The Smithfield Review

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

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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 Col. 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. Articles accepted for publication in the journal have focused—and continue to principally focus—on important people and events; archaeological

discoveries; and analyses of the social, political, economic, and architectural history of the region. Whenever possible and appropriate, these articles have incorporated letters, diaries, business papers and reports, speeches, and other primary documents that convey a direct sense of the past to the reader.

Beginning this year, the Smithfield-Preston Foundation and the Department of History at Virginia Tech have joined together to co-publish *The Smithfield Review* in cooperation with University Libraries at Virginia Tech. The library began putting the journal online in 2017 with volume 21, which can be accessed at *scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/smithfieldreview/*.

Additional information about Historic Smithfield© and its programs can be found at its new website, *historicsmithfield.org*. Inquiries about *The Smithfield Review* should be directed to Editor Clara B. Cox at *history@vt.edu*.

William G. Foster
Chairman of the Board
Smithfield-Preston Foundation

A Message from the Editor

Announcements

A number of changes relating to *The Smithfield Review* (*TSR*) were announced last year, and that trend continues with volume 22. *TSR* is pleased to announce that the Virginia Tech Department of History, under Chair Mark Barrow, has joined the Smithfield-Preston Foundation as co-publisher of the journal, beginning with this issue. The department has supported *The Smithfield Review* for more than two decades through funding from the Frank L. Curtis Fund and has provided the journal with a history advisor throughout the years.

The foundation and the history department are publishing *TSR* in cooperation with Virginia Tech's University Libraries, whose employees have begun putting the journal online at *scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/smithfieldreview/*. Volume 21 was the first to go global via cyberspace, and work is under way to add previous volumes, with the exception of work by those authors who do not want their articles included. This online presence continues with volume 22 and those that follow.

Changes have also come to the *TSR* Editorial Board. An exceptional historical researcher, Aaron D. Purcell, director of Special Collections in Tech's University Libraries, has joined the group, effective with volume 23, while David McKissack departs the board with publication of this volume. Additionally, Sharon Watkins has returned to the board after serving one year as co-editor during *TSR*'s major transition period.

Contents of Volume 22

For the first time and beginning with this issue of *TSR*, articles include brief biographical notes about each author. Other changes are under consideration for later volumes.

The content of the four major articles in volume 22 centers upon two overriding themes: World War I and the achievements of father and son Harvey and Alexander Black.

This year is the one-hundredth anniversary of the end of World War I. To mark this milestone, two authors look at different aspects of that war and the effects it generated. In the first article, "Southwest Virginians and the 'War to End Wars,'" author David McKissack commemorates the experiences of Southwest Virginians in the conflict, reports on views of the "Great War" held by regional citizens, and examines how military service affected Southwest Virginians. He also provides a list of Southwest Virginia soldiers who died in the conflict.

The second article, "'Living in a New World': World War One and the Decline of Military Tradition at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1916−1923" by Daniel C.

Newcomb, relates how the U.S. Army's use of the Blacksburg college undermined the school's military tradition, which had dated to the school's beginning as a land-grant institution in 1872. Newcomb looks at the establishment of a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) unit and the Students Army Training Corps (SATC) on campus and how they affected VPI. The article explores the conflicts between military and academic education and training and between military leaders and college administrators.

Next is "Sketch of the Life of Dr. Harvey Black," written in longhand by John S. Apperson and transcribed by Clara B. Cox. It begins the focus on the Black family and their achievements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dr. Apperson, who married Harvey Black's daughter, worked with Dr. Black during the Civil War and on founding the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum. The biography is a tribute to the Blacksburg physician and his accomplishments in education, medicine, and even politics.

The final article, "Alexander Black and His World, 1857–1935, Part II: Alexander Black and the Bank of Blacksburg, 1877–1935," completes the examination of Alex Black's life by author Sharon B. Watkins. In this treatise, she focuses primarily on how Black founded the Bank of Blacksburg, his leadership as president of the bank, and its operations and advancements during its years under Black's guidance. She also covers the second part of Black's life, including an overview of his early business ventures, which included a general store, and his marriage and family life.

For the Brief Notes and Documents section, which follows the fourth article, "A Letter from Janie Preston Boulware Lamb" provides information on Lamb's ideas for Smithfield and touches on some of her relatives.

The editor thanks these authors and extends appreciation to Barbara Corbett, graphic designer; the anonymous reviewers who provided feedback on the articles; Laura Wedin, a *TSR* author, for behind-the-scenes assistance and information; Sharon Watkins, board member, for editorial assistance; and Dan Thorp, board member and history advisor, for influencing authors to submit articles, both for this volume and the next.

Southwest Virginians and the "War to End Wars"

David McKissack

When I was a boy, I occasionally heard my grandfather humming the chorus of a tune I later learned was "Over There," one of the best-known songs of World War I:

> Over there, over there
> Send the word, send the word over there.
> That the Yanks are coming
> The Yanks are coming
> The drums rum-tumming
> Everywhere.[1]

When the United States decided to enter World War 1, my grandfather and over two million Americans, including thousands of Virginians, went "Over There" and provided the fresh manpower to turn the tide of what some, including President Woodrow Wilson, idealistically called "the war to end wars."[2] This year marks one hundred years since the American "Doughboys"[3] helped bring about the German surrender and the Armistice of November 11, 1918, which we now celebrate as Veterans Day.[4] It is fitting that we remember the service of the men and women who participated in "the Great War" in this, the centennial of its ending.

It is easy to overlook things that should remind us of their war and their sacrifices. How many people passing the unusual-looking Harvey-Howe-Carper American Legion Post 30 on Main Street in Radford, Virginia, know it was named for men killed in action in World War I? Or that the American Legion is a fraternal and service organization begun by World War I veterans in 1919?[5] How many Virginia Tech Hokies know the campus War Memorial Gymnasium was originally called the World War I Memorial Gymnasium and resulted from "[an] alumni campaign to finance construction of a gymnasium to memorialize Techmen who had died in World War I?"[6]

American troops suffered 116,516 deaths (53,000 combat deaths) and 204,002 wounded in World War 1, the third highest death count of all American wars.[7] It is estimated that over one hundred thousand Virginians

Harvey-Howe-Carper American Legion Post, Radford, Virginia
(Photo by William E. Cox)

served and more than four thousand of these died from disease, combat, and training accidents.[8] It is difficult to ascertain what percentage of Virginia's total contribution in manpower and casualties can be counted as coming from Southwest Virginia, but a conservative estimate would place the number at around 10 percent (see Appendix for list of Southwest Virginia casualties).[9]

This article does not examine the Great War's campaigns, military strategy, or the combat performance of individual military units in which Southwest Virginians served. Nor does it address the wisdom of America joining the war. Instead, the discussion that follows attempts to commemorate the World War 1 experiences of the individuals and communities of Southwest Virginia[10] and, where appropriate, provide additional facts about the war in order to place those experiences in context.[11] In addition, the article attempts to further *The Smithfield Review*'s goal of "helping to preserve the often-neglected history of the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and adjacent states." Thus, it first examines how Southwest Virginians viewed World War 1 before the United States entered it and what made American leaders finally declare war on Germany. Secondly, it looks briefly at which Southwest Virginians served and the military units in which most of them went to war. Then it follows the men and women of Southwest Virginia to France and sketches what they faced on the battlefield and behind the lines of the Great War's Western Front. And finally, it looks at how those Southwest Virginians who served viewed their experiences once they returned home from war.[12]

The Beginning

When World War I erupted in Europe in August 1914, the vast majority of Americans, including Virginians, saw it solely as a European dispute. In fact, President Woodrow Wilson was reelected in 1916 partly because of his slogan, "He kept us out of war!"[13] Radford resident Sadie Johnson Reid recalled after the war,

> [In] Radford there was little thought given in 1914 to the possibility of our entrance into the European conflict. The papers of that period record a wide interest in matters that had nothing to do with war and its possibilities . . . . [However,] as early as 1915 flags were displayed on business houses and on private homes. There was an undercurrent of restlessness and a desire to be prepared for whatever might come.[14]

One thing that did come was Germany's decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917 after a pause of almost two years.[15] Unrestricted submarine warfare violated the previous international understanding that submarines of all nations should first stop a merchant ship—bearing civilians, not soldiers—board it, remove the passengers, and then sink it. Otherwise, there was a good chance many of the passengers would drown. The Germans insisted this approach was not feasible once the British began equipping merchant ships with hidden guns that could sink submarines. Regardless, Americans who were simply trying to reach Europe on business and vacation began dying on the torpedoed ships of Allied forces. American shipping was also forced to change travel routes to avoid certain sea zones declared off-limits by the Germans, and that resulted in increased, and sometimes unprofitable, shipping expenses.[16]

Opinions in Scott County about the war in Europe were representative of those held elsewhere in Southwest Virginia:

> The people of Scott County, who, in August, 1914, read the news items from overseas, stating that Germany had declared war against France, and had violated the neutrality of Belgium, little thought that the war thus begun would ever assume such proportions as to have any direct personal interest to them. The probability of the United States becoming involved in a war so far away seemed too remote to be considered . . . .
>
> By and by, as the war dragged on year after year and nation after nation became involved in it, as Germany's submarine policy, like a giant octopus, reached out to destroy the commerce and lives of neutral and

> enemy nations alike, the sense of justice and fair play, characteristic of Scott County people, was powerfully appealed to. . . . [T]here was a deep-seated aversion on the part of the majority of Scott County people to entering this war. However, it was not possible to behold such a struggle as that daily being presented to them in the public press without taking sides.[17]

A "Duty to Answer the Call"

Edward A. Gutièrrez, author of *Doughboys on the Great War,* examined thousands of "Individual/Military Service Records" (hereafter referred to as "questionnaires") completed by Great War veterans from states that issued them in 1919. Gutièrrez noted that the veterans' answers often showed that the heroic legacy of the Civil War influenced the prewar motivations and emotions of the young men growing up in the 1890s and 1900s.[18] A modern reader might well wonder if that "heroic legacy" would create a conflicted allegiance in Virginians, where the memories of the Civil War were still alive. The answer lay in the word "duty." The veterans repeatedly stated that it was their "duty to answer the call" and fight their country's battles, and their country was now the United States. This sense of duty was voiced throughout the Virginia veterans' questionnaires, perhaps in its strongest version by African-American Sgt. Harry E. Curry: "Any man living in a country under its Flag and is not willing to go to protect his Flag which he is living under[,] I say should be killed."

Military Units in Which Southwest Virginians Served[19]

At the start of the war, some Southwest Virginia men were serving in locally based companies of the Virginia 1st and 2nd Regiments of the state's National Guard. Many of these men had participated in Gen. John J. Pershing's "Punitive Expedition" into Mexico in 1916−1917.[20] Once war was declared in 1917, these men's companies were federalized into a new unit, the 116th Regiment of the 29th Division. While the men already knew the basics of military service, they underwent further training with the rest of the 29th's regiments at Fort McClellan, Alabama. These other regiments were also former National Guard units, and the 29th was known as the "Blue and Gray" because it contained men from both Union and Confederate states during the War between the States: Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. Its shoulder patch is similar to the yin and yang symbol but with blue and gray replacing the black and white. The 116th still exists and has seen service overseas in recent military actions. Some of its components and citizen-soldiers are headquartered in Christiansburg,

Virginia. The Virginia National Guard regiments also supplied companies of men who were reformed into the 112th Machine Gun Battalion, which served with the 116th Regiment in its campaigns in France.

Route 460, a section of which memorializes the 116th Regiment; photo taken on segment between Elliston and Salem, Virginia (Photo by William E. Cox)

Likewise, the 1st Company of the Virginia National Guard Coastal Artillery, consisting of men from Roanoke, Virginia, was mustered into federal service and reformed as the 117th Trains Headquarters and Military Police of the 42nd Division, or "Rainbow Division." The formation of the 42nd was announced on August 14, 1917. The division was formed with national guardsmen from 26 different states, from east and west, north and south of the United States, for immediate service overseas. Douglas MacArthur, who at the time was a major working in the U.S. Office of the Secretary of War, is credited with saying, "The 42nd Division stretches like a Rainbow from one end of America to the other." The nickname stuck, and MacArthur was appointed its chief of staff and promoted to colonel.[21]

Yet another Virginia National Guard unit headquartered in Roanoke, the 5th Company of Virginia Coast Artillery, became the nucleus for Battery B of the newly formed 60th Regiment of the Coastal Artillery Corps, which would see action in France in the Argonne offensive from September 17 to war's end.

