ascertain upon what terms* and conditions the existing war may be terminated, provided the several States constituting the Confederacy shall *consent to readopt the constitution of the United States* - and the President be requested to transmit such information, when obtained, to the Senate, if in Session, and if not to the Governors of the several States.⁷⁸

That the three Senators presented a peace proposal is supported by Wilfred Yearns, author of *The Confederate Congress*. Yearns describes a mid-February meeting of three senators with Davis, advising him to work for favorable reconstruction terms, "the first time the peace leaders had

proposed anything short of independence and Davis disdainfully asked them to make their proposal through formal Senate channels. Both he and they knew that honor forbade such action.”⁷⁹ Stephen Mallory, a member of Davis’s cabinet, believed Davis would have reacted favorably had he realized their meeting was the result of a formal Senate resolution.⁸⁰

Additional support for identifying Graham as the author of the Resolution for Peace is based on the similarity of the italicized language in the resolution with that part of Graham’s March 20 report to Governor Vance discussing the sentiment for separate peace agreements with the Union by North and South Carolina and Georgia. The language is as follows:

I had conferred with the Pre’t and found him, though in an anxious frame of mind, constrained by the scruple that he could not “commit suicide” by treating his Government out of existence – “nor even ascertain for the States, *what terms* would be yielded, provided they consented *to readopt the Constitution of the United States*.”⁸¹

The Final Days of the Second Confederate Congress

By March 1865, the Second Congress was anxious to adjourn and leave Richmond before Grant breached Lee’s defenses at Petersburg. Legislation moving the seat of government and its archives from Richmond was adopted, and on March 13, they met to receive Davis’s message on the crisis facing the country.

Davis began by stating his belief that “it is within our power to avert the calamities which menace us and to secure the triumph of the sacred cause for which so much sacrifice has been made, so much suffering endured, so many precious lives lost.”⁸² Congress was blamed for the critical situation facing the Confederacy and was advised of the “necessity of further and more energetic legislation” and “for the adoption of the measures required to guard them [the people of the Confederacy] from threatened perils.”⁸³ The Senate was not pleased by Davis’s criticism and on March 16 publicly admonished the president, stating that “Congress would be derelict in its duty to permit its legitimate and constitutional influence to be destroyed by Executive admonitions.”⁸⁴

On March 18, 1865, President Davis advised the House and Senate that “he had no further communication to make.”⁸⁵ The Second Confederate Congress then adjourned “sine die.” It was appropriate that the Confederacy’s last Congress adjourn without setting a date for resumption. The disintegration of the Confederacy was complete when Davis and his cabinet left Richmond on April 2, 1865, leaving John A. Campbell, assistant secretary of war, to surrender the city to President Lincoln and Grant’s army.

Sadly, the peace advocates and the chairmen of the Select Joint Committee on the Means of Public Defense could take little comfort in knowing that their proposals for peace and reconstruction had been correct. Their counsel and proposals had been rejected at every turn by Davis and a congressional majority who refused to acknowledge that the Confederacy lacked the resources to win the war and establish an independent country. Unwilling to accept reality, the president and his congressional allies had abandoned the nation to a dark and uncertain future, leaving to its soldiers and citizens the negotiation of surrender terms with the occupying Union armies.

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74. *Journal of the Senate*, 679.
75. *Journal of the Senate*, 633.
76. Yearns, *The Confederate Congress*, 183.
77. Williams, *Graham's Papers*, 253.
78. Williams, *Graham's Papers*, 270. The Resolution for Peace is recorded without reference to its source and is dated only by the year, 1865.
79. Yearns, *The Confederate Congress*, 183.
80. Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 592.
81. Williams, *Graham's Papers*, 294. Graham's discussion with Davis is also described by Walter Clark in his 1916 Graham biography. Clark, who was a Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, wrote: "Davis declared himself without power to come to any terms that would put an end to the Confederacy. Thereupon Senator Graham gave notice that to save further effusion of blood he would introduce a resolution for negotiations looking to a return to the Union, but the notice was unfavorably received."
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83. *Journal of the Senate*, 703.
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“The Nigh and Best Way”: The Early Development of Roads in Montgomery County

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Montgomery County became a major pathway into the New River Valley during the early days of European settlement. The development of the early routes traveling southwest to the New River Valley had to overcome the obstacles of the Alleghany Divide and the New River itself. Early court documents, maps, and diaries allow us to trace the development of roads in the county during the settlement period. These sources make a strong case for the importance of Montgomery County as a thoroughfare to Southwest Virginia.

Early Explorers Find Obstacles

By following American Indian paths and influenced by topography, early European-American adventurers entered what is now Montgomery County with the goal of finding routes further west and surveying tracts on behalf of land companies. The earliest recorded trip into the region is thought to have been made by Abraham Wood in 1654. Abraham Wood was well placed to be at the forefront of westward exploration. He was captain at Fort Henry (located at the falls of the Appomattox River) and had entered the House of Burgesses in 1644. He served 22 years on the Privy Council and held a life appointment beginning in 1658 that gave him access to the highest levels of thinking and intelligence about the frontier within the colonial government. In 1671, Wood sponsored an exploring party led by Thomas Batte and Robert Hallom (often denoted as Batts and Fallam).¹ The explorers found that the first major obstacles to westward travel in Southwest Virginia were the steep, high slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains (the Alleghany Divide) that separated waters draining east into the Atlantic from those that drained west into the Ohio River and ultimately the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Once over the Blue Ridge, the wide, deep New River (named Wood's River by Batte and Hallom) formed a second impediment to movement further west.²

The Promise of Opportunity

Long hunters were the earliest long-term residents of European descent in what is now Montgomery County. These men, sometimes traveling in small groups, came into southwestern Virginia for long periods during the fall and winter to hunt and trap for profit. By the 1740s, these hunters were active in the region. Residing in small, temporary cabins, they came and went with the seasons and were part of a vibrant trade in furs and hides. Adam Harman, one of the area's early settlers, was also participating in the fur and hide trade. When his cabin was robbed in 1749, he lost 96 deer skins and three elk skins.³ The availability of wild game is further evidenced in the diary of Dr. Thomas Walker, who recorded his notes in July 1750 at the end of his six-man party's four-month exploration through the area and into Kentucky:

We killed in the journey 13 Buffaloes, 8 Elks, 53 Bears, 20 Deer, 4 wild Geese, about 150 Turkeys, besides small game. We might have killed three times as much meat, if we had wanted it.⁴

The hunter's potential for profit is evident in a February 21, 1765, record made by Moravians in North Carolina. Their diary noted: "Yesterday two Virginia hunters, named Bleven, came to the store bringing 1600 lbs. of skins and furs." The hunters, who were probably Jack and William Blevins, were paid £80 in cash and goods by the Bethabara storekeeper.⁵

In addition to hides and furs, hunters also returned home with vivid reports of the excellence of lands to the west. These reports met with ready ears among two important groups: entrepreneurs looking to profit from the unsettled land and farmers looking for affordable, productive land. An organized settlement of the New River Valley began in 1745 with the Wood's River Grant (or Great Grant), issued to a company of men including James Patton, John Buchanan, and George Robinson. The grant included 100,000 selected acres on the New, Holston, and Clinch rivers. John Buchanan journeyed through the area in 1745 and mentioned three settlers known to be living in the area that became Montgomery County: Israel Lorton, Adam Harman, and Jacob Harman.⁶

The Easy Way

Early reports of the frontier made it clear that significant obstacles lay between the eastern settlements and the western lands. Many travelers would need to cross not only the Blue Ridge, but also the James River, Roanoke River, and New River drainage basins as well as intermediate ridges.

These obstacles, the difficulty of travel, and the poor living conditions of the early settlers in the region are mentioned in the diary of Moravian missionaries Leonhard Schnell and John Brandmueller. From mid-October through mid-December 1749, the men journeyed from Pennsylvania to Virginia. Their diary records that the “manner of living [of the settlers] is rather poor in this district” and that “hunting is their chief occupation.” On November 18, the pair found travel through snow to be difficult:

Moreover, we had to cross the Catawba Creek and a branch of the Roanoke, more than thirty times. There was no house for the first twelve miles and then none for the next fifteen miles. But although we were in the water nearly the whole day, the Lord helped us through and brought us in the evening to an English house, where we enjoyed the comforts of a good fire.⁷

With all of these impediments, finding the easiest way west was very important indeed. In general, a combination of factors, including distance, grade, drainage, existing paths, landmarks, forage, and supplemental game, worked together to make a certain route “easy.” On foot or on horseback, leading a string of packhorses to carry provisions and equipment, early settlers generally preferred the shortest way, assuming other factors were equal.

Early routes into the region likely followed long-used animal trails, American Indian paths, and the topography itself. Existing large animal trails often followed shallow grades as the animals moved to and from grazing sites, water sources, stream crossings, and salt licks. American Indians followed and widened these paths over time as they hunted and traveled. The traveler in the climax forests of the region benefitted from the minimal undergrowth found in the shade of the tall trees. From late fall until early spring, the leafless trees made it easy to see 200 feet in most directions. The lay of the land and the general direction of trails and paths were clear. If looking from atop a high ridge or mountain, where growth is not as tall and dense, drainage basins and the network of stream courses could also be observed. With this in mind, one can envision how early explorers began to find the easiest routes. Historian Alan Briceland’s work, for example, places the Batte and Hallom party at Adney Gap near the western end of Poor Mountain (the junction of current Montgomery, Roanoke, Floyd, and Franklin counties) on September 8, 1671. From this height, the view westward encompasses the Roanoke River basin, the Alleghany Divide, and much of the lower New River drainage basin into West Virginia. This was significant since streams were commonly used landmarks for overland

travelers. Stream grades were often easy until they reached the headwaters. Once over the divide, another stream traced the way down to a larger stream or river. Thus, many trails followed major waterways from one drainage basin, across a divide, and into another.⁸

It was probably not until the late 1760s, 15 or 20 years after the initial settlement in Montgomery County, that portions of the “Great Road” became passable for wagons. The long hunters and earliest farmers alike used packhorses to carry their belongings to their new homes. A packhorse could typically carry up to 200 pounds of goods and travel about 20 miles a day. Teams of two-to-twelve horses were common. The weight of goods was a significant factor and meant that the grade became very important. Energy consumption during a steep ascent was considerable, and the descent could often be difficult and dangerous as well. Representative grades in Montgomery County are 11 percent on today’s three-lane road up Christiansburg Mountain (U.S. 460/11) between Shawsville and Christiansburg; 5 percent on the section of the Southwest Turnpike on Christiansburg Mountain, now known as Wayside Drive; and 3 percent or less for the county’s railroads, whose grades seldom exceed 3 percent.⁹