Other units in which Virginians served were "national," which meant they were created by the federal government and filled with new, untrained volunteers and draftees. The 80th Division was one of these, and nearly half its men were Virginians. Like the 29th Blue and Gray Division, it contained men from former Union and Confederate states: Virginia, West Virginia, and the western mountains of Pennsylvania. Consequently, the new division chose

to call itself the "Blue Ridge" Division because that mountain range passes through all of those states.[22] Most importantly for this article's focus, the 317th Regiment of the 80th Division was composed almost entirely of men from Virginia's "mountain country."[23] During training, some of the 80th's recruits were formed into the 314th Machine Gun Battalion, which served with the 80th Division in France. Many of these men were Southwest Virginians.

One hundred years ago, the American military was segregated by race.[24] In World War I, many African Americans from Southwest Virginia—they were listed as "Colored" on official documents of the time—were formed into the 510th and 511th Engineer Service Battalions, which had white officers and noncommissioned officers. These battalions reported to the Chief Engineers in the U.S. and to the commanding officer of the Engineers, American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) in France. They did not see combat but contributed labor to war operations.

Some Virginia African-American men, however, wanted to join combat-oriented infantry units. The 92nd (Buffalo Soldiers) and 93rd (Blue Helmets)[25] were the only all-black divisions in the American army, and they contained African-American men from throughout the United States. "Buffalo Soldiers" was the name given black troops in the late 1800s by the American Indians against whom they fought; "Blue Helmet" derived from the fact that the regiments of the 93rd were integrated with French troops in France, and their French-supplied Adrian helmets were blue. The 92nd was organized in October 1917 at Camp Funston, Kansas, and formed with black soldiers from all states.[26] The 93rd included the famous 369th "Harlem Hellfighters" and the 370th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed "The Black Devils." The questionnaires show Southwest Virginians of color saw combat with the regiments of both of these divisions.

Women Who Served

While women were not allowed in combat roles during World War I, many Southwest Virginia women eagerly enlisted as army and navy nurses, as well as clerks and stenographers. In fact, once war was declared, Fairfax lawyer and political leader Robert Moore would write, "My observation is that in Virginia women are much more completely aroused than are the men."[27] One thousand and seventy one Virginia women enlisted in the navy alone. Bessie Alexander Coleman, who served in the U.S. Naval Reserve, expressed the sentiments of many women volunteers: "I felt that every citizen of the United States should take some part in winning the war." Likewise, Cecilia Turner Stevenson of Radford wrote, "My attitude toward military service was always favorable and I was privileged to be of service to my country."

The Virginia questionnaires show that most of these women volunteers lived in the eastern part of the state and worked in the navy facilities near the coastline, serving as clerks and stenographers in Norfolk, Newport News, and Portsmouth. Nevertheless, Miss Ralph Drumheller of Roanoke made the trip east and served as a storekeeper at Portsmouth Naval Yard. Other Southwest Virginia women made their contribution with their nursing skills. Bettie Jane Wingfield, a Hollins College graduate, enlisted as a reserve nurse in the Army Nurse Corps. She served at the hospital in Toul, France, eight miles from the combat lines, and wrote on her questionnaire, "I felt that it was a privilege to have an opportunity to help and nurse our American boys." Three women from Rockbridge County, Virginia, also worked in the hospital at Toul: Nora Black Sandford, Mattie Frank, and Helen Gibbs Moore Beecher. Mary Graham, also of Rockbridge County, served as a nurse, though she did not go overseas. Verna Mae Smith of Clifton Forge, Virginia, was likewise stationed near Toul and described how the nurses helped not only to heal wounds, but also, to some extent, homesickness:

> There soon came a call for help at the front. Ten girls were sent to Toul and I was sent with five nurses to Baccarat. There we were only three miles behind the rear trenches and could not sleep for the sound of the guns . . . .
>
> I'll never forget the way the American boys received us . . . . It was worth more than all our hard labor. They gave one yell—AMERICAN GIRLS!—and ran up and almost shook our hands off. We really thought we were going to get kissed and by george we wouldn't have cared. They had not seen any American girls since they'd been over and we took them by surprise. The spirit that existed between the boys and nurses overseas was great. They were all our big brothers and we their sisters. We laughed together, cried together, and worked together all for the one great cause.

Going "Over There," of course, was no prerequisite for a nurse to face danger. Nurse Victoria Ruth Good, who enlisted while living in Clifton Forge, was stationed first at Norfolk Naval Hospital. Transferred to Brooklyn (New York) Naval Hospital, she died of influenza contracted while caring for patients with that disease, which was sweeping across the globe. It is not clear who filled out her questionnaire, but someone returned it with basic information on her service and the note, "[She] won the love and respect of all around her. Gave untiring service during influenza epidemic. Contracted influenza and died at her post, and for her country."

What It Was Like "Over There"

Once training had been completed, the divisions of Virginia men began trickling into France in the late spring and summer of 1918. While many Virginia soldiers participated in holding actions or short offensives throughout the summer of 1917 and spring of 1918, most of them experienced combat during the 1918 Allied drives that occurred near the war's end and which in later years were dubbed "The Hundred Days" or "Grand Offensive."[28] This period began with an attack by French and Americans on a bulge in German lines at Saint Mihiel in early September 1918[29] and ended with the Armistice on November 11, 1918. During that period, Virginia troops not only helped flatten the German hold on the Saint Mihiel salient, but also participated in other offensives (primarily in the Meuse-Argonne) that broke the German Hindenburg Line and convinced the German high command to ask for the armistice. Anyone interested in a detailed narration of the fighting experienced predominantly by Virginia units, as well as anecdotes of the soldiers' lives, can turn to the unit histories (several of which are online) and the letters and diaries of the veterans mentioned in this article's endnotes.[30]

At the Front

It is impossible in a short space to give a comprehensive account of what the men from Southwest Virginia experienced while at war in France. The fighting occurred on a front that was longer than the distance from Norfolk, Virginia, to Charleston, West Virginia: over four hundred miles. Millions of men—mostly French, British, Americans, and Germans but others from countries around the world—faced each other along those lines. Twenty thousand men sometimes died in one day of fighting. Some veterans later said they felt like part of a giant, impersonal machine far bigger than themselves and expressed amazement at all its working parts. In fact, by the time America entered the war in 1917, the Western Front, after nearly three years of war, in the grim words of British soldier-poet Robert Graves, "was known among its embittered inhabitants as the *Sausage Machine* because it was fed with live men, churned out corpses, and remained firmly *screwed* in place."[31]

These massive casualties mentioned by Graves resulted not just from the size of the opposing armies but also from advances in military technology—especially long-range, precision artillery and machine guns—which made standing on open ground even miles behind the front lines hazardous.The front lines became a strange, other-worldly place, often muddy, infested with maggots and giant rats that fed on the bodies and body parts scattered throughout the soil, blanketed by air that reeked with the stench of rotting human flesh.[32] Maj.

Edgehill of the 317th Regiment vividly described the landscape seen by his Virginia mountaineers when they reached the front lines:

> It is a useless waste of time and words to try and describe a battlefield, because even large and elaborate paintings can give only the faintest conception of the ghastly and horrible scenes. For instance, take the awful destruction to vegetation that gas alone does; aside from terrific shellfire throwing up tons of earth and shattering the wonderful forest. Then the endless chains of trenches with hideous barbed wire in front of them and the once prosperous villages completely razed to the ground. The utter desolation of the whole landscape, with nothing living in sight, just makes creepy shivers go stealing over your body.[33]

Lt. Herman R. Furr, who served in a machine gun battalion in the Blue Ridge Division with Maj. Edgehill, similarly described his unit's position on Dead Man's Hill:

> All of the trees in that part of the world had been shot to pieces, only splintered stumps left; not a foot of ground on Dead Man's Hill that had not been plowed up and churned by bursting shells. Desolation was complete.[34]

Many Southwest Virginia veterans, when asked after the war, "What impressions were made upon you?" by the fighting, answered by quoting Gen. William T. Sherman, "War is hell." Hugh Roberts French of Radford, gassed while fighting with the 116th, put a finer point on that famous quote, stating, "Sherman owes hell an apology." Yet, despite the horrors of war, contemporary accounts and memoirs often described how Virginians and other American troops arrived in France with an optimism and confidence that had long since disappeared among the British and French and how this attitude continued until the end of the war. American commanders in the field repeatedly mentioned the high morale and confidence of their troops.[35]

An example of the American spirit was well illustrated by Capt. Lloyd W. Williams, a former cadet at Virginia Polytechnic Institute[36] (VPI, now Virginia Tech). When a French officer told him that an attack was imminent and the Marines should retreat, Williams responded, "Retreat, hell, we just got here!" thus creating a famous battle cry for the United States Marine Corps. Williams was gassed and wounded in the ensuing battle, dying when a shell exploded nearby while he was being evacuated. For his heroism, Williams was posthumously promoted to major and awarded three silver star citations and a purple heart. Major Williams Hall on the Virginia Tech

campus bears his name, and it appears on the campus Pylons memorializing cadets who died in war.[37]

Major Williams Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg
(Photo by William E. Cox)

Behind the Lines: Hospitals

Behind the lines, Virginia nurses and doctors worked to patch up the wounded and sick, often with inadequate facilities and supplies. Nora Black Sandford of Lexington, Virginia, remembered working in a four-story building at Toul without water for washing or use in the bathrooms:

> We arrived at Toul for the St. Mihiel Drive. We had no equipment—food issued for only a day—water a hundred yards from the old four story barracks we were using as a hospital—with hundreds of boys arriving from the field day and night. I had pneumonia wards—the most virulent type. We could do nothing [but] nurse them, give them food (not enough) and a place to lie down, but they were so grateful, so wonderful in every way. Some had not had food for days and would eat anything, though temperature raging and in acute pain. But they never complained—would beg me to stay by them sometimes. . . . Their wonderful [illegible] impressed me the most I believe—and their fortitude. We all longed for the end of it all—and to return to our own beloved land—always and at all times.

Nurse Verna Mae Smith remembered the uptick in casualties at Base Hospital 18 in Bazoilles-sur-Meuse during the Hundred Days offensive:

> We worked steadily though not overly hard up until four months before the Armistice was signed, then our hospital was turned into an evacuation hospital for the center and our big drives were on. We certainly worked then, patients were coming in, sometimes three trainloads a day, and we had to send out equally as many in order to make room for more. We were also getting patients by ambulance right from the field. We did not get time to bathe these patients, we took them in, operated, dressed their wounds and sent them out as fast as we could. Sometimes we were on duty day and night and often we were so tired we couldn't sleep when we got off. . . . Really, I can't see how we got through with so much work under such circumstances, but we [kept up fairly well;] only a few broke down and had to be taken off duty . . . . When the 11th of Nov. came and we got the good news, many of us were too tired to celebrate, but the boys who were not beat all the dish pans up and hurrahed until they were hoarse.

Distinguished Service

Southwest Virginians would distinguish themselves in these and other battles. Many received medals for their heroism—the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the French Croix de Guerre, the British Military Medal—and were cited by their commanders for bravery. A complete list of these men can be found in "Virginians of Distinguished Service," a publication of the Virginia War History Commission (unfortunately, not available online).[38] Below are just a few of the citations of medal winners taken from that publication; they give some idea of the fighting these men experienced and their valor under fire.

With regard to America's highest combat medal, the Medal of Honor, the first Virginian to win it was Earl Gregory, who single-handedly captured a machine gun, mountain howitzer, and 22 Germans.[39] Gregory would enter Virginia Tech after the war, become a leader of the corps of cadets, and graduate with honors. The Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets' precision military marching unit, the Gregory Guard, was named in his honor in May 1963.[40]

Many Southwest Virginians won the nation's second-highest medal, the Distinguished Service Cross, awarded for "extraordinary heroism." For example, the citation of Priv. George Bishop of Salem, Virginia, while serving with the 38th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Division, A.E.F., near Mezy, France, 15 July 1918, reads:

> Against the advice of his companions, Private Bishop advanced through intense artillery and machine-gun fire against an enemy machine gun, which was maintaining a damaging fire on his company. Single handed, he killed the crew of this gun, returning to our lines with the captured gun.

Other Southwest Virginians received the Silver Star, as did Mess Sgt. Asa D. Reed of Floyd County, Virginia, who was cited by his division commander for "distinguished conduct" while serving with Ambulance Company 27, 3rd Division:

> He remained at the kitchen in performance of his duties, preparing hot soup, chocolate and other nourishing foods for the slightly wounded, even under the hottest shellfire. He showed absolutely no sign of fear in his conscientious devotion to duty, and when everyone else had deserted the kitchen to seek refuge from the fragments of exploding shells he remained at his post, furnishing a most inspiring example to the men of the organization.

The Aftermath

A few Southwest Virginia veterans said their service had little effect on them. Walter J. Wright saw combat in several sectors with the 318th Regiment but wrote that he had seen "very little if any change" in his state of mind afterwards. African-American Charles Roscoe Perry of Pearisburg, Virginia, fought with the famous Harlem Hellfighters in the 369th Regiment and wrote, "I can't see that [my service] has made any change whatever in my mind." Other men could not, or did not choose to, articulate how their service affected them.

Only a few Southwest Virginia veterans described having what we would today call post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the most vivid symptoms of which are flashbacks, nightmares, or moments of reliving traumatic events.[41] Cpl. Andrew M. Parcell of Bland County, Virginia, fought in the Argonne Forest with the 317th and wrote after the war, "I feel some older than I should at my age, and I cannot forget what we had to go through. Seems at times I am surrounded by conditions as they were and can see things that happened as if I was going through with the same again." Garnett D. Claman of Bristol, Virginia, was more emphatic. Remembering his service with the 30th Division, where he was gassed and wounded in the face and right eye, he wrote, "Before the war I was an innocent, ignorant child, while now I feel I could easily go insane by permitting my mind to recall and dwell upon the horrors of my experience."

Other men emphasized positive aspects of their experiences during the war. African-American Ahaz Thomas of Washington County, Virginia, said his service with the Buffalo Soldiers Division "made a man of me." Isaac A. Hamilton of Rockbridge County, a soldier in the 111th Field Artillery of the Blue Ridge Division, wrote, "I thought it was the finest experience I had undertaken."

Many other veterans felt they had gained valuable training and knowledge from their service. Thomas M. Shuler of Smyth County, Virginia, wrote that his time with the Marine Corps "was much more educating and beneficial than I had looked for." Some thought their service had given them important, new habits. Lennie Lee Cox of Grayson County, Virginia, wrote that his camp experiences "taught the meaning of endurance, accuracy, promptness, regularity and obedience."

Predictably, the great adventure of entering the service and going to a foreign land made normal, everyday life seem tame and unchallenging once the men returned home. John Castleman of Roanoke, who went to France with the Army Air Service, expressed the sentiments of many other veterans that his service "left me in the most restless sort of condition, the excitement which had keyed me to a high pitch, when taken away I did not want to do anything but dream and wander over the country."

Many of the veterans used the word "broadening" to describe their service. For example, George Washington Childs saw combat as an artilleryman with the 26th Division and said that his service "[b]roadened [my] mind and improved [my] nerve. Would not take anything for my experience." Swepson Joseph Richter fought with the 116th and wrote, "My army experience broadened my mind almost double to what it was before entering the service."

Of the women, Miss Ralph Drumheller clearly had one of the most positive experiences of her life while working in Hampton Roads. She wrote,

> I . . . like the Navy R[eserve]. Would like to be called back at any time the U.S.A. needs me. [It] gave me a mental picture of myself of what I would have missed. [And in] physical body health much better and stronger. [My service] made me look forward and to be thoughtful to myself and others and want the true and give the truth in all my dealings."

After the Armistice, Nurse Verna Mae Smith transferred from the hospital at Toul to one in Germany that served the American troops in the Army of the Occupation. In March 1919, she obtained two weeks leave and "went to Paris, Cannes, Nice, Italian Border, Grenoble and Metz, took in the sights of both countries."

Many veterans said their service had increased their love for America and their hatred of war. Maj. John Adolph Rollings was living in Wise County when he entered the Medical Corps, and he spoke for many veterans when

he wrote that his experiences in the war served "to increase my appreciation of America and things American." Robert Lee Roope of Pulaski, Virginia, saw a great deal of combat with the 116th Regiment and wrote, "I don't like war and believe it should be stopped."

One area in which the questionnaires indicate virtually no change is in the men's religious beliefs. In response to the question, "What effect, if any, did your experience have on your religious belief?" the vast majority responded, "None" or "No effect." The next most common response was given by men like William Johnson Price of Blacksburg, Virginia: "Stronger belief." Price saw combat with the 116th Regiment.

African-American Veterans

Most black veterans, like their white counterparts, slipped quietly back into their prewar lives. Grayson M. Harris of Marion, Smyth County, Virginia, fought with the all-black 370th Regiment, the Black Devils. He described himself as the 370th's "No. 1 hand-bomber in 2nd platoon/F Co." After fighting with such an elite band, Harris merely wrote that the war had taught him "[t]o always be ready to do your duty in every calling, and to always try to live upright."

The pride black Virginians felt about having done their duty was intensified by the fact that they had served despite racial discrimination back home. Their questionnaire responses were sprinkled with statements supporting the same theme as that of African-American Sgt. Harry E. Curry, who wrote that war had taught him "[t]hat if one man is as good as another in the trenches, he is also as good elsewhere."

Charles Lamond Hogue responded on his questionnaire, "If this record will be of any service to the War History Commission by me filling it out, please use it to the best of our advantage. The colored boys of our beloved State of Virginia." In a separate letter to the War History Commission, Hogue expanded on his feelings:

> I am delighted to fill out this War History blank. I know it is for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of Virginia's part in the World War. I am glad to state the fact, that Virginia sent me into the service, and I did everything in my power to gain honor for myself and the beloved state whom I represented in the greatest and most terrific conflict that ever defaced humanity. I am not saying it because I went into the service from Virginia, but I want you to know that the black boys from Virginia was second to none. We respected the government regardless of past circumstances.[42]

The war experiences of some African Americans imbued them with a mission to advance social equality. Gillespie G. Lomans from Chilhowie, Marion County, Virginia, answered the question "What was your attitude toward military service?" by writing, "I felt that my going would free the whole world, America included, therefore I went willingly to the army, undergoing the hardships and camaraderie." Lomans also wrote, "[My] experiences have broadened my vision. I am no longer a provincialist. I observed that ignorance is rampant in America and solicits attention." When war was declared, he was attending West Virginia Collegiate Institute and returned there to complete his studies after the war, moving to Covington upon graduation.[43] His 1969 obituary states, in part, "[He] was a retired school teacher and insurance agent, treasurer of the local NAACP and Notary Public. He served for a number of years as a Superintendent of Sunday School at First Baptist Church. He was a member of Alpha-Phi-Alpha fraternity and a member of Alleghany Players." Alpha Phi Alpha, a service organization, was the first African-American, intercollegiate Greek-lettered fraternity.[44]

"Done My Duty"

The majority of veterans were simply proud they had done their duty. In fact, "duty" may very well be the most common word on all the questionnaires. William Johnithan[45] Tracy of Bland County fought with the 317th Regiment and wrote that his service had been "a serious injury to my present health." He nevertheless wrote, "I was not in favor of war but after war was declared I felt it my duty to go and fight for my country." Asked what impressions the fighting made on him, Denver C. Kilgore of Wise County, Virginia, responded, "Most feelings except sense of duty were dismissed."

These men's military service and having done their duty was their induction into a special brotherhood that existed for the rest of their lives. Veterans often feel that only fellow veterans can fully comprehend what they have experienced.[46] That makes them dear to each other. Hugh Roberts French wrote his impression of the war: "I think the slackers got more out of it than we did (in one way) but I wouldn't trade places with them for a million dollars." Sgt. Archer Miller Graham of Pulaski responded to the question about the effects on him of overseas experience with "I learned the worth of friendship."

Alvin C. York, the most famous Medal of Honor winner in the Great War, was a "mountaineer" like many of the Southwest Virginia men, although he was from Tennessee. The following quote from York probably explained why Hugh French and Archer Graham treasured their service:

> The war brings out the worst in you. It turns you into a mad, fightin' animal, but it also brings out something else, something I jes [just] don't know how to describe, a sort of tenderness and love for the fellows fightin' with you. . . . I had kinder got to know and sorter understand the boys around me. I knowed their weakness as well as their strength. I guess they knowed mine. If you live together for several months sharing and sharing alike, you learn a heap about each other. It was as though we could look right through each other and knowed everything without anything being hid. I'm a telling you I loved them-there boys in my squad . . . . They were my buddies. That's a word that's only understood by soldiers who have lived under the same blankets, gathered around the same chow can, and looked at death together. I never knowed I loved my brother-man so much until I was a doughboy.[47]

Requiem

Tom Williams of Hoge's Store, Giles County, Virginia, shipped to France with the 317th Regiment. After the war, his partially completed questionnaire was returned with the note, "Enclosed you will find the questionnaire of Tom Williams[;] will say he was killed in France on the 3rd day of November Nov 1918. Respt, Mrs. Tom Williams (X)—her mark." Three thousand seven hundred and six Virginians would make the ultimate sacrifice in World War 1, more than three hundred of them Southwest Virginians. As was mentioned at this article's beginning, these numbers do not rise to the level of Southwest Virginian sacrifices in the War between the States or World War II, but they nevertheless represent the significant service and sacrifice of young men and women from Southwest Virginia, as well as their loved ones.

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the Washington County (Virginia) Sheriff's Department and particularly to Deputy Sheriffs Joshua Gobble and William Ledford for making access possible to the World War I memorial window at the county courthouse.

Tiffany stained glass window honoring those who served in World War I, Washington County Courthouse, Abingdon, Virginia (Photo by William E. Cox)

Appendix

Southwest Virginia Soldiers Who Died in the Great War[48]

Killed in Action

Lieutenants

Fairfax, Norwood C., Eagle Rock
Harvey, Alfred R., Radford
Howe, Elliott H., East Radford
Leavell, John C., Salem
Moomaw, Clovis,, Roanoke
Taylor, Oscar M., Toms Creek

Sergeants

Carper, Jacob E., East Radford
Dwier, Charlie H., Eagle Rock
Hudnall, James W., Critz
Laphew, Ernest C., Max Meadows
Leffel, Alvey R., Covington
Mitchell, Roy T., Figsboro
Painter, Sidney M., Jonesville
Salyer, Walter G., Castlewood
Stulz, Fred B., Roanoke
Turner, Samuel E., Falls Mills

Corporals

Coleman, Charles A., Healing Springs
Durham, Rufus M., East Stone Gap
Foster, Henry L., Brookneal
Grimes, Charles A., Hillsville
Harrison, Daniel O., Hardy
Hawks, Rosco S., Roanoke
Holland, Lloyd, Axton
Houston, Lee Meade, St. Paul
Inman, Samuel J., Whitmell

Innes, Henry W., Castlewood
Kelly, Walter W., Marion
Lucas, Wiley S., Pearisburg
Melton, Chester, Osaka
Moneyhun, Ralph C., Toms Creek
Moran, Thomas D., Bassett
Payne, Morris L., Maringo
Perdue, Marshall V., Blacksburg
Reynolds, Byron, Newcastle
Richmond, Garnett C., Rural Retreat
Scott, Claude S., Hardy
Stone, Benjamin L., Sanville
Swats, Cecil F., Lone Mountain
Tardy, Jackson R., Murat
Thompson, William O., Roanoke

Buglers
Barger, Lawrence Guy, Buchanan
Nicholas, William R., Crabbottom

Cook
Cooper, Ned J., Blue Ridge Springs

Mechanics
Goings, John, Rose Hill
Marsh, Earl M., Vinton
Tate, George K., Thaxton

Wagoners
Corum, John H., Abingdon
Priode, Fred H., Clintwood

Privates
Adams, Lee, Troutdale
Akers, Waitman J., Sowers
Alderman, Frederick L., Willis
Alexander, James William, Lebanon
Anders, Warrick A., Independence
Atkins, Roscoe C., Fries
Austin, Samuel J., Fincastle
Ball, John, Swords Creek
Barrett, Gordon M., Benhams
Bazzarre, Roy A., Lowmoor
Beavers, Maurice, Bristol
Bell, Harry T., Copper Hill
Bishop, Connie, Blackwater
Bishop, John F., Sowers
Bishop, Steve B., Pilot
Brickhead, Thomas W., Red Hill
Blankenship, Charles, Gladehill
Blankenship, Charlie P., Boissevain
Bowling, Martin, Sowers
Brett, Jarvis L., Newsoms
Burton, Miller T., Bland
Byers, Hobson D., Roanoke
Byers, Joseph A., Covington
Cain, Frank, Arno
Calhoun, James, Spears Ferry
Calhoun, Robert Edward, Teas
Candle, James A., Fries
Carroll, Charles, Pilot
Carter, Millard D., Blackwater
Carvele, Toney, Mount Clair
Carter, Thomas G., Shuff
Chafin, Dennis, Carterton
Compton, Aubrey L., Roanoke
Compton, Axley, Council
Compton, William, Swords Creek
Cress, Arthur G., Atkins
Davis, Levi B., Redwood
Dickerson, George T., Indian Valley
Dunn, Joseph C., Burkes Garden
Eanes, Arthur L., Roanoke
Eanes, Edward F., Roanoke
Edwards, Willie N., Cana