Drainage was an essential part of improved roads, keeping the road dry, solid, and usable. Often, roads would be laid out on high ground to facilitate drainage. Yet this meant that steep inclines had to be traversed. This situation is illustrated by the 1753 diary accounts made by a group of Moravian brethren travelling in Augusta County on the Great Road from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to their new settlement location in North Carolina:

At day-break we crossed the Runoke, which was very low . . . but full of slippery stones We had much difficulty in getting our sick horses across. A quarter of a mile beyond . . . our road turned to the left and became very narrow. A mile further we came to a steep hill, and the road sloped badly. We soon stuck in a ditch, and were in danger of breaking our axle. In another mile a rather high hill rose before us, and we had to unload half our things and carry them up on our backs, and even then we could hardly get the wagon up. The going down was also steep, we locked two wheels, hung a tree on behind, and all the brethren held back by it; and so we crossed this hill safely.¹⁰

The first part of this quotation illustrates the importance of good stream fords, which were often wide and shallow with firm bottoms for easy crossing during periods of low water. The greater width makes for a slow flow, particularly along straight sections. In curves, however, the outside of

the flow is faster and more aggressive, eroding and deepening the outside of the curve in a stream.¹¹

The supply of food and water was also a consideration to the earliest travelers. With few places to acquire provisions, most essentials had to be packed and carried. Travelers often carried a knife, at least one ax, and a flint and steel for starting fires. Some travelers also carried a compass. A gun (.43–.52 caliber with powder and ball) was sometimes carried, but not every traveler owned one. Less than 50 percent of recorded estates between 1745 and 1769 in what would become Montgomery County listed a gun of any kind, according to Mary Kegley's study of estate records. A hunter or traveler expecting a long journey would take canteen, cups, cornmeal, flour, a cooking pot, lard, salt, sewing needles, a small amount of extra clothing, and an oiled cloth or canvas. Occasionally, medical items and grain for the horses were also included, but horses were usually expected to forage overnight.¹²

Road Building

During the colonial period, roads were marked, built, and maintained by "tithables," any white male or slave¹³ aged 16 and older. The county court heard petitions for new roads and road improvements, often sending overseers to "view" the road and make determinations about what was the "nighest and best way." Road orders show that the road into Southwest Virginia ran southward through the Valley of Virginia to Looney's Ferry over the James River (near present-day Buchanan) and continued southward via Looney's Mill Creek to Howery Town (between present-day Trinity and Troutville), where the road divided. One branch of it continued southward and was known as the Carolina Road; the other traveled southwest up Catawba Creek to its headwaters and over a divide to the headwaters of the North Fork of the Roanoke River and continued southwest to Draper's Meadows (modern-day Blacksburg). Another route began at the Carolina Road junction and followed the lower part of the North Fork of the Roanoke upstream to the South Fork of the Roanoke, then to the Alleghany Divide.¹⁴

The earliest of these approaches followed Catawba Creek to the North Fork of the Roanoke River southwestward towards Draper's Meadows. This route is mentioned in the earliest reference to a road in the New River Valley, appearing in the Orange County Road Orders in May 1745:

James Patton and John Buchanon Gentl. having Viewed the way from Frederick County Line Through that Part of this County Called Augusta . . . [from] Tinklin Spring to Beverley Mannor line to Gilbt. Campbell's Ford on the north branch of James River . . . to a ford at

the Cherry tree Bottom on James River . . . to Adam Harmon's on the New or Woods River and that Capt. George Robinson and James Campbell and Mark Evins and James Davison be Overseers the Same and that all the Inhabitants between James River and Woods River Clear the Same and that a Distinct Order be given to Every Gang to Clear the Same and that it be Cleared as it is already Blazed and laid off with Two Knotches and a Cross Given under our hands this 8th Day of April 1745 James Patton and John Buchannon¹⁵

Without the benefit of bridges or ferries, fords such as that at Adam Harman's farm were important, as were the roads leading to these fords. For example, the Augusta County court ordered on November 19, 1746,

that a road be cleared from Adam Harmons to the River and North branch of Roan Oak [Roanoke] and it is further Ordered that George Draper Israel Larton & son Adam and George Herman Thomas Looney Jacob Harman and three Sons Jacob Castle John Lane Valintine Harman Adrew Moser Humberston Lyon James Skaggs Humphrey Baker John Davis Frederick Hering & two Sons and all Other Persons Setling in the Precincts work on the sd [said] Road Under the sd Adam Harman who is hereby appointed Overseer of the sd Road with the sd Gang to Clear & keep the sd Road in repaire according to Law.¹⁶

Two additional orders on November 19, 1746, addressed the northern section of road along Catawba Creek and the South Fork of the Roanoke River in what would become Montgomery County:

Ordered that a road be Cleared from the Ridge above Tobias Brights that Parts the Waters of New river from the brances [branches] of roan Oak [Roanoke] to the Lower ford of Catabo Creek and it's further Ordered that William English and two Sons Thomas English and son Jacob Brown George Bright Benjamin Oyle Paul Garrison Elisha Isaac John Donalin Philip Smith Mathew English and the rest of the Tithables as Nominated by George Robinson and James Montgomerie Gent Work on the sd Road under Tobias Bright who is hereby appointed Overseer of the sd Road with the sd Gang to Clear and keep the same in repair according to Law.

Ordered that a Road be Cleared from the Ridge that Devides the Waters of New river from the waters of the South branch of Roan Oak to end in a road that heads Over the Blew ridge [Blue Ridge]. . . .¹⁷

In other words, the initial routes were laid out in May 1745, up Catawba Creek to the divide and then via the North Fork of the Roanoke and tributaries of the New River to the Draper's Meadows settlement and on to the so-called horseshoe bend of the New River. A second approach followed the South Fork of the Roanoke River from Lafayette (Montgomery County) to Fort Vause (Shawsville), then over the divide (Christiansburg Mountain), joining a route ordered in November 1746 from Reed Creek (Wythe County) to Eagle Bottom (Ingles Ferry site).¹⁸ A clue to where the earliest route traversed Christiansburg Mountain is found on the pen and ink draft of the *Map of Montgomery County, Virginia taken from actual survey made by topographical party in charge of Lieut. C. S. Dwight*. A Confederate engineer, Dwight made this map, now held by the Library of Congress, in June 1864, noting an "old road" from Montgomery Tunnel* to the top of the ridge. From the top of Christiansburg Mountain, the route traveled through Hans Meadow (Christiansburg) westward to cross the New River at Ingles Ferry. It is the later route that moved more traffic toward the southwestern portion of Virginia along what was to become the "Great Road."¹⁹

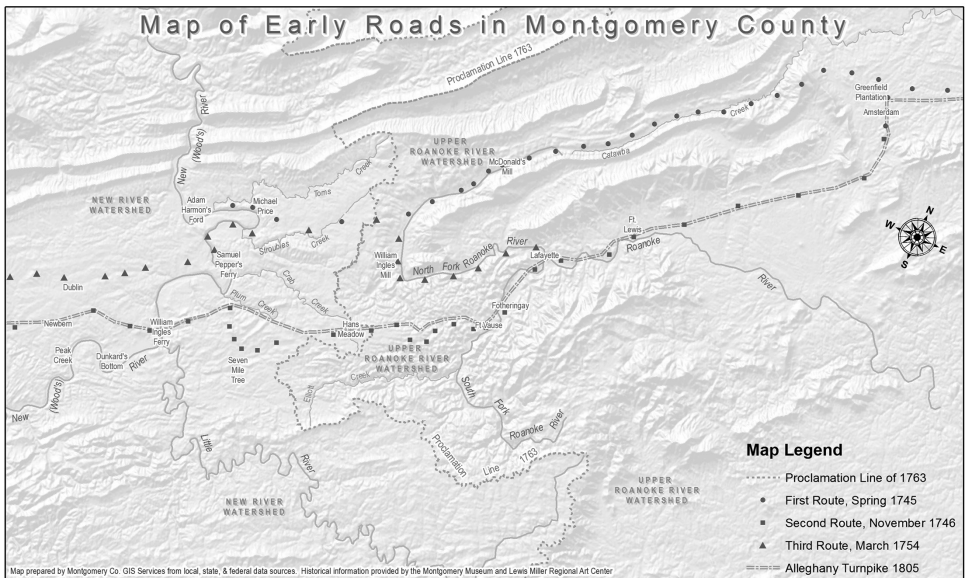


Figure 1: A study of county court road orders from Orange County and Augusta County reveals the ultimate development of two primary routes through Montgomery County before the construction of the Allegheny Turnpike in 1805. (Map by Bob Pearsall, Montgomery County GIS, with Jim Page)

* The eastern terminus of the "old road" is about .4 mile southwest of the Norfolk Southern railroad's west portal of the so-called Montgomery Tunnel on State Road 641 (Den Hill Road).

The Necessity of New Lands

Two groups of settlers flooded into the American colonies in the early and mid-eighteenth century: Presbyterian Ulster Scots (Scotch-Irish) and Palatinate Germans who were members of the Lutheran, German Reformed, Moravian, German Anabaptist, and Baptist Brethren religious groups. All of these settlers were in search of religious freedom and economic opportunity. Their numbers created political pressures and high land prices in Pennsylvania and Maryland. By the 1720s and 1730s, they had established new settlements in the Valley of Virginia, and by the late 1740s, their settlements began to move further southwest into the New River Valley. The earliest permanent residents relied heavily on trade with coastal markets via the export of cattle, hemp, and whiskey. Livestock drovers were common.²⁰

The earliest settlers in the area included the Harman family and, in 1745, a small group of brethren who had broken off from the Ephrata Society in Pennsylvania and settled at Dunkard's Bottom, a site now covered by Claytor Lake. The Draper's Meadows settlement on Strouble's Creek was founded in 1748 by Ulster Scots on land patented by James Patton. Dr. Thomas Walker noted the richness of these lands as he passed



Figure 2: Ruins of the William Christian House in Dunkard's Bottom. The house site was covered by water when Claytor Lake was constructed in 1939. (F. B. Kegley Photograph Collection, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College)

through the New River Valley on his surveying trip for the Loyal Company. During the trip, he lodged at James Robinson's home on March 15, 1750, "the only place I could hear of," he wrote, "where they had corn to spare, notwithstanding the land is such that an industrious man might make 100 barrels a share in a Seasonable year."²¹

Tension and Conflict

The settlement of Montgomery County was neither continuous nor undisputed. As settlers streamed into the area, tensions with both American Indians and the French increased. Skirmishes on the Holston River in 1754 culminated in an attack at Draper's Meadow on July 30, 1755, and the destruction of Fort Vause in 1756. William Preston recorded casualties from such attacks throughout western Virginia: 177 raids with 129 settlers killed, 22 wounded, and 153 taken prisoner. Panic ensued among settlers in the summer of 1755, and the exodus of settlers from the area was dramatic. The population of Augusta County dropped from 2,663 in 1754 to only 1,474 in 1758 despite the 17 forts in Virginia serving as the British front line during the French and Indian War (1754–1763). John Madison, clerk of the Augusta County Court, expressed the point of view of the settlers in 1755 when he wrote:

Four families on their flight from a branch of New River this minute passed my house. . . . 'Tis shocking to think of the calamity of the poor wretches who live on the Holston and New Rivers, who for upwards of a hundred miles have left their habitations, lost their crops, and vast numbers of stock.²²

The hostilities of the French and Indian War helped to bring about the construction of the first road through the area for wagons. When Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson prepared the first map showing western Virginia in detail in 1751, their map noted: "The Great Road from the Yadkin River, North Carolina thro Virginia to Pennsylvania 435 miles." The word "wagon" is not included in this label, and likely there were few roads suitable for a wagon in southwestern Virginia at this time. A map drawn by Thomas Hutchins shows the home of Samuel Stalnaker, which was probably located west of present-day Marion, to be the furthest extent of settlement in 1755, with no indication of a wagon road.²³

In 1760–1761, a campaign was planned to relieve Fort Loudoun (in eastern Tennessee) and to attack the Cherokee who were waging war against settlers in South Carolina and Virginia. To execute the plan, about

700 militiamen were assembled near present-day Salem, Virginia, and the Virginia Assembly made arrangements to supply the troops. Records show that William Davis went into business on August 19, 1760, with Augusta County Sheriff William Preston to ship supplies from Staunton, Virginia, to the Long Island of the Holston (present-day Kingsport, Tennessee). The Preston-Davis operation used four wagons and at least 16 horses. Merchant Samuel Cowden, another Staunton businessman, used 12 wagons to ship supplies at least as far as Fort Chiswell, a significant fortification constructed by Col. William Byrd III in the fall and winter of 1760–1761. Col. Adam Stephen, who replaced Col. Byrd as commander of the expedition to the Great Island of Holston (Kingsport), wrote his superiors in 1761 that he and his men had “opened a wagon Road to the Big Island” suitable for military wagons. Additionally, requests for reimbursement were made by Samuel Cowden and Company in Augusta County Court in 1761 to cover costs of ferrying his 12 wagons over the New River twice, in addition to ferrying people and horses multiple times. This evidence strongly suggests that a ferry was in operation by William Ingles at the Ingles Ferry site, at least for military use, as early as the fall of 1760 to accommodate freight traffic to the so-called “Cherokee War.” This use preceded the ferry’s legislative approval in November 1762.²⁴



Figure 3: Ingles Bridge over the New River as sketched by Lewis Miller in 1859, showing Ingles Tavern on the Pulaski County (far) side of the river. This view was near the site of Ingles Ferry. (Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center)

Evidence for dating Ingles Ferry is supported by the probable movements of William Ingles. Historical documentation places him in the area about 1746, and he was certainly operating a gristmill on a small tributary of the North Fork of the Roanoke River (probably Mill Creek) since Thomas Walker encountered him on March 16, 1749/50.²⁵ Ingles married Mary Draper in February 1754, and the couple lived on 255 acres in Draper's Meadows.²⁶ With this early residency in the area, it is reasonable to expect that William Ingles had explored many parts of the New River and was aware of the site where he eventually operated Ingles Ferry, which was about 13 miles from Draper's Meadows. The ferry site would probably have been well known as a ford; that particular ford was composed of eons of debris dumped by the Little River into the New River. The November 1762 official authorization of Ingles Ferry set fees at 3P (pence) for man or horse.²⁷

Before supply wagons could arrive at the Ingles Ferry site in the fall of 1760, an improved route or wagon road would have to be in place. The preferred route west ran along the South Fork of the Roanoke, ascended the Christiansburg Mountain dividing ridge, probably followed the ridge west with little altitude gain or loss, and then crossed the New River at a ford at Eagle Bottom (Ingles Ferry) and continued into present-day Pulaski County by Reed Creek. It was likely the route that the militiamen and wagoners used. The preference for this route was codified in a petition to the Augusta County court on March 18, 1767, by 18 men "for a Road from Vauses by Ingleses ferry to Peak Creek on the North side of the New River." The first mention of the Great Road in the New River Valley would not come until 1769.²⁸

Stability and Settlement

Although the Proclamation of 1763 at the end of the French and Indian War made it impossible to claim legal title to land west of the Alleghany Divide, several important milestones for settlement had already occurred: the construction of Fort Chiswell, the opening of the military wagon road by Byrd's men, and the establishment of Ingles Ferry. Men and women intent on finding land in the New River Valley and the western waters were not going to be put aside easily.

The opening of the road to wagons was a significant improvement over packhorses. Although not much faster than a pack horse, the Conestoga wagons favored by settlers could carry 10 tons of goods when pulled by a full team of six horses. However, most settlers chose to carry lighter loads with a smaller team of horses or oxen. The Virginia freight wagon was of a design similar to the Conestoga wagon; measuring 15 feet long at the top and 11 feet long at the bottom, it was 40 inches wide with sides about 2 feet high.²⁹

Firsthand accounts provide a sense of travel during the 1790s. Governor John Sevier left his home in East Tennessee on May 19, 1790. After six days of travel, he “[d]ined at McCraigs [John Craig’s tavern at Hans Meadows] pd. 4- Lodged at Col. I. Robertsons [possibly James Robinson near Elliston]. . . .” Sevier traveled about 20 to 30 miles a day.³⁰

A petition submitted to the Montgomery Court on May 31, 1794, by 30 tithables living near the North Fork of the Roanoke River describes the conditions of roads and the effort to keep them open. The petition reads:

[The Montgomery County Court did] . . . Impose on us so far, as to work on a road on North Fork Ron Oak [Roanoke] . . . which is known to be a Very Public road and of the greatest use to the Community in general. . . . [I]t may be observ’d that as many as thirty hand wrought Steady on that road every Saturday during the course of three Summers past, and at this time a man on a Single Horse is in danger to be Injured. . . . [W]e rest in hopes your goodness will not Suffer us to be Wretchedly Imposed on. . . .³¹

Another traveler was Louis Phillipe, Duke of Orleans and later king of the French, who visited the United States with his brothers in 1797. Locals advised them to take the road via Ingles Ferry rather than Pepper’s Ferry (authorized by the Virginia Legislature in 1779), a choice they soon discovered to be popular as Louis Phillipe noted large groups of settlers at the site. “Every man has his own way of traveling and travelers are mutually annoying,” he wrote. Louis Philippe attributed the difficulty of the ascent of Christiansburg Mountain to poor road-building, writing: “The one we followed crossed over the tallest of the rounded hills.” He did not consider that a ridge route avoided soft and wet bottomland. Arriving in Christiansburg, Louis Philippe found the fledgling county seat to be “a tiny village of about ten houses.”³²

Prosperity and Turnpikes

After the Revolutionary War, settlers continued to flock west into the newly opened Kentucky frontier. Travelers made their way over the Cumberland Gap via the Wilderness Road, a path marked by Daniel Boone’s party in 1775. However, the first wagon did not cross the gap until 1796. The Great Road running through Montgomery County was an important thoroughfare for travelers moving west or east. For example, the well-known explorer William Clark (of Lewis and Clark fame) made at least five documented trips through the New River Valley between 1801 and 1820.



Figure 4: Ingles Ferry as it appeared circa 1906. (D. D. Lester Collection, Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center)

In 1807, Clark spent two months traveling from St. Louis through Illinois, Indiana, across the Cumberland Gap, and northeast on the Great Road to reach Fincastle, where he would marry Julia Hancock in 1808. In 1809, William and Julia and their infant son journeyed for 39 days on the same route from Lexington, Kentucky, to Fincastle.³³

The roads in the first decade of the nineteenth century were decidedly better than the simple foot and horse trails of the 1740s–1760s. Over time, roads were slowly upgraded from trails to “cut” trails, where stumps in the road were cut down to less than 12 inches high to accommodate wagons. Simple grading was first done at fords to reduce steep stream banks to a shallower grade into and out of the streams. This work was followed by more efforts to fill low spots and to remove large rocks. Ferries were authorized, and lastly, the county court ordered the building of bridges.³⁴

These improvements were still modest, however, and private turnpike companies became common during the early nineteenth century. In 1805, for example, sections of the old road that followed the South Fork of the Roanoke up Christiansburg Mountain became part of the Alleghany Turnpike. Sections of this same route were later included in the larger Southwest Turnpike of 1845.³⁵

The route through the Shenandoah and New River Valleys of Virginia has been important since animal paths were first followed and expanded by American Indians traveling to homes and hunting grounds. As Europeans flooded into the region, these routes and paths shifted, changed, and improved to carry the ever-increasing numbers on narrow horse trails, then on the Great Road, and later still on the turnpikes and the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad in 1854. In the twentieth century, these same paths were incorporated into Lee Highway (U.S. 11) and now into Interstate 81, carrying millions of vehicles every year. The culture and economy of Montgomery County is in many ways closely bound to this transportation route—ever changing and improving, yet still carrying travelers seeking to enrich their lives.

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Catawba Sanatorium: Its Founding and Early History

Grace Hemmingson

You who must walk in darkness,
 Away from the worlds bright song,
Comfort yourselves with dreaming
 Dreams will make you strong

Swift are the feet of the runner
 Climbing the endless hills
But sweet and sure is the joy
 A white dream distills

Only in quiet places
 Life is minted true
Comfort yourselves, O dreamers,
 Keats was one of you.

“White Sorrow,” Virginia McCormick¹

This poem was included at the end of Dr. Earnest Drewry Stephenson’s twentieth anniversary history of the Catawba Sanatorium. It was meant as a tribute to those lost to tuberculosis in the sanatorium and a comfort to those still receiving treatment there. The pastoral imagery reflects the rural mountainous location of the sanatorium, which both isolated the institution from the outside world and ensured its patients a rest from the polluted air of the cities. The idealism of the piece, which describes an ultimate cure for tuberculosis, is typical of the period. Dr. Robert Koch had, in 1882, announced the causative agent of the disease, and many were beginning to claim that the “captain of the hosts of death” could be cured by proper rest and sanitation.² Their faith was justified in some ways by a general decline in death rates from tuberculosis that began in the 1870s, decades before Catawba, one of the first state-run ventures to combat the disease, opened in 1909. However, the death-rate decline was far from even across different

levels of society. A growing sanitarian movement during the late nineteenth century led to a general improvement of the quality of life for the middle class, which partially led to this decline.³ Meanwhile, the poor sections of the cities were often affected with two or three times the number of new cases of the wealthier regions,⁴ slowing the decline of the disease.

The history of tuberculosis is a “chronicle without closure ... filled with phantoms and puzzles,” according to Katherine Ott, a leading scholar on the subject.⁵ In her book, *Fevered Lives*, she examined the development of medical knowledge and the way it affected the lives of those stricken with tuberculosis. In her evaluation of sanatoria, Ott argued that although a small percentage of consumptives ever spent time in a sanatorium, the overall system represented a shift to standardized medicine.⁶ Sheila Rothman, on the other hand, has attributed the gradual eradication of the disease not to the distinct medical practices within the sanatoria but rather to the patients’ isolation from communities and inability to spread the bacillus.⁷ These two works, and many others, focused primarily on the broader picture of tuberculosis in America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Two published works directly focused on the history of Catawba Sanatorium. Written by a doctor and nurse employed there and while the sanatorium was still accepting tuberculosis patients, the books, for the most part, promoted Catawba’s success and omitted unpleasant details.⁸ With the benefit of more than 100 years of hindsight since the sanatorium was opened, this article will attempt to provide a more balanced view.

Within Virginia’s history of treating tuberculosis, Catawba represented a slow but steady shift in thinking, while retaining some continuity with earlier treatment. Its establishment reflected a shifting landscape of thought that began around 1882. The discovery of the tubercle bacilli by Robert Koch introduced the concept of bacteriology to tuberculosis treatment. Although the medical profession in general was slow to accept this idea, the concept did introduce a new understanding of how the disease was spread and led health officials to consider new methods to limit new cases. Also in 1882, Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, father of the American sanatorium, first came into contact with the Brehmer-Dettweiler method of treatment.⁹ This method, the closed sanatorium, stood in sharp contrast to the open sanatorium system that had taken root in the American West earlier in the nineteenth century in the form of health resorts. The immediate difference between these two systems was the prevalence of medical supervision, which was strict and all-encompassing in the closed system and more advisory in the open system. In the end, Trudeau’s model of a closed sanatorium focused on treating those who could not afford it, won

out. In its first decade, Catawba reflected the growing influence of these trends as resident physicians increased their control over patients' lives and increasingly relied on microscopes to diagnose the disease.

Physicians were not the only group to begin exerting control over the lives of tuberculosis victims. The attitude that the state should provide for the public health of its citizens began to take hold. Sheila M. Rothman has suggested that this attitude was an offshoot of the "Progressive Era's spirit of reform," which put an increased emphasis on the health and happiness of the average worker.¹⁰ However, the Virginia legislature and the State Board of Health disagreed completely about the best method to combat disease. The creation of Catawba magnified this conflict, promoting an atmosphere of careful defense surrounding it in its early years. To create an appearance of effectiveness, the majority of those admitted to the sanatorium were examined to admit "only those patients whose cases [were] deemed curable."¹¹ Another complication in the state's efforts to combat tuberculosis was the size of Catawba. Its limited number of beds prompted the lingering question posed by Dr. B. L. Taliaferro in the sanatorium's 1917 report: "What are 163 beds for 4,003 cases—1,765 white and 2,238 colored?"¹²

This question addressed the root of the issues in Virginia's fight against the "great white plague." Much of Catawba's importance was that it represented the state's first concentrated effort against a disease whose deadliness had peaked in the mid-1800s.¹³ However, the small sanatorium, limited to mostly middle-class white patients, could not impact the entire population of Virginia. In an era when most other aspects of citizenship were being denied to African Americans, they were also denied admission as patients. On the other hand, African Americans composed an integral part of the staff at Catawba.

Climatology and Tuberculosis in Virginia

When the state undertook to combat tuberculosis, the disease had existed since the Greeks wrote about it under the name *phthisis*. Later it became known as consumption or the white plague. There was no consensus on how to treat tuberculosis despite a sense of dread surrounding it. Most leading physicians at the time considered it hereditary, an understandable claim due to the frequent loss of entire families from the disease. As opposed to the major epidemic diseases of the nineteenth century, it did not have an observable causal element that could be attacked to end it. Therefore, there was no known overarching policy that Virginia could enact; nor would the state have had the infrastructure to institute such change. Until the early twentieth century, state health departments were usually formed only in

times of emergency. The Virginia Board of Health was not reorganized in a permanent manner until 1908.¹⁴ Furthermore, such a temporary board of health was usually tasked with elimination of a more drastic epidemic linked to poor sanitation—smallpox, malaria, and typhoid for example. Rothman suggested that these health officers, whom she called “sanitarians,” mostly worked on improving water systems and sewage treatment. Although targeted elsewhere, some of these policies and programs ultimately had an effect on decreasing the number of cases of tuberculosis as well.

Before the state took over the treatment of tuberculosis, care for Virginia’s invalids fell largely into their own hands or, if they could afford it, a doctor’s best judgment. At that time the medical profession was based largely on “vitalism,” a concept considering both a person’s physical and spiritual state.¹⁵ When Koch’s work on the tubercle bacilli began to suggest that tuberculosis was contagious instead of hereditary, it was only the latest evidence of how diseases were caused and spread by physical means. Many originally rejected the idea that bacteria could spread disease, but slowly, the mounting evidence from different studies began to change doctors’ outlooks. Many merely modified the earlier theory about heredity by claiming that while the disease itself was not inherited, a susceptibility to it could be passed down.

Since doctors had limited knowledge about what would have an effect on the sick, most prescribed healthy living and a change in climate. The idea that climate could positively or negatively affect diseases is known as climatology and is first seen in the writings of Hippocrates.¹⁶ Physicians debated exactly which conditions were favorable; most around the turn of the twentieth century thought that effectiveness largely depended on the patient. Another group was convinced that a cure through climate could be deadly since the patient would be unable to return to his/her native climate without risk of relapsing. Belief in climatology led to the foundation of open sanatoriums in key regions that were said to have restorative climates. These health resorts had limited doctor surveillance, were in isolated locations, and were quite expensive. In general they became a refuge for some of the wealthier consumptives and other health seekers from the 1850s through the early twentieth century.

In Virginia, health resorts developed around natural springs in the mountainous regions. They gained popularity during the same time period in which tuberculosis was responsible for the majority of deaths in the state. Notable among these was the Roanoke Red Sulphur Springs Resort, which occupied the same property later used for the Catawba Sanatorium.¹⁷ The resort’s healing waters were heavily advertised to persuade people to vacation

at the springs. They were also bottled and sold nationwide as “Catawba Iron, or All Healing” potions.¹⁸ Since the effectiveness of prescribed treatment was thought to depend heavily on a person’s constitution, such cure-alls were often accepted as real possibilities for relief. To reinforce its reputation for healthfulness, Roanoke Red maintained a doctor on staff for its visitors. These visitors, in season, were generally affluent and sometimes came from far away or from large cities, especially Baltimore and New York. The sanatorium that replaced the resort had similar features: its location was decided by advocates of climatology, and its first patients were mostly middle and upper class.

Beyond glamorous resorts like Roanoke Red, wealthy Virginians were offered many other opinions about finding a curing climate. Men were most often encouraged to travel to climates as varied as the Caribbean, the Alps, Colorado, New Mexico, California, the South, or the Adirondacks. Women were advised to travel in some cases but usually only domestically and always accompanied by a male relative. More often, women were prescribed a routine that could be carried out near home since it was thought that they were more attached to the domestic sphere and would recover better in familiar surroundings.

The experience of impoverished patients differed greatly since they usually could not afford to travel or even seek medical advice. Nor did they have enough money to stay at home to recover because the loss of wages would devastate their families. It was common for the sick to work for as long as possible, creating additional risk to their health and that of those around them. Any help the poor received usually came from a charitable or government-run organization.

African Americans usually had an experience similar to that of the lower classes, with the added difficulty that charitable societies frequently refused them help on racial grounds. This type of discrimination was widespread in Virginia, with many health care providers determined to provide care only for white members of society. Catawba was founded at a time when the death rate from tuberculosis of African Americans in Virginia was about 50 percent more than the rate of white deaths.¹⁹ However, tuberculosis had long been considered a disease that only affected whites, and some scholars of the time tried to exclude African Americans from this narrative. Some claimed that no recorded cases of tuberculosis existed on antebellum slave plantations and that either freedom or the attempt of black people to live in white society caused so many of them to fall ill.²⁰ No state provision was made for African-American victims of tuberculosis until the foundation of Piedmont Sanatorium in 1917.

In summary, more than 30 years after the discovery of the tuberculosis bacillus, there was no consensus over treatment for tuberculosis or whether it could be cured. A 1914 report from the Virginia Board of Health summed up the nature of the disease: “[I]t is not so much a disease of the lungs as it is a symptom of a social and economic disorder; it is not so much a disease as a condition.”²¹ Virginia’s leading physicians published treatises on the prevention and cure of tuberculosis or sold products they claimed would cure it, misinforming the public and giving false hope.²² Furthermore, such brochures often persuaded the public that a cure had been found and turned public opinion against those who were either so unlucky, immoral, or stupid as to have gotten the disease.

The second conversation that dominated the sanatoria movement regarded the cost of admission. By 1900, the old view of tuberculosis as an upper-class malady was fading, yet many classist ideas were applied to the admission of patients. Particularly, insistence on the morality of patients and strict discipline in the institution revealed upper- and middle-class expectations. Additionally, the cost of one bed per week was nearly half of an average week’s salary in 1910.²³ Although Catawba was meant to help the citizens of Virginia, the cost often made it impossible for the poorest citizens to afford its treatment. Long-standing traditions saw treatment not as a public good but as a private commodity. This mindset began to shift as cities organized attempts to fight the spread of the disease and the state established its first sanatorium.

The Battleground: Choosing a Site for Virginia’s Sanatorium

Although the creation of a state sanatorium was not the only goal of the Virginia Board of Health when the legislature created it during the 1908 session, it was one of the legally mandated goals. The board was “particularly instructed to organize a fight against consumption,” and from the \$40,000 appropriation given to the State Board of Health in 1908 (a ten-fold increase), “\$20,000 ... was allotted for the foundation of this sanatorium.”²⁴ Almost immediately after being appointed commissioner of health for Virginia, Dr. Ennion G. Williams began searching for a suitable location for the state’s sanatorium. Although he was not given clear guidelines to follow on selection, this topic became the first major point of contention between the state legislature and the State Board of Health. Swayed by the reputation of the famous Roanoke Red Sulphur Springs and its powerful advocates, the board of health decided to stake its reputation on what became a somewhat questionable location for the state sanatorium. For the sum of \$18,774, the state purchased around 600 acres of land, including

a hotel containing thirty rooms, two cottages containing twelve rooms, two cottages containing eight rooms, four cottages containing four rooms, and two cottages containing two rooms, besides barns and buildings on the farm. . . . [A]ll of these structures were in bad repair, and a number of them were beyond rehabilitation [sic].²⁵

Most of these buildings would not survive the first few years at Catawba. The hotel was refurbished, and material from demolition of several cottages was used to build lean-tos, the precursor to the pavilion-style buildings that would later be utilized at Catawba. When the sanatorium first opened, space was very limited with only about 30 available beds. The first few months of operation were more costly than productive. The initial purchase of the sanatorium consumed almost the entire \$20,000 budget for 1908. Between getting the buildings in shape to receive patients and paying doctors and nurses, the sanatorium also overspent its 1909 budget of \$20,000 by more than \$4,000.