Elliott, John C., Roanoke
Farmer, Dave L., Carterton
Fleenor, Thedford H., Bristol
Folden, Daner G., Stewartsville
Frith, Jesse, Sydnorsville
Fry, James William, Seven Mile Ford
Garman, Harry V., Catawba
Goad, Robert, Hillsville
Goings, Monteroville, Carters Mills
Goldsby, Robert O., Fairfield
Goodall, Daniel, Covington
Grow, Hansford M., Buena Vista
Grubb, Wiley H., Seven Mile Ford
Guynn, Everett M., Fries
Haburn, Chester Jonesville
Hammonds, Clayton, Gate City
Hardy, Sheridan, Pulaski
Harlow, Cris, Bristol
Harris, William E., Hagan
Haynes, William, St. Charles
Hayton, Joseph K., Bristol
Hendricks, Roy, Lebanon
Herrington, Stuart M., Oak Dale
Hess, Silas, Monk Branch
Holmes, Frank S., Graden
Horn, Granville M., Skeggs
Hull, Albert R., Rocky Gap
Ingersoll, John W., Galax
Ingle, Henry, Pounding Mill
Jefferson, John D., Sandy Level
Jenkins, Luther Kelly, Speers Ferry
Jessie, Joe W., Nickelsville
Jones, Charles, Ewing
Jones, Finess B., Eagle Rock
Jones, Jeter H., Boones Mill
Jones, William A., Ivanhoe
Justus, William L., Hurley
Kenley, Grover C., Indian Valley
Kennedy, Harry B., Ellmore
Kennedy, Horace, Toms Creek
King, Grover C., Cana
Lambert, Harvey, Jonesville
Lamkin, Posey L., Galax
Lancaster, Claude S., Bent Mountain
Law, Frank B., Warm Springs
Leonard, Billy K., Galax
Lilly, Clownie W., Hicksville
Lucas, Mason, Pembroke
McCloud, Charles W., Marion
McCracken, Thomas D., Graham
McFalls, Harry Preston, Hollins
McMeans, Frazier B., Gratton
Maiden, Reece A., Abingdon
Meade, Henry H., Wise
Meade, Thomas B., Drill
Meadows, George W., Roanoke
Metz, Clarence E., Poages Mills
Monday, George T., Ivanhoe
Morris, Herbert Wane, Crandon
Musser, John W., Atkins
Nichols, Emmett, Baywood
Pack, Rosco C., Cedar Bluff
Page, Willie E., Durmie
Pannill, George E., Martinsville
Pasley, Granfield, Scruggs
Pendleton, Adison D., Crandon
Perry, Aubrey H., Roanoke
Phillip, Robert L., Goshen
Pierce, Willie L., Exeter
Piland, Roger L., Franklin
Pulliam, Joe D., Round Bottom
Raines, John F., Prater
Rainey, William Anderson, Lodi
Rasnake, Della J., Honaker
Rasnick, James J., Cleveland
Ratcliffe, Sherry W., Dublin
Reedy, Everett K., Rugby
Rhodes, John, Buchanan

Rhoten, Rufus, Blackwater
Riddle, James K., Elkton
Riggleman, Charles W., Dovesville
Ring, Vester, Ararat
Ringley, Conley Barker, Hiltons
Rodgers, Robert J., Martinsville
Salyer, William H., Virginia City
Sayers, David L., Delton
Seay, George B., Natural Bridge
Sheets, John L., Sugar Grove
Shrader, Emery Chappen, Marion
Sisk, Willie H., Monk
Slagle, Frank, Bristol
Smith, Eldridge D., Wytheville
Smith, James R., Toms Creek
Smith, Lester J., Covington
St. Clair, Harry, Roanoke
Starnes, Jadie, Dante
Steffey, John W., Castlewood
Stewart, James M., Cummings
Sutherland, Edgar, Coulwood
Sweeney, Charlie L., Roanoke
Tate, Henry N., East Stone Gap
Tetter, Campbell W., Salem
Thompson, Benjamin H., Burkes Garden
Tillison, Jahue, Benhams
Triplet, Roy M., Mouth of Wilson
Vest, Herbert M., Kerrs Creek
Ward, Velpo D., Lambsburg
Weddle, Chester, Stewartsville
Weddle, Edgar, Floyd
Wells, Clyde, Fairview
White, Byrd, St. Charles
White, Leonard J., Debusk
Whitt, Lee H., Hagan
Williams, Rayburn E., Clifton Forge
Woolwine, Earnest, Christiansburg
Woolwine, Walter, Christiansburg
Wray, William A., Wirtz
Wright, Crockett I., Rocky Mount
Wright, George W., Ferrum
York, Will, Dante

Died of Disease

Lieutenant
Mouser, Vivion K., Big Stone Gap

Sergeants
Breuer, Charles, Marion
Lee, Roben, Abingdon

Corporals
Cheek, Morgan, Ewing
Dickerson, Posey Grover, Floyd
Keister, Mason H., Cambria
Quinn, Charles A., Roanoke

Cook
Muncus, John C., Galax

Army Field Clerk
Tensley, Benjamin T., Salem

Rhodes, Oscar W., Gala
Sutphin, Samuel La Fayette, Willis

Sayers, Wash L., Cratton
Thompson, Prentiss G., Christiansburg
West, Oscar Duval, Buchanan

Privates

Atkins, Charlie E., Atkins
Banks, William, Covington
Bishop, Beverly H., Duffield
Blackwell, Willie J., Sunnyside
Brown, John, Brownsburg
Bourne, Daniel F., Fries
Bousman, Thomas, Union Hall
Boyer, Bays F., Carsonville
Burgin, George, Hubbard Springs
Cale, Alex F., Marion
Calloway, Homer, Henry
Charlton, Rufus N., Christiansburg
Cole, William H., Tazewell
Collins, Hugh C., Longsper
Conner, John C., Huffville
Conner, Sam L., Meadows of Dan
Deel, Charlie W., Vicey
Deel, John H., Maxie
Delph, Charlie W., Nicholsville
Dew, Alner R., Irongate
Doss, Joseph, Hollins
Elmore, Oaty H., Pearisburg
Garman, Lucian F., Catawba
Goad, Noah, Peck
Goodpasture, William E., Atkins
Grimes, Fred Davis, Norton
Haley, Walter Elam, Salem
Harbour, John H., Stuart
Hargis, Harmon, Murphy
Harman, Bill, Sayersville
Harris, Harmon W., Tip Top
Harter, Luther E., Floyd
Hawkins, Jones A., Troutdale
Hay, Luther, Haysi
Herron, Harvey D., Watauga
Hollins, Homer, Hollins River
Iddings, Castilie, Terry's Fork
Ison, Stuart L., Galax
Jenkins, Corbett L., Hillsville
Johnson, Arvel, Coeburn
Johnson, Hal, Pulaski
Kasey, Samuel H., Moneta
King, Heiner, Figsboro
King, Willie S., Houston
Lam, Bedford C., Covington
Lester, Jesse, Big Rock
Lester, Jessie J., Big Rock
McClanahan, George, Big Rock
McPeak, Franklin L., Draper
Macarroni, Agostino, Roanoke
Mayo, Ellis, Cartersville
Meade, John W., Nickelsville
Musse, Zack, Naffs
Myers, Charles H., Maggie
Nicely, James M., Longdale
Pasley, Samuel H., Vinton
Payne, Wilbur R., Warm Springs
Pennington, James K., Independence
Perkins, James M., Dye
Phillips, Corbett, Peck
Pope, Ezra T., Ivanhoe
Quesinberry, Arthur D., Mayberry
Rodgers, William W., Stuart
Sampson, Erwin L., Big Stone Gap
Semenes, James G., Lone Ash
Setliff, Posy A., Dodson
Snead, Roy M., Pennington Gap
St. Clair, Clarence Alvin, Vinton
Stanley, John W., Sontag
Starke, Eugene E., Bristol
Stinnett, Jack A., Stone Mountain
Talbert, Lawrence, Pulaski
Tickle, John Nye, Longspur
Tilson, Charles M., Monarat
Walker, Willie B., Hurley
Washington, Vint E., Meadowview
Washburn, George P., Sago
Weddle, Charles Emmett, Elliston
Wyatt, John, Stella

Died of Wounds

Lieutenants

Kent, Thomas D., Lexington
Moore, Arthur B., Blacksburg
Williams, Harry Clay, Roanoke

Sergeants

Clark, Robert D., Buchanan
Clingempell, John P., Roanoke
Gilbert, Charles, Saltville
Lawson, Enoch, Bristol
Osborne, James E., Dante
Plogger, Fred A., Carrie
Smith, Fred B., Ocala
Williams, Roland A., Clifton Forge

Corporals

Busch, Roy H., Lowmoor
Peake, Laurence S., Pocahontas
Rose, Thomas M., Independence
Rose, Wilber McK., Rich Patch
Sanger, Miles D., Clearbrook
Walls, Fulton, Hillsville
Whitmire, Roy O., Salem
Williams, Lee, St. Charles
Williams, Ralph E., Comers Rock
Wilson, Samuel B., Raphine

Bugler

Davidson, Elbert L. Buena Vista

Mechanic

Harkrider, George W., Belsprings

Wagoner

Stump, Joseph, Copper Hill

Privates

Altice, Galvin Jack, Redwood
Bailey, John E., Keokee
Bane, Erwin R., Tip Top
Buchanan, Emette, Bondtown
Camden, Abb., Glasgow
Catron, Jack J., Saltville
Cox, Eugene Eldridge, Indian Valley
Deyerle, Addison A., Roanoke
Dishman, Charles, Bristol
Dixon, Lieu S., Roebuck
Doak, Neith O., Rural Retreat
Dodd, Kent C., Fincastle
Duncan, Leonard C., Rich Creek
Earls, Fieldin K., Cliffield
Elmore, Chap J., Maggie
Epperly, Everette R., Roanoke
Fisher, Luther W., Lone Mountain
Fleenor, Oscar Lee, Gate City
Fletcher, Earnest A., Nickelsville
Gray, Ira Vandorn, Austinville
Greene, Samuel B., Toms Creek
Grow, Hansford M., Buena Vista
Hagy, Hubert R., Abingdon
Hale, Herbert, Dodson
Hatcher, Elbert M., Troutville
Hensley, George L., Groseclose
Hickman, Thomas H., Eagle Rock
Hoback, Floyd A., Wytheville
Hodge, Monroe C., Atkins

Honaker, Jason Harrison, Draper
Jennings, Britain, Shorts Creek
Keese, Arthur L., Bristol
Killen, Alexander, Osborns Gap
Lam, William B., Lexington
Layman, Henry H., Indian Valley
Lumsden, Clarence, Boones Mill
McCoy, Steve A., Clear Creek
Mills, Joe W., Toms Creek
Pannill, Jeb S., Martinsville
Powers, Charles B., Virginia City
Quarles, Lowry O., Hardy
Ratcliff, John William, Grundy
Reedy, Leonard M., Raven
Rhoton, Benjamin, Clinchport
Richardson, Guy H., Galax
Richardson, Willie, Toms Creek
Salyer, Pierce S., Nickelsville
Sexton, Sidney L., Volney
Short, John, Raven Creek
Six, Charles C., Rural Retreat
Sloan, Lee, Grundy
Smith, Keller T., Boone Mill
Stanley, Bruce, Coeburn
St. Clair, Kenneth L., Eggleston
Stidham, Clarence V., Norton
Stidham, Roy E., Pound
Sublett, William A., White Gate
Sutphin, Posie E., Willis
Thompson, Auston, Lexington
Thompson, Major McK., Damascus
Tilson, Charles M., Monarat
Tolley, Walter B., Lexington
Vires, Henry, Loneash
Walton, William T., Martinsville
Wheatley, Hurley, Fox
Whitecarver, William Robert, Jr., Salem
Williams, John, St. Paul
Williams, Tom, Hoges Store
Winn, Charlie L., Hebron
Wolfe, Elbert, Ewing
Wood, James S., Bristol
Woodall, George R., Stuart
Wright, Richard D., Rocky Mount