Figure 1. Patients at Building 22, one of many buildings at Catawba. (Postcards from Catawba, catawba.dbhds.virginia.gov/images/postcards/bldg22.jpg)

The legislature noticed Catawba's overspending as well as the deficit created by the State Board of Health, which spent \$42,669.40 when it had a \$40,000 budget.²⁶ As a result, there was a defensive tone to the State Board of Health reports in 1909 and 1910. Their focus was to show results and to help Williams make the argument that more money was needed to expand Catawba's effectiveness. While pushback from the legislature initially

centered on the expenses of the board, such opposition likely induced Catawba officials to limit its growth during its early phase. One of the most memorable examples of legislative criticism was the Noel–Williams dispute of 1910. J. C. Noel, a Republican, brought charges against Ennion G. Williams, claiming to have a source that had recommended cheaper land for the sanatorium. According to a newspaper article written at the conclusion of the hearing on these claims, the letter in question came from a Delegate Spessard (possibly Michael P. Spessard of Craig County) and “suggested Newcastle as a fit site for the sanatorium, saying that a good site could be bought for one-sixth of the price paid for that at Catawba,” a location characterized as “low and damp.”²⁷ Noel also decried the lack of accountability of the state board, claiming that it “drew out thousands at a time, deposited it at Salem, expended it, and we have no receipts.”²⁸

Part of the problem in ascertaining the fitness of Catawba as a site was the lack of consensus about a good climate for the treatment of tuberculosis. Although Commissioner Williams and the other board members considered the healing reputation of Catawba to be indisputable, others did not necessarily agree. Dr. Robert Williams, the first appointed head physician of Catawba Sanatorium, “characterized the site as ‘hopeless.’” He believed patients could not climb the steep, high areas around the sanatorium, effectively confining their exercise to “a narrow sphere and retarding their improvement.”²⁹ In the view of some leaders in the treatment of tuberculosis, Catawba lacked the conditions for a cure. Thus, it is not surprising that the expenditures of the board and its choice of a site raised some eyebrows.

Noel’s objections were met with widespread resistance from supporters of Williams and anti-tuberculosis work in Virginia. Many prominent men also rushed to defend the honor of Commissioner Williams and the board, including “Senator Keezell, ... Raleigh C. Martin, ... Carey Shapard, ... Dr. W. W. Smith, ... [and] Senator Halsey.”³⁰ Leading the defense was Virginia’s 29th District Senator Charles T. Lassiter, who replied to each concern. In response to complaints about the property’s cost, he claimed that “this particular land sold at a much lower price” than nearby land and that “the buildings alone ... were worth more than the price paid for the land.”³¹ He furthermore vouched for the site as a place of healing, pointing out that it “was for many years considered a Mecca for consumptives” both for location and the healing waters.³² He also cited the sanatorium’s young record, claiming that everyone treated had been at least improved by his or her stay.³³ Above all, the defense was adamant that the board had acted in the best interests of the citizens of Virginia and had never been dishonest

to the legislature. In the end, Noel was forced to relinquish his claims, and the legislature appropriated an additional \$40,000 to Catawba for that year.

It is clear from these discussions that the reputation of the healing powers of Catawba Valley provided the bulk of the motivation for its acquisition. In his 1929 history of the sanatorium, Dr. Earnest Stephenson retrospectively defended the purchase of the property, pointing out that the Roanoke Red Sulphur Springs was “known far and wide for its pure Sulphur water”³⁴ and that “many influential and prominent men” had renewed their health there.³⁵ A number of the early State Board of Health annual reports used these same arguments to justify the need for more cottages in the open air and to blame the faulty constitutions of patients who failed to improve there.

Legitimate reasons did exist to complain about the site. No railroad line connected Catawba to the nearby Northern and Western Railway line; nor were the roads in good condition for hauling patients and supplies. According to Stephenson, the Norfolk and Western Railroad promised speedy construction of a branch road, which was not finished until well after the sanatorium opened.³⁶ As a result, “practically all material [for the construction of open-air tents and the rehabilitation of the out-buildings] had to be hauled from Salem” for 12 miles over Catawba Mountain using almost impassable roads.³⁷ The arduous journey from the railroad in Salem to the sanatorium later reemerged as a divisive issue between the board of health and the state legislature. Regardless of other drawbacks, it seems that climatic conditions at Catawba informed the board members’ reasoning for locating the institution there.

In later years, the battleground for Virginia’s anti-tuberculosis efforts would grow substantially. Within a year of its establishment, Catawba had tripled in size. Noel’s attempts to discredit the board had failed, and the institution had already gained a reputation for “cures,” according to newspapers around the state.³⁸ An initial newspaper report of the opening of the sanatorium reported that the State Board of Health did not intend to make it “a resort for hopeless consumptives” but rather wanted to “admit only those patients whose cases are deemed curable.”³⁹ These hopeful reports, however misleading, were aimed at increasing public confidence that the state government was doing all it could to fight the dread disease. In 1910, as the board sought public support for a large appropriation to expand Catawba, the *Staunton Spectator* called for its immediate enlargement because of its “large percentage of successful cases.”⁴⁰ Most of Catawba’s media coverage was positive, emphasizing the curable and preventable nature of the disease and justifying appropriations made by the legislature supporting an expansion.

The 1910 State Board of Health report to the governor focused on these physical changes to the institution.⁴¹ An additional four open-air pavilions, built “to meet the most exacting sanitary and climatic conditions” according to the “unit system of sanatorium construction,” meant that patients were divided into distinct communities within the institution.⁴² New facilities also included an office building, completed “at small cost,” and an amusement hall, which “forms a most valuable addition to the State’s property.”⁴³ Commissioner Williams pointed to the careful planning and low cost of these improvements, almost as a preemptive defense in case a second round of accusations by Senate Republicans should occur. He even defended the accounts of the sanatorium, which, in his estimation, had been “economically and wisely administered” by A. Lambert Martin, business manager of Catawba.⁴⁴ The rapid expansion was balanced by a severe lack of trust by Senate Republican members, especially since Virginia’s economy continued in a recovery phase after a recession. However, the influence of the institution was steadily broadening over this period, which brought new challenges.

The new pavilions brought the sanatorium’s total space to 109 beds. Despite this increased capacity, only 161 patients received treatment during the year. This is likely due to the fact that the new units were not opened until near the end of the year.⁴⁵ Williams acknowledged that the physical impact of Catawba had been very small as the number of patients treated at the sanatorium (161) was only 1.5 percent of all estimated cases in Virginia during 1910 (10,545).⁴⁶ By 1916, the total capacity of the institution only reached about 168.⁴⁷ The physical space never allowed all the consumptives who wanted treatment to receive it, and the waiting list remained long in the period before 1917, when the state would open its second sanatorium. In addition to Catawba’s space problem, the sanatorium faced a shortage of doctors and nurses willing to marshal patients to recovery.

Resident Physicians and Staff

The initial man chosen by Ennion G. Williams to command the post of resident physician was Dr. Robert Williams (no blood relation to Ennion Williams). He was considered a good choice because of his “wide experience and special training for this line of work.”⁴⁸ Robert Williams traveled the country to study procedures and methods of sanatoria construction. However, he resigned before the institution opened its doors, citing as his reason insufficient state funds for a sanatorium on the scale he wished.⁴⁹ Williams’s short time as the medical director at Catawba indicates that the sanatorium was not reaching the high standards of treatment expected in other parts

of the country. His travels revealed that sanatoriums in Colorado and east coast states such as New York and New Jersey provided more than 600 total beds for the treatment of tuberculosis by the time Virginia was moving toward opening those first 35 beds at Catawba.⁵⁰ Larger expenditures were needed in Virginia, and those were not forthcoming until the late 1910s, once Catawba's "good results" had been adequately confirmed.

Robert Williams's resignation became a major issue during the attacks by legislator Noel because the State Board of Health had given him \$2,262.76 despite his failure to deliver any services to the patients at Catawba. Williams had received approximately a year's compensation while only in the board's employ for about two months.⁵¹ Although it was explained that this charge was compensation for Williams's travels, the incident reveals more of the fiscal conservatism shown toward the resident physician.

Robert Williams's short tenure began a string of short residencies. Next came Dr. Truman A. Parker, then Dr. W. D. Tewkesbury from 1909 to 1910, followed by Dr. W. E. Jennings in 1911. Finally came Dr. John J. Lloyd, serving from 1911 to 1917.⁵² Until Lloyd, none of the resident physicians had stayed long enough to have a measurable impact on the institution. Lloyd was particularly involved in lobbying the state for the creation of a separate institution for Virginia's African Americans, oversaw the installation of an x-ray machine at Catawba, and oversaw most of the building improvements.

Another crucial staffing problem was the difficulty in retaining trained tuberculosis nurses. As early as 1910, the annual report mentions this issue, blaming "the nature of the disease" for the reluctance of nurses to work there as well as the "isolated location ... which offers few amusements during the hours off duty."⁵³ This was not an uncommon problem during this era, as citizens began to realize the contagious nature of the disease. Many preferred not to expose themselves to its danger, and apathy still led many not to take the fight against the disease seriously. Catawba was able to solve the problem of nursing staff on its own. Before the end of 1910, only about a year after the institution was opened, "a training school for cured and arrested patients" was established that would enable them to "keep the nursing corps full by employing chiefly [their] own [graduates of this school]."⁵⁴

Although the school could not meet all of the needs of the institution, it could nearly do so by 1913. The need "to employ general graduate nurses" had become increasingly rare.⁵⁵ The dedication of the former patients to the current ones was a general feature of the fight against tuberculosis. Long experience showed that most of the doctors who made a life of studying

the disease were suffering from it themselves, as in the case of Trudeau, the inventor of the sanatorium system. Ex-patients also supplied the greatest number of nurses trained in tuberculosis prevention methods.

The disadvantage to this practice was that the former patients would occasionally relapse. Due to the frequent recurrence of symptoms, nurses would often become bedridden and unable to work. Nevertheless, their dedication to Catawba and the betterment of the patients there did not waver. In 1915, the nurses had formed an alumni association to allow them to better provide for the needs of patients and nurses who reverted to being patients.⁵⁶ This dedication of patients resulted from the personal impact the disease had had and from the extensive patient culture that had developed.

Patient Demographics and the Culture at Catawba

During 1909, the first full year of Catawba's operation, it cared for 52 patients. The oldest patient was 50 years old and the youngest only 17, with the average patient age 31.⁵⁷ It was not unusual for the 20 to 50 age demographic to be the most represented at institutions like Catawba. In 1914, five years after Catawba's establishment, 1,666 of 3,591 deaths from consumption "were of persons between the ages of 20 and 39—the young fathers of dependent children, the mothers of infants."⁵⁸ This age group was especially at risk of contracting the disease because people out in the working world had a greater chance of coming into contact with infected consumptives. This often led to situations in which breadwinners were forced to spend their time trying to regain their health. Often such situations ended in tragedy. The death of a family's wage earner left it without a steady income, and life insurance benefits were often withheld when the cause of death was consumption.

In the general pattern of the disease, the male to female ratio was almost even at 28:24.⁵⁹ Although men had historically more options for treatment, the sanatorium system did not favor one sex over the other. Men had a hard time staying for an extended period of treatment because they wanted to go back to their occupations and to produce income. This was an added concern because treatment at the sanatorium cost \$5 a week, or about a third of the average monthly household income at the time.⁶⁰ This concern did not affect women as much because they were still largely employed in the domestic sphere; however, the separation from home life was harder on them in many ways than it was for the men. The diseased men to women ratio stayed more or less constant from 1909 to 1917, as befit the character of the disease.

Occupations held by patients were widespread, middle-class positions. Of 425 patients in 1914, some 75 were engaged in some form of domestic work. Another 13 were nurses, two were physicians, 38 were clerks, and 14 had no occupation. Those who were housewives or unemployed young adults usually came from higher-class families that could afford treatment. More important than the exact demographics of those admitted to the sanatorium were those cases not allowed in. African Americans comprised the largest group of those excluded from entry and are perhaps the most important to note because they were kept out as a matter of race, whereas the poor were kept out by a factor of circumstance. African Americans were dying of tuberculosis at a rate two or three times higher than that of whites.⁶¹ However, the state did not provide a place where they could go for treatment for several more years. As Williams stated: “[I]ndeed, the only [N]egroes who may expect treatment ... are the insane and the criminal.”⁶² Virginia was not alone; no state-run sanatoriums for African Americans existed in any part of the former Confederacy before 1917. Virginia was the first state to recognize that treating its African-American population would also benefit its white citizens. Commissioner Williams and Dr. Lloyd were two players in this debate who used their knowledge and involvement at Catawba to direct the state toward founding another institution, this one for African Americans.

Their motives were not driven by a belief in the inherent dignity of their “colored” neighbors, but rather by self-interest. Williams believed that “our [N]egroes are citizens of a more or less dependent class” and that white people were responsible for taking care of them.⁶³ Additionally, he argued that as “a servant class,” African Americans “frequently spread consumption among those whom they serve.”⁶⁴ Lloyd agreed with that viewpoint. After complaining about the number of Negroes who had applied to Catawba but were refused admittance because of their race, Lloyd stated: “[T]he [N]egro as a source of infection can hardly be overestimated,” and he demanded that some kind of provision be made because “as a human being, he deserves treatment.”⁶⁵ Both Lloyd and Williams continued these pleas for a separate sanatorium for African Americans until the legislature finally approved an appropriation for the purchase of land in Burkesville, Virginia. These two men surely were not the only ones fighting for this outcome; local groups of African Americans had been raising money for an institution for quite some time before the state issued funds to construct the Piedmont Sanatorium. Williams, in his 1916 report to the governor, wrote: “[S]urely a State can write no better history than that of constructive philanthropy.”⁶⁶

Although the color line at Catawba was firmly established, there were lots of places where color lines crossed. For example, Stephenson, at the end of his report, described “Doctor” Charles Twine as a “real old darky.”⁶⁷ Although African Americans were not allowed to receive treatment at Catawba, any account of the institution would have been incomplete without a mention of Twine, Stephenson suggested.⁶⁸ However, the author did not treat him with much respect. The short amount of space used to describe him strongly suggested Twine’s lack of education and contained numerous racial assumptions. Stephenson emphasized that Twine’s guess of his own age was based on “ca’culations,” ridiculing the man’s lack of knowledge about his own life that would have been common among most people in the lower classes, regardless of race.⁶⁹ Twine was also singled out from others of his race as “sober, industrious, and hard-working,” signaling the prejudices of the time against the African-American community. He worked at the sanatorium from its opening until shortly before his death in 1943, but when he died, his death certificate revealed that he had been cared for by Dr. J. B. Nichols, the resident physician after 1921.⁷⁰ The physicians at Catawba would often care for the African Americans who lived and worked at the sanatorium, although they were not admitting tuberculous members of the same race.

Meanwhile, white patients at Catawba were unable to find true and lasting relief for their symptoms. However, in the midst of their on-going recoveries, and with an ever-changing guard stopping through for treatment, the roots of a patient culture took hold. Likely, the strong sense of community was aided by creation of the Catawba Alumni Association, without which life at the sanatorium would have been rather different. The imposition of a six-month-stay rule in 1910 and then a four-month rule afterward made it difficult for individual groups of patients to know each other based on their experiences at Catawba.⁷¹ However, the on-going contact with the community and the development of places where patients could relax and spend free time helped to create a strong sense of loyalty between the patients and the establishment.

As early as 1910, patients had “organized a Sunday school, [were] collecting a library, and . . . devised amusements by the aid of which they pass most agreeably the time of their treatment.”⁷² In 1914, funds were raised to “erect a chapel for the patients.” In the same year, Mr. C. E. Brauer, one of the first patients of the sanatorium, helped the Catawba Alumni Association get “gifts of books, clothing, games, etc.” to patients. Lloyd noted in the report from that year that “new patients are welcomed, and made to feel at home, and a better spirit of fellowship exists among the patient body”

because of the work of the organization.⁷³ Around 1916, the Catawba Alumni Association began publishing *Sunbeams*, a magazine that drew attention to the plight of those suffering from tuberculosis and provided patients with a creative outlet for their frustrations.⁷⁴ The ingenuity of the patients seemed to parallel the old idea that consumption could release a wave of inspiration. Like many other romantic notions regarding tuberculosis, the myth of the consumptive genius took a new form in the growing rigidity of the sanatorium system.

Treatments Used at Catawba

Until the discovery of the anti-biotic streptomycin, treatment at Catawba mostly relied on rest and a good diet. It is hard to determine how effective these treatments were, but it is likely that they hardly had any effect on the course of the disease and that most declared “cures” were only periods of remission. This claim is based on more recent developments with the disease. In 2008, there were 8.8 million new cases of TB, with 1.9 million deaths attributed to it.⁷⁵ Although these cases mostly occurred in regions such as India and East Africa, where poverty and the HIV epidemic contribute to the spread of tuberculosis, we still face this fact: tuberculosis has never been successfully cured. With this fact in mind, it may seem pointless to examine the treatments used at Catawba; however, value can be gained in examining problems that health officials faced. It is also important to try to understand why Catawba medical personnel were convinced that they had solved the problem.

As Katherine Ott has noted, one of the main problems in the tuberculosis narrative was a nationwide lack of reporting protocol.⁷⁶ Many of the ill never saw a doctor, and many doctors did not participate in the state’s efforts to track tuberculosis. Adding greatly to this problem was the difficulty in diagnosing the disease, especially in its early stages. Catawba was founded with the goal of treating only incipient cases of the disease, but fewer than 20 percent of the patients admitted fit this diagnosis.⁷⁷ One of the major problems was that the treatment methods were designed to act upon early cases only. The general treatment combined long periods of rest and exposure to fresh air with training on how to dispose of sputum sanitarily, the protocol in a majority of cases at Catawba.⁷⁸ However, when patients with advanced cases were made to sit in the cold as part of their treatment, they often suffered negative effects. In fact, the State Board of Health recognized the deficiency in their methods when a hard winter forced a realization that an enclosed hospital nearer to the railroad would have worked better for the advanced cases sent to them.⁷⁹

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:15 - Rising Bell.
8:00 to 8:30 - Breakfast
9:00 to 11:00 - Rest in bed or exercise
(walking).
11:00 to 12:00 - Rest in bed.
12:00 - Rising Bell.
1:00 to 1:30 - Dinner
1:45 to 4:00 - Quiet hour, Rest in bed,
No talking.
4:00 to 5:30 - Rest in bed or exercise
as ordered.
5:30 - Rising Bell
6:00 - Supper
9:00 - All patients on pavillions.
9:30 - All lights out.

Figure 2. Tuberculosis patients followed a strict regimen at the hospital, as evidenced by this schedule from 1930. (Virginia Board of Health, "Rules and Regulations for Patients" in James E. Young, "A Story of Catawba Hospital," draft, 1984)

The sanitation training that Catawba patients went through was the most important thing that happened at the institution. Since a large percentage of patients left after only a short course of treatment, it was important to educate those who went home on how to properly protect their neighbors from infection.⁸⁰ Williams claimed that Catawba's real impact would take place at home, where former patients would return "an apostle of the cure, able to explain the treatment and drilled in methods of prevention."⁸¹ However, the number of people who went through the system at Catawba was still only a small percentage of Virginia's citizens. Furthermore, since the poor and African Americans infected with the disease had not been educated, the number of new cases did not decrease nearly as much as predicted. Williams pointed out that logic demanded that "when we disposed of that [infected] sputum in a sanitary manner we should have been able to check the disease ... but it has been circumscribed by conditions which render its application extremely difficult."⁸²

Those conditions were ignorance about the disease on the part of both physicians and the population in general. The high percentage of patients sent to the sanatorium in an advanced stage of the disease resulted from a lack of training on how to diagnose tuberculosis. Catching the disease in the early stage was "often a matter of extreme difficulty and can only be done by men carefully trained and constantly in practice."⁸³

Furthermore, there was a sense of frustration on the part of Commissioner Williams because “in spite of the fact that the sanatorium is known to be for incipient cases, physicians send patients to the sanatorium who are in advanced stages of the disease, yet are certified in the application to be incipient.”⁸⁴ As Williams saw it, the failure of physicians to correctly diagnose the stage of their patients’ disease when referring them to Catawba was one of the main reasons that the institution did not have a higher rate of cures. The shortage of trained physicians was only part of the problem. Just as important was the absence of a prevalent impetus for treatment. Since symptoms were not well known by the common citizen, the first signs of the disease were often missed. As those at Catawba saw it, “few true incipients wanted treatment” because they were “not educated as to the necessity.”⁸⁵ This problem was widespread across all groups; however, the State Board of Health targeted only the middle and upper classes in its initial attempts to educate the public. The pamphlets it issued were text heavy, and people had to write in to get them, which eliminated the chance they had to make an impact on the poor and African Americans. According to a 1910 statistical abstract, African Americans were twice as likely to be illiterate as whites, and, therefore, efforts to educate their community through written bulletins were unsuccessful.⁸⁶ In this way, the poor and African-American groups were even cut off from receiving the training in sanitation that would have prevented them from spreading the disease to their families.