Died from Accidents

Corporal
Burkett, James G., Groseclose

Bugler
Miller, James H., Wytheville

Privates
Anders, Warrick A., Independence
Bratton, Walter, Pulaski
Cassady, Drewery, Stuart
Colley, Fred H., Birchleaf
Cornett, Harvey E., Grayson County
Cress, Arthur G., Atkins
Fields, Anthony, Lebanon
Gilliam, Isaac, Fairview
Harris, Robert L., Mill Gap
Henderson, John B., Thessalia
Hess, Silas, Monk
Howard, William, Christiansburg
Jackson, Thomas A., Pounding Mill
Link, Tiney J., Chilhowie
Long, Bernard J., Clifton Forge
Matney, Earnest R., New River
Taylor, Thomas A., Roanoke
Wiles, Roby F., Lodi
Wilson, Vilas Z., Norto.
Wright, Oliver G., Oriskany
Vogt, Charles A., Atkins

Endnotes

1. George M. Cohan, Over There (Victor, Camden, N. J., 1917), audio, *www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/5977,* retrieved from the Library of Congress website 28 August 2017.
2. The phrase "The War That Will End Wars" was coined by H. G. Wells for his book by that title (*archive.org/details/warthatwillendwa00welluoft*) in 1914 and had seeped into common usage by the time Wilson used it. Kathleen Jamieson has pointed out that Wilson, in fact, only used the phrase once (Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (Oxford University Press, April 1990), 99, *books.google.com/books?id=DdFFtM1pvzcC&pg=PA99#v=onepage&q&f=false*), accessed 28 September 2017.
3. Historical sources contain no definitive explanation of how or why the word "Doughboy" came into use to describe American soldiers, but the term was used to describe American infantrymen as early as the Mexican-American War. An infantryman named Napoleon Dana, who served in that war, wrote home, "We 'doughboys' had to wait for the artillery to get their carriages over" (Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana, *Monterrey Is Ours! The Mexican War Letters of Lieutenant N.J.T. Dana, 1845-1847* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 166.
4. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, "History of Veterans Day," *www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp*, accessed 23 September 2017.
5. The American Legion, "History," *www.legion.org/history*, accessed 23 September 2017.
6. Virginia Tech, "War Memorial Hall," *vt.edu/about/buildings/war-memorial-hall.html*, accessed 28 September 2017.
7. U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, "America's Wars Factsheet" (Washington, D.C.: May 2017), *www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf*, accessed 4 September 2017.
8. United States World War One Centennial Commission, Virginia's WW1 Centennial Homepage, *www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/virginia-centenary-home.html*, accessed 14 September 2017.
9. To this author's knowledge, there is no comprehensive source that lists the names or numbers of Virginia World War 1 veterans by county. The estimate that Southwest Virginia contributed at least 10 percent of the state's total Great War soldiery is based on two sources: the total number of questionnaires returned by Southwest Virginia veterans and a count of the number of Southwest Virginia soldiers who died during service.

   After the war, the Virginia War History Commission sent questionnaires to the state's more than one hundred thousand World War 1 veterans via their local county commission three-person boards, staffed by volunteers. The questionnaires that were returned are housed in the Library of Virginia. Of a total of 14,900 questionnaires returned for the entire state, soldiers from Southwest Virginia counties and cities returned 3,699. The Library of Virginia's website states that local boards of the commission had "mixed results" in acquiring completed questionnaires. Sometimes it was difficult for the local volunteer board to locate the veterans once they returned home and then deliver the questionnaires to them. This problem would have been exacerbated by the remoteness and terrain of some Southwest Virginia communities. Furthermore, the Library of Virginia website states, "Many soldiers refused to submit a completed questionnaire, fearing that doing so would subject them to future military service."

   To find the number of Southwest Virginians who died in service, the author consulted the online text of *Soldiers of the Great War: Vol 3* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920), *archive.org/stream/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3_djvu.txt*, accessed 27 September 2017). Since that book provides only dead men's names and hometowns, the author conducted an Internet search to locate each hometown and determine if it lay within one of the Southwest Virginia counties included in this article. This research revealed that 404 Southwest Virginians died in service during World War I. The Library of Virginia also offers an online, searchable list of Virginia war dead for all wars in which Virginians served, *www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/vmd/,* accessed September 26, 2017. Likewise, an original of the Report of the Adjutant of Virginia, "Virginians Who Lost Their Lives in the World War," appears online but is poorly formatted, *archive.org/stream/virginianswholos00virg/*

virginianswholos00virg_djvu.txt, accessed September 26, 2017.

10. For the purpose of this article, Southwest Virginia is defined as the Virginia counties of Alleghany, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Roanoke, Franklin, and Henry, and all Virginia counties west of them. In a few instances, however, veterans from other parts of the state are quoted when they expressed the sentiments of Virginia soldiers particularly well.
11. Three sources of information in particular have been useful in writing this narrative. All of these sources are available to the public online. They are based on materials collected and produced by members of the Virginia War History Commission, which was created by the state on January 7, 1919, "to complete an accurate and complete history of Virginia's military, economic and political participation in the World War." All of the commission's original research and production are archived in the Library of Virginia, *ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi00958.xml*, accessed 28 August 2017,.

    The commission's history of virtually every military unit in which Virginians served, whether overseas or stateside, is Arthur Kyle Davis, ed., *Virginia Military Organizations in the World War* (Richmond, Va.: Virginia War History Commission, 1927). A searchable copy of this document is available online at *archive.org/stream/virginiamilitary00unse/virginiamilitary00unse_djvu.txt*.

    Second, the Virginia War History Commission requested that local historians in every Virginia county submit a narrative of their county's history, describing how it was affected by the war and the names of the men it sent to war. The intent was to combine all of these manuscripts into a four-volume narrative of Virginian's wartime experience, which, unfortunately, was never completed. The individual county narratives that were submitted, however, are archived at the Library of Virginia. Transcriptions of some of those pertinent to Southwest Virginia counties, however, can be found online at *www.newrivernotes.com/topical_history_ww1_virginia_communities_inwartime.htm*.

    A third source of information is World War 1 veterans' Individual Service Records, also called "Questionnaires." Virginia was one of four states—Utah, Minnesota, and Connecticut being the others—which sent questionnaires to its veterans after the war, seeking information on their service and their views of their service. The majority of the veterans did not complete and return these forms. Some provided only minimal information. An important few, however, including thousands from Southwest Virginia, completed the forms, sometimes providing answers to personal questions, including how their service affected their religious beliefs, state of mind, and health. All of these questionnaires are maintained online by the Library of Virginia and can be searched by individual name or county. Unless indicated by a separate endnote, all quotations and information provided in this article about the individual service of Southwest Virginians comes from these questionnaires, which are discussed generally at *www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/opac/wwiqabout.htm*.
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48. To find the number of Southwest Virginians who died in service, the author consulted the online text of *Soldiers of the Great War: Vol. 3* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920), *archive.org/stream/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3_djvu.txt*, accessed 27 September 2017. Since that book provides only the dead men's names and hometowns, the author conducted an Internet search to locate each hometown and determine if it lay within one of the Southwest Virginia counties included in this article. This research revealed that 404 Southwest Virginians died in service during World War 1. The Library of Virginia also offers an online, searchable list of Virginia war dead for all wars in which Virginians served, *www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/vmd/*, accessed September 26, 2017. Likewise, an original of the Report of the Adjutant of Virginia, "Virginians Who Lost Their Lives in the World War," appears online but is poorly formatted, *archive.org/stream/virginianswholos00virg/virginianswholos00virg_djvu.txt*, accessed September 26, 2017.

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"Living in a New World": World War One and the Decline of Military Tradition at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1916–1923

Daniel C. Newcomb

Introduction

In June 1916, the commandant of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (shortened in popular usage to Virginia Polytechnic Institute or VPI),[1] Lt. Col. Sheldon W. Anding, asked professors to send him their thoughts on the value of military education at VPI. The professors who responded—J. B. McBryde, A. W. Drinkard Jr., J. R. Parrott, and J. S. A. Johnson—all shared a few common beliefs about military education at the school. First, they believed that all college-aged students, both at VPI and other universities, should participate in some degree of mandatory military training. Second, they connected the academic and post-graduate success of students at VPI directly to the system of military training and discipline students received through the institution's corps of cadets. Finally, they all believed that military education encouraged good behavior and prepared students for citizenship. In sum, they viewed the military nature of VPI as both a positive force and an integral part of the institution's mission.[2]

Seven years later, in the spring of 1923, a faculty committee tasked with studying student life at VPI had an entirely different opinion. Instead of viewing the military nature of the institution as a positive force, they viewed it, and the corps of cadets, as the sole source of the "evils" of student life. Unlike professors in 1916 who believed military training encouraged student success and good behavior, VPI professors in 1923 directly connected the problems of student life to the system of military education at the college. As a solution, the committee recommended that military education at VPI either be significantly reduced or entirely abandoned.

A few months later, when VPI President Julian A. Burruss met with the institution's board of visitors, he concurred with the faculty report. In his "President's Report," he told the board that it was his belief that military education at VPI was "archaic" and that it stunted the growth of the institution, impeding the ability of VPI to compete with other state and

regional colleges. Furthermore, Burruss wrote that such a "despotic system" did not prepare students for "citizenship in a democracy."[3]

Between 1916 and 1923, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute community dramatically reconsidered the nature of its institution. The central question was whether or not VPI should remain an institution rooted in traditional military education or become one akin to other standard colleges that were centered on academics. The First World War, rather than reinforcing traditional military education at VPI, instead provided the impetus for some of the first challenges to it. During the war itself, VPI played host to intense wartime mobilization during which the student body, curriculum, and campus were all mobilized in ways that directly and indirectly assisted the American war effort. But the wartime uses of VPI also consistently challenged and undermined the authority of the faculty and administrators on campus, revealing a growing gap between the military and academic natures of the institution. In the immediate post-war years, the changes wrought upon the institution, along with those in larger American society, combined with the arrival of new leadership in VPI's administration, led to the wholesale questioning of VPI's military nature and a permanent change in the institution's educational identity. This article examines the evolution of those changes.

A Short History of Military Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Even though VPI was not founded as a land-grant institution until 1872, the story of that institution began in 1862, when Congress enacted the Morrill Land-Grant Act. Passed in the midst of the Civil War, the act provided each state an allotment of 30,000 acres of federal land per senator and representative in Congress that could be sold or used by individual states to establish educational institutions specifically dedicated to teaching agriculture, mechanical arts, and military tactics. During the Civil War, these funds were reserved for those states still members of the Union; however, in the years after the Civil War, the Morrill Act was extended to southern states. It was during these years that Virginia was accepted back into the Union and then took advantage of the Morrill Act to found its white land-grant institution, Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, later renamed Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute.[4]

Like VPI's southern counterparts—the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama (now Auburn University), Clemson, and North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (now NC State)—VPI was

The Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College cadets in this 1880s photograph are Cadet Cap. R. E. L. Aylor (left) and an unnamed cadet. The first uniforms used by VAMC were gray and were inspired by uniforms worn by Confederate soldiers and by those worn by keydets at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia (Harry Downing Temple Jr. Papers, Ms1988-039 Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech)

heavily influenced by the tradition of military education prominent in the South. Although the Morrill Act required land-grant institutions to provide some form of military education, it issued no clear guidelines regarding the level of that military education. While northern land-grant institutions tended to offer almost no military education to their students, southern land-grant institutions usually took the military requirements of the Morrill Act much more seriously. Historians like Rod Andrew Jr. have even suggested that land-grant institutions, like VPI for example, actually assisted the rebirth of military education in the South.[5]

There are two main reasons for the entrenchment of military education in the South via land-grant institutions. First, many of the faculty members hired at these new institutions founded in the 1870s and 1880s were former Confederate officers. Many of these men took their ideas and experiences during the war with them to their institutions. Influenced by the developing "lost cause" mentality, many of them pushed their institutions toward

becoming military-centered institutions similar to Virginia Military Institute and the Citadel. A second reason for the entrenchment was that many southerners, particularly those of the middle and upper classes, generally supported military-style education because they believed that it was vital to preserving social order. For example, in its 1906 course catalogue, the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical Institute (a land-grant university known today as Mississippi State), claimed that the habits of obedience and adherence to lawful authority were promoted by the military education in which all cadets participated. Furthermore, as Andrew explained, southerners generally believed that military life at land grants also trained young southerners to assume leadership roles that were reserved solely for white men within southern society.[6]

Due to these factors, nearly all of the white land-grant institutions founded in the South were established firmly upon military grounds. On most of these campuses, as was the case at VPI, military education revolved around a cadet corps. All able-bodied students at the all-male VPI were required to be both students and cadets. Thus, student life was dominated by the military nature of the institution. Each student was required to live in barracks, participate in daily drills, and wear a uniform during school hours. Students also were organized into ranks based upon seniority and had to submit to a system of military discipline administered by upperclassmen and the commandant, who was usually a current or former military officer placed in charge of the corps of cadets. Tradition at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, then, was firmly entrenched. By 1916, 44 years after its founding as a land-grant school, VPI still bore a striking resemblance to the college of the past.

Preparedness: VPI and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps

In August 1914, following the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the mobilization of massive armies throughout Europe, that continent, along with many of its countries' colonial possessions, went to war. Noticeably absent was the United States. Many Americans, including President Woodrow Wilson, viewed the war as strictly a European conflict and generally believed that the United States should stay out of direct military involvement. However, by 1916, with increasing financial ties to the Allied powers and with repeated German attacks on Allied ships carrying American passengers, it was becoming increasingly clear to many in Washington, D.C., that the U.S. could, eventually, become directly involved in the conflict.[7]

If the United States did become involved, the country obviously would not be prepared. In 1916, the United States Army, the largest branch

of America's armed forces, numbered just over 100,000 men, making it only the seventeenth largest army in the world. Of even more concern was that the army was ill equipped, undertrained, and underprepared. In early 1916, advocates of war "preparedness" in Congress, alongside the War Department and the Wilson Administration, took the first steps to put the United States on a more solid war footing. Their solution was the National Defense Act of 1916, and one of the first places they looked for solutions was America's colleges and universities.[8]

While the National Defense Act modernized America's military structure, laid the foundation to dramatically increase the army, and gave the country's president the authority to federalize the National Guard, it also created the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). From its inception, the ROTC program was designed as a voluntary program in which colleges and universities could participate by requesting the War Department to establish an ROTC unit on their campuses. Once a unit was created, the War Department supplied at least one army officer to lead each unit and instruct participating students in standard army tactics and knowledge.[9]

ROTC had two primary purposes in 1916. The first was to federalize most military training on college campuses. In this way, the War Department could ensure that the basic quality of military education students received was consistent and that all students who participated would receive the same standard education regardless of the institution they attended. Second, ROTC allowed for the rapid expansion of the army's officer corps. Students who completed their college education along with the ROTC would, upon graduation, enter the ranks as second lieutenants. If the United States did become involved in the war, the ROTC program ensured that there would be a large, highly trained officer corps ready to train recruits and draftees and eventually lead men into battle.[10]

During the summer of 1916, VPI Corps of Cadets Commandant Anding, who was himself an active-duty captain in the United States Army, was particularly excited about the possibility of VPI establishing an ROTC unit on campus. Just a week after Congress passed the National Defense Act, Anding sent a letter to faculty members, asking them to write letters in support of ROTC and military education at VPI. In his letter, Anding stated his belief that the most valuable department at VPI was the military department. He further encouraged President Joseph D. Eggleston Jr. to apply to the War Department on VPI's behalf for an ROTC unit. It was Anding's hope that with an ROTC unit, all students would be "under military control, and instruction where[ever] possible."[11]

As mentioned previously, the professors who responded were wholeheartedly in support of military education at VPI. James McBryde, professor of chemistry, wrote that he believed every student should receive military training because the success of the institution's graduates was largely due to the training they had received through the corps of cadets. Alfred Drinkard, professor of economics, stated emphatically that VPI was, at its core, a military school. He told Eggleston that it was the president's duty not only to support military education, but also to strengthen it. Establishing an ROTC unit on campus, Drinkard wrote, would strengthen military education by training students with modern military equipment that could prepare them for modern warfare. Even the self-proclaimed pacifist, professor of shops John Parrott, believed that all students should take part in military training. Parrott, despite his pacifism, told Anding that he believed VPI's military nature shaped students into dutiful citizens and morally sound men.[12]

When students returned to campus that fall, it seemed that even they supported establishing an ROTC unit on campus. Student columnists for *The Virginia Tech*, the campus newspaper, commented favorably on the ROTC program by highlighting opportunities it offered to students. In their estimation, ROTC not only would give them an opportunity to serve their country, but it also would afford them opportunities to advance the careers they would enter after their military service ended. Students also voiced their support in the debate halls of VPI's most prominent literary societies. In a November debate hosted by the Lee Literary Society, for example, a large audience of students decided overwhelmingly in favor of their institution establishing an ROTC unit on campus. The support of both faculty and students had the desired effect, and by the beginning of December, President Eggleston recommended to the board of visitors that VPI establish an ROTC unit on campus. The board voted unanimously to establish a unit that would begin to enroll students during the upcoming spring 1917 semester.[13]

When ROTC enrollment began in January and February 1917, a staggering number of students signed up, including more than 50 percent of all juniors and seniors. These students perhaps were enticed to join the ROTC because (1) it afforded them the opportunity to earn a nominal salary while enrolled in school, (2) they liked the idea of military service, and/or (3) they believed that the United States would eventually enter the war in Europe. A year later, in the spring of 1918, when the United States began sending more significant numbers of soldiers to France, nearly 90 percent of all VPI upperclassmen were members of the ROTC program.[14]

The Outbreak of War

Unknown to VPI during January and February 1917 was that the next two months would be crucial in moving the United States into World War I. That February, Germany announced that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare on shipping lanes in the Atlantic, putting both American citizens and ships at risk. That same month, the American government learned about a coded telegram from the German government to Mexico, proposing an alliance between the two in the event America entered the war. In return for Mexico's alliance and help, Germany ensured the return of New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona to Mexico. President Woodrow Wilson released the communication, known as the Zimmerman Telegram, to the media on February 28, an event that mobilized American support for war. On April 2, Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. Congress acquiesced on April 6 and the United States joined forces with the Allies.

The declaration of war had immediate effects on VPI. In the days following Congressional authorization, almost all athletic events on campus were cancelled in light of the uncertain wartime situation. Meanwhile, students occupied their time by organizing additional military drills under the guidance of the army ROTC instructors who had arrived on campus only four months earlier. According to *The Virginia Tech*, two-year agricultural students, graduate students, young faculty members, and young men in Blacksburg were motivated by the declaration of war and organized their own volunteer training company, which drilled alongside the corps of cadets at least three days a week. There were even some students who wondered whether or not it would be appropriate for the entire corps of cadets to leave VPI to enlist and offer their services to the War Department.[15]

Publicly, President Eggleston supported the efforts of students. Privately, however, he was deeply concerned about the effect the war would have on VPI. Eggleston's main concern that spring was that most students would enlist during the summer instead of returning to VPI. If that did happen, he feared that the college would have to struggle to remain open due to the loss of tuition revenue. To confront this possibility, he expressed his fears in his commencement address and implored parents to send their sons back to school the following fall. If their sons did not return, he said, it would place "an almost hopeless handicap upon them" because it was the duty of their sons "if not called to war, to go to college and prepare themselves for efficient citizenship."[16]

For Eggleston, attending college despite the war was the patriotic and civic duty of every VPI student. He stated:

> It is even more necessary that the colleges be filled in time of war than in peace, because the colleges do prepare our leaders for every walk of life; and if war decimates the men of the land, it is essential that other leaders be prepared promptly to take their places. It is not consistent with a high ideal of national service to keep a young man at home, if it is possible to send him to a good college.

Eggleston assured students that they would still contribute to the war effort, even though the students themselves were not enlisted. Although Eggleston wanted to keep his students out of military service to benefit the university, he promised them that VPI would support the war effort in any way possible.[17]

Table 1

Enrollment at Selected Virginia Universities, 1916–1918

School	*1916-1917*	*1917-1918*	*Percent change between 1916/1917 and 1017/1918*
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	533	519	-3%
Virginia Military Institute	406	584	+44%
University of Virginia	418	313	-25%
College of William and Mary	276	204	-26%

Data taken from Michael Faughnan, "You're in the Army Now: The Students' Army Training Corps at Selected Virginia Universities in 1918," PhD dissertation, College of William and Mary (2008), 40, and Clara B. Cox and Jenkins M. Robertson, "Enrollments," *History and Historical Data of Virginia Tech, www. unirel.vt.edu/history/students_alumni/enrollments.html.*

Eggleston's concern was not unique. University presidents and administrators across the nation worried that they would be forced to close their doors if too many of their students enlisted. Fortunately for Eggleston, VPI experienced little attrition that summer, particularly when compared with other Virginia institutions. When students returned in the fall, enrollment had fallen only by 3 percent, whereas enrollment at the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary fell by around 25 percent. In fact, while VPI's enrollment stayed roughly the same, the only major institution to experience an increase was Virginia Military

Institute, where enrollment expanded by 44 percent. It is possible that both VPI and VMI were better protected from wartime loss of enrollment due to the military nature of both institutions. Since the two schools already offered military training, many underclassmen may have decided to return in the hopes of becoming officers upon graduation. Even though 64 VPI students, almost all of them juniors, left VPI to enlist during the summer of 1917, Eggleston's fear of declining enrollment was not realized when students returned in the fall.[18]

"A small cog in the machine": Wartime Uses of VPI

When students returned to VPI during the fall of 1917, enthusiasm for war pervaded the campus. Patriotic red, white, and blue replaced the institution's maroon and orange colors at student dances; war training continued to be introduced; and students received weekly war updates in the pages of the campus newspaper. President Eggleston, sticking to his course of publicly embracing the war, implored incoming freshmen to do their part in helping VPI assist the war effort. He urged freshmen to cease wasteful spending and to use their time wisely by preparing both their bodies and minds for war.[19]

Meanwhile, the divide between the military and academic sides of VPI was beginning to grow. Even though the United States was now at war with Germany, there continued to be a large and vocal anti-war movement throughout the country. Among the loudest voices for isolationism were women and college professors. One such professor was VPI's J. R. Parrott, who had written Commandant Anding and President Eggleston just a year before, in June 1916, about his support for ROTC and military education at VPI. While Parrott supported military education during peacetime, his opinions were starkly different during wartime. For Parrott, his support of military education was rooted in the idea that it helped to maintain order and instilled good character in students. But when military education during wartime meant training his students to fight on the battlefields of France, that support changed completely.[20]

In late October, a visiting minister to VPI's campus delivered a sermon in support of the American war effort. Within his sermon, the minister insinuated that anti-war advocates, particularly isolationists and pacifists, were not patriotic Americans. Parrot, who was himself a pacifist, took to paper to write his thoughts about the sermon and the war to President Eggleston. In his letter, which he titled "A Little Preachment from the Pew to the Pulpit," Parrot made it clear that he believed the war was, at its core, the just punishment God was giving Europe. In his stated opinion, it would

have been best if the United States had kept out of the war to avoid God's wrath. He blamed U.S. involvement on "the Morgan money and the munition crowd" (mainly manufacturing owners and preparedness advocates), who were "worked up by the jingoists" and their extreme and aggressive patriotism. Now that that the country was directly involved, Parrott wrote, the war would not end "till this proud, rich United States is thoroughly humbled and on her knees, not to Germany, but to Almighty God." Parrott closed by writing that the sooner the United States was humbled in the war, "the better." When Eggleston responded to Parrott, he was characteristically guarded. While the president admitted that he was not a strong supporter of the war, he wrote that it was the duty of VPI and American citizens to do everything they could to help win it.[21]

Another indication of growing differences between the academic and military sides of campus, particularly between the faculty and cadets, can be seen in how professors responded to increasing coverage of the war in the campus newspaper. During the fall of 1917, student editors at *The Virginia Tech* added two pages to the newspaper to cover more war stories. The additional war coverage drew several complaints from some faculty members who wanted to see more local and college news instead of national and international wartime stories, a feature that was not present in any previous campus papers. Responding to the complaints, the student editors wrote on January 24, 1918, that it was their patriotic duty to cover the war. They claimed that the majority of their readers, primarily students, wanted to be presented with "America's standpoint in this great war" and wanted to know what was "being done for the country and her fighting men." The editors acknowledged that the War Department sent many of the articles published about the war. Including these articles, the editors said, was the main way *The Virginia Tech* could help mobilize campus opinion and support for the war. This, they said, made *The Virginia Tech* a vital, yet "small wheel in the machinery of America" that was working for victory.[22]