Rest, clean air, good food, and sanitation training were not the only weapons Catawba physicians had at their disposal. As early as 1910, tuberculin was used in select cases, and the drug became relied on more heavily during the residency of John J. Lloyd. However, the number of patients who were given the drug was still very small. By 1914, a total of 171 discharged patients had received tuberculin, compared to 734 discharged patients who went through general treatment.⁸⁷ Of those treated with tuberculin, 38 percent were able to return to work versus 29 percent of patients treated without tuberculin.⁸⁸ However, the total number of patients treated with tuberculin was very small.

The sanatorium also tried other radical procedures. In 1913, the physician’s report noted that they had tried “autogenous vaccines in certain cases,” but the results were not recorded.⁸⁹ Starting in 1913, the Catawba staff tried the pneumothorax procedure. This procedure, which continued to be used until the sanatorium closed, involved pumping air into the chest cavity to compress the lung and allow the organ to fully rest so that it might recover. It was fairly unsuccessful. During 1913, it was used in 17 cases, with only one success in “completely compressing the lung.”⁹⁰ Whether a

patient at Catawba was recommended to go through general treatment or one of the more extreme treatments, his/her chance of recovery was about the same. A viable treatment for tuberculosis did not exist until 1944, more than 30 years after Catawba opened its doors, although many of the patients were declared cured or left after a slight recovery only to relapse later.

Casualties: Results of Treatment 1909-1917

Due to the difficulty that separation from home and work caused, neither men nor women generally stayed long. Since the sanatorium had just been opened, the longest stay of any patient was only 20 weeks, or five months, while the shortest stay was one day.⁹¹ In Catawba's early years, convincing patients to continue their treatment at the institution was a difficult task. Many times, eager to recuperate and rejoin their families and everyday activities, consumptives would overestimate the rate of their recovery and leave the facility against their doctor's advice. Katherine Ott has argued that another reason people did not remain long was the social conception of the disease. If someone stayed at the sanatorium for more than a few months, it was considered to be a chronic disease, whereas tuberculosis was not commonly accepted as a chronic disease.⁹² As Catawba entered the 1920s, the four-month rule was abolished as the benefits of long-term treatment for which Lloyd lobbied so extensively became the norm, changing the stigma attached to tuberculosis. It became common for patients to check in for six months. Others stayed for years, hoping to acquire some relief from the acclaimed Catawba physicians.

The numbers themselves tell a different story. Considering the short frame of treatment time, the number of patients recovering is surprising. Dr. Tewksbury, the first permanent head physician, pointed out that not only were Catawba's results positive, they were "obtained in spite of two unfavorable factors," the first being the brevity of treatment received and the second, "the large percentage of advanced cases treated."⁹³

Catawba, although intended and designed entirely for the treatment of incipient, or stage one, cases of tuberculosis, admitted only 12 patients who matched this description in 1909.⁹⁴ A majority of the cases (26) were termed "moderately advanced," or "stage two," and an additional 12 were found to be in a state of "far advanced" consumption.⁹⁵ Admitting the right kind of cases was an ongoing problem because physicians around the country were not equipped to examine their patients' sputum for signs of the bacilli. Additionally, members of the medical profession still resisted the theory of bacteriology. As a result, even younger doctors sometimes began practicing without any training on how to use microscopes, which often

led to misdiagnoses. Even if the bacilli were found in the sputum, some considered the presence or lack thereof to be merely one factor in diagnosis and not by any means the most important.

In light of these complications, it is indeed surprising that the results of the first few months of Catawba's operation were so successful. Of 50 patients who were found to have tuberculosis and had been at Catawba a sufficient time for the physicians to collect data on them, one was apparently cured, six had been arrested, and 40 had improved, while only three were unimproved and none had died.⁹⁶ These groups, and the symptoms that defined the limits of them, were undefined in the report, leaving room for doubt about what the categories described. Weight gain, considered an indication of recovery, was an almost universal phenomenon among the first group of patients at Catawba. Average weight gain for 49 was 9.7 pounds, and only one patient lost weight, a comparatively small 2 pounds.⁹⁷ Therefore, much of the categorization of the patients was clearly subjective and irregular. In fact, the meanings of the categories were not expressly defined until 1912.

With the arrival of John J. Lloyd, these distinctions were used to help interpret the patient information included in annual reports to the governor. Constitutional symptoms were given precedence in determining the patient's condition. This type of symptom usually was defined during this period as "surface indications of a greater and more serious bodily derangement," and Dr. Lloyd put further emphasis on those constitutional symptoms that involved "gastric or intestinal disturbances or rapid loss of weight,"⁹⁸ This fits the prevalence of notes about patients' weight loss and gain. This fact becomes especially important when considering the classifications that Lloyd defined in the 1912 report. Closer examination of those in the largest group—the "improved" class—reveals a possible lack of any one objective factor that determined whether any improvement had been made.

Two case studies of patients treated at Catawba in the first year show that the distinctions may have been arbitrary or based on the physician's opinion of the patient's constitutional improvements. The first patient, a woman of 35, was admitted in the third, far advanced stage of tuberculosis. Her temperature was 101 degrees Fahrenheit and her sputum tested positive. After eight weeks of "general" treatment, her temperature remained at 101 degrees and her sputum was still positive. Despite a two-pound weight gain, she was classified as "unimproved."⁹⁹ Comparatively, a male patient of 40 was admitted with the same symptoms. After six weeks of the same general treatment, he gained four pounds and his temperature dropped to 100, but his sputum was still positive. This man's case was labeled "improved."¹⁰⁰

Since the descriptors of these two patients was the only information recorded in the report about their physical status, the missing information concerning why these two patients with such similar situations were granted different distinctions must have been a qualitative observation, which would certainly explain the difference. However, without knowing what type of additional symptom could make a patient “unimproved” as opposed to “improved,” the actual state of these patients is called into question. Since both of them still tested positive for the bacilli, the disease likely was still present in both cases.

The majority of patients each year were listed in the “improved” category, a case in which “constitutional symptoms [were] lessened or entirely absent” and “physical signs [were] improved or unchanged” although “cough and expectoration with bacilli [were] usually present.”¹⁰¹ As can be seen here, the physical signs of damage to the lungs and the presence of bacilli were considered secondary to the side effects of the disease when determining the progression or recession of a patient’s condition. This is problematic when considering that the sanatorium based its reputation on the large number of patients who left in an improved state. This designation did not necessarily mean that they were going back to their communities healthy or incapable of spreading the disease.

Only one category, that of apparently being cured, was a designation that meant the patient was on the way to recovery. Supposedly, this group was free of “all constitutional symptoms” and had “expectoration with bacilli absent.”¹⁰² However, in a 1916 table of patients who had been discharged for six months or longer, no space was left for this designation, only for that of “apparently arrested,” which had the key difference that “expectoration and bacilli may or may not be present.”¹⁰³ This group contained only 27 patients, or 2.4 percent of the total reported.¹⁰⁴ Hindsight indicates that very few patients benefitted from the treatments at Catawba, but contemporaries likely would have viewed constitutional fitness as the most important feature of recovery.

Conclusion

*The drop in mortality in Virginia from 200 per 100,000 in 1900 to 3 per 100,000 in 1970 is ... one of the spectacular success stories in medical history, of which Catawba Sanatorium was an integral part [emphasis added].*¹⁰⁵

In the five-year span before Catawba opened, the death rate from tuberculosis was already trending downward. It fell from 168.2 per 100,000 in 1905 and likely would have continued dropping without the state sanatorium.¹⁰⁶ An increase in sanitation and a higher standard of living for the middle class were likely more influential factors in the decline of tuberculosis during those years. As noted above, the drop in mortality was one of the most important developments of the early twentieth century. More important than the drop itself were the various changes in medical ideology. The standardization of medical diagnosis was based on scientific tests that took one's internal state into consideration rather than merely relying on external symptoms. This article presents the viewpoint that the power of the sanatoria lay in isolating the infected from their families and communities.¹⁰⁷ Further study, however, reveals that there was likely little truth to this claim, especially in Virginia. Taking into account the limits on patients' stays and the unwillingness of many patients to remain in the sanatorium for extended periods, only a small chance exists that tuberculosis would have been removed from their communities long enough to stop the spread of contagion.

However, the change in environment could have provided a positive benefit in the sense that patients were removed from polluted city air, given good food, and cared for by doctors and nurses. Another factor that contradicts Catawba's overall effect on the level of new cases in the state is the limited scope of the institution. Not only was a small number of beds available at Catawba for people to take the cure, but those beds were restricted to whites willing to pay \$20 a month. If the consumptive were African American, then the only chance of being treated before 1917 was if he or she were insane or criminal. It was the voice of Williams and the voice of Lloyd that strongly influenced the building of the Piedmont Sanatorium for African Americans. These two men were respected members of the white community. Thus, they carried weight with the General Assembly, influencing it to allocate funds in 1916 to help not just the white upper classes but also African Americans and the poor. In all, this question of race and class was addressed before 1917, and the ideology laid out in *Plessy v. Ferguson* was put into practice in the treatment of tuberculosis. The next 50 years of treating the disease would be strongly influenced by the decisions made by those involved in making Catawba a success, if indeed it can be given that label.

Modern historians now know that many of the patients who returned to their normal jobs and families relapsed or died. In a 1914 report of 734

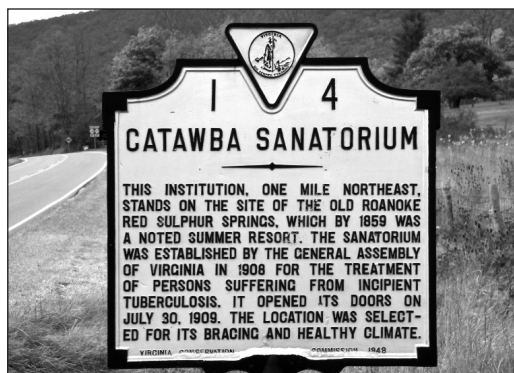


Figure 3. Today, a state historical marker commemorates the institution at Catawba. (Virginia Historical Markers, *MarkerHistory.com*, 2010)

patients who had been discharged for six months, only “213 or 29 percent” were “at work,” 12 percent were lost, 7 percent had failed, and a large percentage (42 percent) were moved from their prior distinction to one of being “improved,” while 39 percent of those who left the sanatorium died.¹⁰⁸ It is possible that the meaning of the word “improved” was changed when describing those who had left the sanatorium’s care, although it is unclear since Lloyd did not provide an alternate definition. If the definition was congruent between cases, that would lead to the unfortunate conclusion that the sanatorium treatment did little good beyond briefly removing the consumptives from their communities and teaching sanitation methods to prevent rapid infection. In fact, the rate of death from tuberculosis only dropped from a national rate of 143.6 per 100,000 in 1909, when the sanatorium was opened, to a statewide rate of 100.2 per 100,000 in 1929. However, the drop was not uniform across all citizens of Virginia, and especially in the history of sanatoria before 1917, the results of treatment at Catawba were not a simple success. People who were sent to the sanatorium were the ones least in need of treatment, and although the reports argued that the results of the institution were encouraging, it is clear from reexamining the tables of former patients that many who left had relapses. The reports acknowledged this fact, and in the 1916 report, Lloyd called the “large death rate” of former patients “a disappointment.”¹⁰⁹ Viewing Catawba and the larger sanatoria movement as a significant factor in the decrease of tuberculosis cases disregards the work underway in education and sanitation across the state and ignores the experiences of both the African American community and the poor.