Meanwhile, as the bulk of American troops arrived in France during the spring of 1918, the War Department continued to devise ways to rapidly mobilize millions more men for combat. As with ROTC, the War Department looked to American colleges for solutions. In April 1918, the department announced plans to use land-grant colleges, VPI among them, to provide special wartime training to detachments of working class men during the summer. Following VPI's commencement, the War Department billeted more than 220 men, mostly from manufacturing plants in Ohio, on campus to receive training from the faculty. For two months, VPI's professors were asked to train these men in blacksmithing, mechanics, carpentry, machinery,

construction, and wireless communication, which were considered useful skills for the battlefield when these men were shipped to France that fall.[23]

When this first detachment left for France, a second detachment of 225 men, mostly working class men from Washington D.C., arrived at VPI to receive the same training before students returned to campus in September. Through this program, the War Department effectively turned VPI into a training camp. First, the program utilized the physical structures of campus as barracks for men as they trained to enter military service. Second, and most importantly, the program turned the faculty, along with their knowledge and instruction, into a weapon by requiring them to educate and train men, who were not VPI students, in fields that were deemed militarily useful by the War Department.[24]

A second, more ambitious plan to use American colleges to mobilize for war was unveiled by the War Department that spring: the Students Army Training Corps (SATC). Similar to the summer training detachments sent to VPI during summer 1918, the SATC was administered by the department and utilized college campuses to train for military service young drafted men who were college-aged but not enrolled in an institution of higher education. Unlike the summer detachments that only targeted vocational schools like VPI, however, the SATC program eventually involved more than 600 institutions, including VPI. The program essentially federalized these institutions, keeping administrators and faculty members in place to govern and run their institutions in the name of the United States War Department. In return, colleges would receive detachments of draftees to house, feed, and train on their campuses with the promise that the War Department would foot the bill. The hope was that the SATC would be mutually beneficial. The draftees sent to campuses would help colleges who had lost large numbers of students to enlistment, and it would also help the War Department add to the officer corps by giving drafted men some degree of college education while training them for war.[25]

The draftees sent to VPI assumed the novel status of student-soldiers. They were subject to the military discipline of their army commanders and were required to follow all army regulations. Yet, they were also considered partially to be VPI students subject to the institution's regulations and discipline within their academic world. However, authority over all military matters on campus was given to ROTC and SATC commanders assigned to VPI. While academic aspects of the institution were left to the control of administrators and faculty, the SATC required VPI to make curricular changes that aligned with wartime needs and technologies. In a circular letter sent to Eggleston on September 18, the War Department informed him that

VPI was required to introduce courses on "military law and practice, hygiene and sanitation, surveying, and map-making." Additionally, Eggleston was informed that VPI needed to offer a "War Issues Course," as outlined by the War Department, that would teach a "sympathetic understanding" for the reasons why the United States was fighting, essentially requiring VPI to become an agent in the government's campaign to win support at home for the war.[26]

The War Department assured Eggleston that these curricular changes were not meant to "deaden the initiative" of VPI or its faculty. Instead, they were meant to ensure that every SATC unit received the same collegiate and military education. These changes, however, made many professors, as well as Eggleston, unsure of where military authority ended and where academic authority began. When the new courses were introduced or old courses were modified to meet specific military needs, it was unclear whether or not military leaders on campus had the authority to intervene. Even more complicated was the fact that the institution already offered its own form of military education through the corps of cadets. Eggleston, among others, was understandably confused over whether the corps and military education offered by VPI would also be transferred to the authority of the ROTC and SATC programs and commanders on campus.[27]

Potential problems with the SATC were identified by the War Department as the program went into effect. Maj. John Skuse, the SATC commander assigned to VPI, and President Eggleston both received a memorandum detailing rules required by the War Department. First, to avoid serious problems between military and academic authority on campus, Skuse and Eggleston should maintain constant contact with each other. Since the SATC was an unprecedented federal program, the War Department believed that solutions to unforeseen problems would best be solved by cooperation between SATC and university officials. Second, the department reminded Eggleston that VPI was contractually obligated to overhaul student and campus schedules, methods of instruction, housing, dining, and the campus social system to align with military requirements. Finally, the department warned both men that problems on campus might arise between academic and military authority. However, the memorandum continued, solutions to these disagreements might have to be "unsympathetically approached" as VPI "slowly assimilated" into its wartime role.[28]

When the new semester began on October 1, 1918, VPI and SATC officials held a ceremony on the parade grounds (today's Drillfield) at the center of VPI's campus. The event was both official and symbolic. Officially, it was held for more than 600 young men, both draftees and many

VPI students, to take the oath of allegiance and formally join the army. Symbolically, according to one student, it was the moment when VPI

> lost its individuality, and became a small but efficient cog in a powerful organization [the United States war effort]. The old, dearly beloved blue and gray [VPI's institutional uniform] vanished ... and its place was taken by a more modern, even more symbolic khaki and olive drab.

In addition to the regular student population of 477 men, the SATC brought an additional 650 uniformed student-soldiers to campus. With nearly all students voluntarily in ROTC and some others compelled to join the SATC, VPI no longer looked or felt like it once did; instead, it looked and felt like a training ground.[29]

In the weeks following the ceremony, the nature of the SATC and the power of the War Department still remained unclear. On September 4, a mere three days after the ceremony, Eggleston tried to clear misunderstandings about the authority of the department. One of his main concerns was that federal authority would trump institutional authority in the matter of African-American men training with SATC units. While the War Department challenged traditions at VPI in a number of ways, integration was not one that any War Department official had planned. Later that day, the department responded to Eggleston, telling him that no white institution would be required to accept black students. Instead, black institutions were being required to establish SATC units where black men would be sent for training.[30]

Eggleston was not the only person confused about what the SATC meant for VPI. Parents, too, expressed concerned about how the program would affect the education of their sons. Even before the semester began, in early August, Eggleston received a steady stream of letters from parents on the subject. One of those parents was William Jeffreys, a member of the Virginia Senate from Mecklenburg County. Jeffreys wrote Eggleston on August 10, 1918, asking if he could obtain draft deferments for his two sons. The state senator wanted to know if his sons becoming students at VPI and, subsequently, joining the SATC would be enough for them to immediately avoid the draft. Eggleston responded that Jeffreys' sons, since they were students and not simply SATC student-soldiers, would be placed in a deferred class within the SATC that would allow them to complete their education before they were forced into service.[31]

Other parents, however, did not want their sons participating in any kind of military training or service. One such parent was W. T. Goodloe,

who wrote Eggleston on October 8, asking if his son could resign from VPI and return home. Goodloe explained that his son had entered VPI to receive a traditional collegiate education, believing that his only exposure to military training would be that which was required by VPI. With the changes underway on campus, Goodloe continued, he thought it best for his son to return home since he was only seventeen and, thus, was not eligible for the draft.[32]

Reflecting on the growing divide between the institution and the military, Eggleston wrote Goodloe, agreeing with the parent that it would be a good idea for his son to leave VPI and return home. Revealing his disillusionment with the SATC, Eggleston lamented that VPI had been "compelled to subordinate everything here to the wishes of Washington officials." Further, he frankly told Goodloe, he believed it would take VPI "years to recover from present conditions." Clearly, Eggleston believed that the SATC was not only hampering the institution's core mission and identity, but he also believed that the SATC could potentially destroy that mission and identity for years to come.[33]

The confusion over military authority versus institutional authority because of the SATC program was, perhaps, compounded by the fact that it ended as quickly as it began. After the American-led fall offensives at the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, and the Meuse-Argonne on the Western Front, Germany finally agreed to an armistice on November 11, 1918, effectively ending the costly four-year struggle. With the war over, Congress and the War Department saw little reason to continue supporting the SATC program and the colleges operating it. Since the SATC was primarily designed to rapidly train young men for military service and not to support colleges, federal officials decided that the SATC should be terminated as quickly as possible. On November 26, just two weeks after the armistice, the War Department informed SATC institutions that the contracts they signed with the department would be adjusted and that the institutions should completely demobilize their SATC units by January 1, 1919.[34]

This news infuriated Eggleston. He responded to the War Department the next day, angrily writing to E. K. Hall, business director of the Committee on Education and Special Training within the War Department, reminding him that the contract VPI had signed stated that the SATC would be continued through July 30, 1919. Furthermore, the president reminded Hall that the contract had required VPI to make long-term arrangements and investments in campus infrastructure to accommodate the SATC unit for the rest of the year. Eggleston made it clear to Hall that he believed the War Department was obligated to fulfill the financial promises it had

made to VPI and its students. He further advised that discontinuing the SATC quickly would put both VPI and its students under extreme hardship. Eggleston further stated that the rapid SATC demobilization would be "an injustice to this institution and the students."[35]

Eggleston's plea was ignored. By January 1, 1919, the VPI SATC, which had only existed for three months, was completely dismantled. After years of struggling with the Virginia House of Delegates to attain funding for VPI and dealing with an upsurge in student misbehavior toward the end of the war, the demobilization of the SATC was the last straw for Eggleston. On January 24, to the surprise of the VPI community, President Eggleston submitted his resignation to the board of visitors. Though he offered no reason for his departure, his private correspondence made it clear that his decision was facilitated by his dissatisfaction over how VPI was treated and used by the War Department in the last year of the war. He believed that the War Department had abused VPI and that the SATC was, in the end, nothing more than a "dismal failure."[36]

"An Archaic and Despotic Institution": Post-War Challenges to Military Education at VPI

With Eggleston's departure, the task of putting VPI on a postwar footing fell to the incoming president, Julian Ashby Burruss, a graduate of VPI and former president of Virginia's State Normal and Industrial School for Women.[37] Burruss embraced the post-war possibilities for change at VPI rather than resisted them. He believed that the United States and the world at large had changed dramatically during the war. In his opinion, if VPI wanted to remain relevant in the post-war world, the institution would have to change as well.

In the first months of his presidency, Burruss began a fact-finding mission to assess the administrative structure and the curriculum of the institution. What he found disappointed him. In a letter to his friend, Dr. William E. Dodd, a professor at the University of Chicago, Burruss lamented the military and academic structure of VPI, writing that he could not "imagine a more unsatisfactory program than our students are required to follow here." Burruss put his findings in a multi-page report to the board of visitors that called for a fundamental reorganization of the school's curriculum and institutional goals.[38]

The first area Burruss concentrated on changing was that of the curriculum. Burruss's plan proposed eliminating low-performing courses (those with low student enrollment) and restructuring those that had not yet adapted to the technological advances made during the war. In fact, some

of Burruss's changes aligned well with some of the curricular changes that had occurred at VPI to accommodate the SATC. Thus, he opted to continue many of these courses. His curriculum restructuring left the institution more heavily focused on agriculture and the sciences at the expense of military education. He also expanded curricular offerings at VPI by creating new concentrations within programs that allowed students to specialize in particular fields. Between 1919 and 1922 alone, Burruss expanded undergraduate curricula from only fifteen courses of study to a total of twenty-two. These curricular changes were in line with his main belief that the war had called for VPI to become a more "standard university." In other words, it should be one primarily focused on academics rather than military instruction.[39]

This belief led Burruss to call for changes in a second area: military education. In his "Report to the Board of Visitors" in the summer of 1920, he called for the board to consider changes in VPI's military requirements, particularly to reducing the number of hours students spent in military training. In his report, Burruss pointed to the fact that VPI required students to complete more hours of military training than almost any other college in the United States, with the notable exceptions of the military academies. Instead of believing that military training supported student success at VPI, Burruss believed that it reduced the quality of student work. Further, he feared that it impeded the school's ability to compete with other state and regional higher institutions for students.