Endnote

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2. Ennion G. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (Richmond, Va.: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1916), 9.
3. Sheila Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 181.
4. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, 184, 185.
5. Katherine Ott, *Fevered Lives: Tuberculosis in American Culture since 1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 8.
6. Ott, *Fevered Lives*, 144.
7. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, 206.
8. Stephenson, *Catawba Sanatorium*, and the subject of the University of Virginia thesis by James E. Young, “A Story of the Catawba Hospital” (Charlottesville, Va., 1984).
9. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, 198–199.
10. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, 183.
11. “Tuberculosis Sanatorium,” *Highland Recorder* (Monterey, Va., January 29, 1919).
12. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1917), 148.
13. Ott, *Fevered Lives*, 8.
14. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1910), 3.
15. Ott, *Fevered Lives*, 34.
16. Ott, *Fevered Lives*, 39.
17. “Summer Houses,” *The Roanoke Times* (Roanoke, Va., July 5, 1891).
18. “Roanoke Red Sulphur Springs, Catawba, Virginia,” *The Roanoke Times*, May 25, 1891.
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20. Ott, *Fevered Lives*, 106, 108.
21. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1914), 47.
22. Ott, *Fevered Lives*, 50–51.
23. Scott Derks, *The Value of a Dollar: Prices and Income in the United States 1860–2004* (Millerton, N.Y.: Grey House Publishing, 2004), 104.
24. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 10, and Stephenson, *Catawba Sanatorium*, 9.
25. Price of the land found in Young, “A Story of Catawba Hospital,” 25; description of buildings from Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 11–12.
26. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 66, 70.
27. “Former Clerk Gave Noel His Information,” *The Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, Va., March 12, 1910).
28. “Former Clerk,” *The Times-Dispatch*.
29. “Former Clerk,” *The Times-Dispatch*.
30. “Former Clerk,” *The Times-Dispatch*.
31. “Former Clerk,” *The Times-Dispatch*.
32. “Former Clerk,” *The Times-Dispatch*.
33. “Former Clerk,” *The Times-Dispatch*.
34. Stephenson, *Catawba Sanatorium*, 9.
35. Stephenson, *Catawba Sanatorium*, 9.
36. Stephenson, *Catawba Sanatorium*, 10.
37. Stephenson, *Catawba Sanatorium*, 10.
38. Already in late 1910, Catawba was discussed as having been established “for the cure of consumption” (“Daniel’s Mantle Falls on Swanson,” *The Times-Dispatch* (August 1, 1910)).

39. "Tuberculosis Sanatorium," *Highland Recorder*.
40. "To Blot out the White Plague from Virginia," *Staunton Spectator and Vindicator* (Staunton, Va., February 25, 1910).
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42. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1910), 11, 12.
43. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1910), 12.
44. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1910), 12.
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46. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1910), 21, 103.
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61. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1915), 20.
62. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1912), 18.
63. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1912), 18.
64. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1912), 18.
65. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1913), 120.
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78. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1913), 119.
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82. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1912), 47.
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89. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1913), 119.
90. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1913), 119.
91. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 88.
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93. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 85.
94. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 85.
95. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 85.
96. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 85.
97. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1909), 85.
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100. All information about male patient from Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1910), 88.
101. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1910), 107.
102. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1912), 107.
103. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1912), 107.
104. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1916), 149-150.
105. Chris Gladden, "The Catawba Cure," *The Roanoke Times* (March 29, 1992).
106. U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract* (1910), 76.
107. Gladden, "The Catawba Cure."
108. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1914), 241.
109. Williams et al., *Annual Report of the Board of Health* (1914), 152.

Brief Note

Possible Scottish Baptism Records of James Patton's Children

Ryan S. Mays

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In March 2015, Malcolm Sandilands of Alexandria, Virginia, who grew up in southwestern Scotland, reported his discovery of two baptism records for the children of “James Paton” from “the parish of Terregles, which is in Kirkcudbrightshire [County of Kirkcudbright] but nearly adjoins the town of Dumfries [in southern Scotland].”¹ Mr. Sandilands kindly sent copies of the original records from the registry books, which he obtained from the website *ScotlandsPeople* and which provide the focus of this brief note. The transcripts of these records follow:²

(1) “Terreglis ... colledge Jan 1732 a child was baptized to James paton.”

(2) “James paton had a child baptized his [the child's] name is John on the 2d day of novbr [November] 1734.”

With regard to the first record, Mr. Sandilands made the following observation: “The first is for the baptism in January 1732 of the unnamed child of James Paton at the ‘colledge,’ presumably a reference to the medieval collegiate church in Lincluden, now in ruins, standing on the suburbs of Dumfries but within the parish bounds of Terregles.”

In April 2015, Mr. Sandilands was able to send a copy of a third baptism record for a child of “James Patoun sailor” living in Dumfries, an abstract of which had appeared on the website *Ancestry.com*; this record is transcribed as follows³:

(3) “Baptisms 1730 ... July ... 19th B: [Baptized] Mary L:D [Lawful Daughter] to James Patoun sailor.”

Mr. Sandilands further noted that he found only “two other James Paton/Patouns in the Dumfries registry: a shoemaker who had a son, George,

after Col. James [Patton's] settlement in Virginia [circa 1741], and another James who is noted as deceased in his final child's baptism in 1712."⁴

These three baptisms are possibly those of Capt. James Patton's children. It is well-documented in the Virginia records that Patton and his wife, whose name may have been Mary,⁵ had two children: daughters named Mary and Margret.⁶ If these records do pertain to the right James Patton, Mary was probably born in 1730 in the port town of Dumfries. Presumably Margret was the un-named child who was likely born in late 1731 or by January 1732 and baptized just outside Dumfries in the parish of Terregles. It appears there was also a son named John born in 1734 and baptized in Terregles, but he probably died very young.

Patton's daughter Mary married William Thompson circa 1748–1750 in Augusta County, Virginia. She seems to have died circa 1772–1776 at Springfield plantation in what is now Pulaski County, Virginia.⁷ Margret Patton married Col. John Buchanan in June 1749 in Augusta County, Virginia.⁸ Col. Buchanan died in 1769, and Margret married William Anderson in 1774.⁹ The author has found evidence that Margret died in 1801 in Kentucky.¹⁰ Therefore, Mary Patton was approximately 19 when she married William Thompson, and she died in her early 40s. Margret Patton was about 17 when she married Col. Buchanan, and she was about 43 when she married William Anderson. She lived to be approximately 70 years old.

These baptism records, with the 1729 record of James Patton's ship *William* of Dumfries wrecking in Cornwall (described earlier in this volume; see article beginning on page 1),¹¹ provide new credible evidence that James Patton and his family were living in or near Dumfries, Scotland, at least intermittently by 1729. They also give us perhaps the best evidence to date of when and where Mary and Margret Patton were born.

Acknowledgment

I thank Mary B. Kegley for her comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this manuscript.

Endnotes

1. Communication from Malcolm Sandilands, e-mail, 22 March 2015.
2. Old Parish Register Births 880/00 0010 0010 Terregles, accessed 13 and 22 March 2015 by Malcolm Sandilands in *scotlandspeople.gov.uk*.
3. This record was located by the author in *Ancestry.com* on 23 March 2015 and confirmed by Malcolm Sandilands on 10 April 2015 in *scotlandspeople.gov.uk*: Old Parish Register Births 821/00 0020 0065 Dumfries.
4. Communication from Sandilands, e-mail, 10 April 2015.

5. Patton's wife is said to have been Mary Osborne of Whitehaven, England. See Patricia G. Johnson, *James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists* (Pulaski, Va.: Edmonds Printing, 2nd edition, 1983, first printed 1973), 11, 21, 26. However, her name and origin remain undetermined.
6. Johnson, *James Patton*; David V. Agricola, *Descendants of Henry Patton Sr. of Augusta County, Virginia* (formerly titled *Descendants of James and Florence [Graham] Patton of Floyd Co., Ky.*): *A Patton Compendium*, Series [31] (Lakewood, Ohio: David V. Agricola, 2003), 9–12. Margret's name is also spelled Margaret in contemporary documents and in the historical literature. The author has seen no documents written or signed by Margret herself, but her husband, Col. John Buchanan, spelled her name "Margret" on several legal documents, so that is the spelling the author has chosen to use. For example: Original indenture (deed) of 22 October 1768 between John and Margret Buchanan and William and Mary Thompson of the one part and Thomas Stevenson of the other part for 118 acres on the south side of James River in Augusta County, Indentures, File 283, Augusta County Courthouse, Staunton, Va.
7. Patricia G. Johnson, *Springfield Saga: The Thompsons of Fort Thompson on New River, Pulaski County, Virginia* (Blacksburg, Va.: Self Published, 1985), 8–9, 34, 46.
8. Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County 1745–1800* 2 (Rosslyn, Va.: Commonwealth Printing Co., 1912), 275. This record was originally recorded in a fee book that was stolen from Augusta County Courthouse in the 1990s (personal communication to the author by several deputy clerks at Augusta County Courthouse, Staunton, Va.).
9. Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement* 2, 278.
10. Montgomery County Order Book 15, 42–43, Montgomery County Courthouse, Christiansburg, Va.; Montgomery County Chancery case *Andrew Boyd and wife Mary vs. Thomas Jackson*, Augusta County Chancery Index No. 1831-015, Original Case No. 437, Augusta County Courthouse, Staunton, Va.; and Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., online at Chancery Records Index, www.virginiamemory.com/collections/chancery/. Margret's life will be discussed more fully in the author's forthcoming biography of Col. John Buchanan.
11. Ryan S. Mays, "New Maritime Records of James Patton," *The Smithfield Review* 21 (2017), 1–17.

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