While the faculty agreed with Burruss's reasoning, the commandant of the VPI Corps of Cadets was, predictably, displeased. Commandant C. C. Carson, who had replaced the former commandant, Sheldon Anding, during the war, notified the War Department of Burruss's proposed changes to the military identity of the institution. Carson warned the federal department that Burruss's proposals would take VPI off the department's list of Distinguished Colleges and would fundamentally undermine military education. Burruss responded frankly to Carson's notification by informing him that VPI students were already completing 50 percent more time in military training than was required to be placed on the War Department's Distinguished Colleges list. Despite Commandant Carson's objections, the board of visitors approved the president's request to reduce the number of hours students were required to complete military training. However, board members maintained that every student would still be required to complete a military education through the corps of cadets for all four years of their education. Burruss's successful move to reorganize military education at VPI deepened the divide between the academic and military spheres on campus.[40]

At the same time Burruss was reorganizing VPI during the first years of his administration, the college was experiencing an unprecedented rise in enrollment in the immediate post-war years. During the entirety of Eggleston's administration directly preceding that of Burruss, enrollment rarely exceeded 500 students. However, by the 1919−1920 school year, barely 10 months after the armistice, enrollment skyrocketed to 757 students. Two school years later, that figure rose to a total of 975 students.[41]

Table 2

Virginia Polytechnic Institute Student Enrollment, 1916−1924							
1916-17	*1917-18*	*1918-19*	*1919-20*	*1920-21*	*1921-22*	*1922-23*	*1923-24*
533	519	477	757	798	975	977	1,110

Table created from data taken from Cox and Robertson, "Enrollments."

The increase in VPI's enrollment in the post-war years likely resulted from a number of causes. First, a number of students left VPI during the war before they finished their education. When many of these men finished military service in 1919, they returned to Blacksburg to complete their education. Second, in 1918, Congress created the Soldier's Rehabilitation Act, which allotted federal funds for veterans to attend vocational colleges and universities. By 1920, at least 54 veterans who had not previously attended VPI were enrolled as students through this program. Finally, a number of men received an education at VPI through their participation in the SATC. After the program was terminated, some of these men may have enrolled as regular students in 1919 and 1920.[42]

Increasing student enrollment at VPI, however, also coincided with rising student misbehavior and, incidentally, may have even facilitated misbehavior. This problem led President Burruss and the VPI faculty to take their most ardent stance against military education at the school. The main source of these behavior incidents related primarily to hazing in the corps of cadets. Hazing then, as now, usually meant the imposition of strenuous or humiliating tasks as part of "initiation" into the corps. Hazing was directed predominately at freshman students, known to VPI upperclassmen as "rats." While a number of types of hazing were common within the VPI Corps of Cadets, the most serious types involved actual physical assault of younger students. Perhaps the most common style of physical hazing in the corps was known as "bucking," which, in the words of historian Rod Andrew Jr.,

"involved several older students holding a freshman by his hands and feet and striking him against a wall or post, or paddling his backside with a plank or scabbard." Even though there had been multiple attempts to curb hazing at VPI, upperclassmen saw hazing as both a formative "rite of passage" into the corps and as a right they had earned due to their seniority and rank within the corps itself.[43]

Even before Burruss became president of VPI, his predecessor, Joseph Eggleston, noticed an increase in behavior incidents related to hazing during the war. The most serious of these incidents occurred in the last months of Eggleston's presidency when a young cadet was brutally assaulted, presumably by "bucking," by a handful of upperclassmen. The assaulters—the details of the assault remain unclear, possibly intentionally—inflicted significant injury to the freshman cadet, resulting in his extended hospitalization. Authorities promptly arrested the guilty students, who were dismissed from the institute. Following the incident, Dean T. P. Campbell, alongside other faculty members, met with corps leaders, and all agreed to extend the honor system to ban certain forms of physical hazing, particularly bucking. However, as Burruss realized, these bans did not go far enough to resolve the problem, mainly because the extension to the honor system only banned physical hazing and failed to include types of non-physical hazing, which Burruss considered to be just as dangerous.[44]

In 1923, the conflict between academic and military authority came to a head when three students were dismissed from VPI for hazing freshmen. Burruss confronted the commandant and senior cadets about their unwritten "rat regulations," which had not been approved by the administration but had tacitly been approved by corps authorities without the authorization of college authorities. Burruss stated firmly that the "rat regulations" clearly constituted hazing and, thus, directly violated the institution's honor system, which had been established by the faculty and administration and which had banned all forms of physical hazing a few years earlier. Burruss received his strongest support relating to the situation from the board of visitors, which adopted a resolution that clearly stated that all authority for adopting rules affecting VPI students lay with the board. Further, the board wrote firmly that no such authority over student discipline had ever been delegated to the corps of cadets.[45]

Two months later, the situation escalated. An unofficial committee composed of upperclassmen in the corps of cadets found a freshman cadet guilty of not conforming to the "rat regulations" and informally dismissed him from the corps. When the freshman appealed to the administration, faculty members found him not guilty because the "rat regulations"

remained unapproved by the administration. Seeing the actions of Burruss and the faculty as a direct assault on their traditional authority and right to haze, senior student officers within the corps resigned en-masse. Their resignations, which were to take place the next day, came with a demand: they would fulfill their resignations only if the faculty committee did not rescind its decision.[46]

But it was Burruss who claimed victory in the dispute. He sent a telegram to the parents of every insubordinate cadet and asked for their help. He warned the parents that if their sons did not desist in defying his authority, they would be dismissed from VPI for blatant disobedience. Over the next two days, as parents flooded the VPI Telegraph Office with messages for their sons, the cadets rescinded their resignations, ending the crisis. But for the president, the incident was a call to action. Burruss, who had previously seen the military system of education as a hindrance to VPI, now saw it as the main source of student misbehavior and as the main threat to academic and administrative authority.[47]

To devise solutions, Burruss created a faculty committee tasked with studying student life and the problems facing VPI. By May, the committee had reached its conclusions. In the opinion of its members, problems with student behavior were directly connected to the system of military education and discipline at VPI. Members further believed that reducing the number of hours students spent in military training did not offer enough of a solution. Instead, the committee went radically further and suggested that the military department, mainly the corps of cadets, be severely reduced or eliminated altogether. In their report, the faculty members of the committee conveyed their opinion that the "evils of our student life" resulted directly from military instruction and that such problems were "inherent" in a military system. Further, they noted that of the forty-eight land-grant colleges in the United States, VPI was one of only three that compelled all students to complete a military education for all four years. They also noted that it was one of only two land grants that required all students to live in barracks for the entirety of their student career.[48]

Additionally, the faculty noticed that both students and army officers on campus had changed since the end of the war. In their report, committee members expressed to President Burruss their belief that most of VPI's new students were not from "a more sophisticated class of students" willing to submit themselves to military discipline. Furthermore, the faculty noted that since the establishment of ROTC in 1916, army officers assigned to VPI regarded themselves more as instructors in ROTC-related courses and not "enforcers of military discipline." In the end, the faculty believed that

"except for the government academies [West Point and Annapolis], no large institution of college grade [should have] an absolutely strict system of military discipline."[49]

President Burruss concurred. With the committee recommendations in hand, he crafted his own report to the VPI Board of Visitors, which he presented in June 1923. Unlike his 1920 report to the board, in which he suggested adjustment to military education at VPI, his 1923 report was much more dramatic. Burruss admitted that that he did not believe VPI could continue to expand and attract more students if the institute continued to be organized upon a firm military basis. He told the board that no other "standard college in America ... is even attempting to do [this], unless we included the United States military and naval academics." Burruss wrote bluntly in his report that "the arbitrary military system of government of students in college is archaic." Breaking with the pre-war opinion of his predecessors, Burruss stated that if the military system of education at VPI continued, it would put the institute under "insufferable handicaps in its effort to grow and maintain a place in the group of standard colleges [in the nation]." Burruss believed that military education at VPI was not beneficial for students, and he found it difficult to believe that "young men trained under a despotic system ... are receiving the best preparation for citizenship in a democracy."[50]

The board of visitors, perhaps unwilling to take such a dramatic step as completely erasing the military nature of VPI, decided upon a moderate course. Instead of eliminating the corps of cadets, it decided to reduce the number of years students were required to be cadets from four years to only two. However, the board made it clear that administrative authority trumped military authority, primarily that of the corps of cadets, by reaffirming that the management of VPI rested solely under the board's authority and that of other college officials. The board confirmed that only certain college officials, the president and faculty to whom the board had delegated certain powers, were responsible for the enforcement of college regulations governing student conduct. Further, board members stated that any by-laws of the corps of cadets that had not been approved by them, like the rat regulations, were in no way recognized by college authorities and were thus unenforceable. Finally, and most emphatically, the board specified that "no constitution, by-law, rule, or regulations of the corps of cadets or any group of students shall take the place of, or have precedence over the regulations made by the college authorities."[51]

After Burruss's presentation to the board, Professor J. R. Parrott submitted a letter of support to the president. Just seven years earlier, Parrott

had proclaimed his support for military education and discipline at VPI. It had been his belief that the military system at VPI was a source of good moral behavior for students and helped ensure student success. But in the letter he sent Burruss on June 23, 1923, he took a different stance. Agreeing with Burruss and his colleagues, Parrott expressed himself as "eternally opposed to unnecessary military in our schools or our nation." No longer did Parrott view military education as beneficial for students; instead, he, too, now saw it as unnecessary and detrimental.[52]

In 1927, President Burruss was asked to write a statement about how the war had affected VPI. Looking back upon the period, Burruss wrote that the war had led to a "deliberate criticism of all the content of instruction." Instead of returning to the pre-war traditions of VPI, he stated, the war had forced VPI to justify the work at the college based upon the contributions it had made to solving problems faced by the nation after the war. More importantly, he stated his belief that the war had put a "premium" on a college education and that the education offered at VPI could never be the same as it had been once before. Perhaps one of the most monumental changes in Burruss's mind was the reduction of military education at VPI from four to two years. In the end, Burruss believed that the war had been a turning point in VPI's history. For him, it had proven that VPI could not live in a world rooted in tradition; instead, VPI had to live in the "new world" created by the war and that "if it [VPI] is to live it all, it must be responsive [to the changes]."[53]

Conclusion

The time between 1916 and 1923 was a period of immense change at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Though there were still ways that the VPI of 1923 resembled that of the past, there were also ways in which it did not. Perhaps the single largest change was that of military education. During the war, VPI was a site of intense wartime mobilization in which the United States War Department consistently found ways to utilize VPI's curriculum, faculty, campus, and student body to assist the war effort. These wartime uses of VPI, however, challenged academic authority and widened the gap between the academic and military spheres on campus.

After the war, post-war challenges to the institution, along with the arrival of new leadership under President Julian A. Burruss, brought the differences between academic and military education at VPI to a head. In the end, it was academic authority that won the day. While military education was not eliminated, it was reduced, and the authority of the faculty and administrators was solidified as supreme to that of the corps of cadets. In

the proceeding decades, VPI's institutional identity shifted further to that of a standard non-military university. By the 1950s, increasing numbers of upperclassmen opted out of the corps of cadets, and by 1964, the board of visitors struck the two-year requirement to be in the corps, making military education at VPI entirely voluntary. While the challenges of the 1950s and 1960s proved to be the most significant to military education at VPI, World War I and the changes it wrought upon the college spurred the first challenges to its military education, setting VPI on a course of becoming more like the land-grant university it is today.

Endnotes

1. The popular name for Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute was simply Virginia Polytechnic Institute or VPI. The Virginia General Assembly did not officially rename the school Virginia Polytechnic Institute until 1944 (Clara B. Cox and Jenkins M. Robertson, "A School of Many Names," *History and Historical Data of Virginia Tech*, *www.unirel.vt.edu/history/historical_digest/index.html*). Throughout this article, the author will use Virginia Polytechnic Institute or, more commonly, VPI.
2. Lt. Col. Sheldon W. Anding to Joseph Eggleston, 19 June 1916; J. R. Parrott to Anding, 15 June 1916; J. B. McBryde to Anding, 16 June 1916; J. S. A. Johnson to Anding, 16 June 1916; and A. W. Drinkard Jr. to Anding, 16 June 1916. These letters are located in Records of Joseph Dupuy Eggleston, Box 4, Folder 305, Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Va.
3. "Report of Special Committee on Student Life," spring 1923, Records of Julian A. Burruss, Box 32, Folder 1940, Special Collections, Virginia Tech.
4. While other colleges and schools, like the University of Virginia and Washington and Lee, for example, tried to convince the Virginia legislature to allocate land-grant funds to their respective institutions, the legislature settled on a plan that converted the existing Preston and Olin Institute, a small Methodist college for boys in Blacksburg, Va., into the commonwealth's white land-grant college, appropriating two thirds of the land-grant funds for that purpose. The legislature used the remaining one third of the funds to convert Hampton Institute, an all-black school in Hampton, Va., into the state's black land-grant college. Today, Virginia State University serves that role (Peter Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech, Land-Grant University, 1872–1997: History of a School, a State, a Nation* (Blacksburg, Va.: Pocahontas Press, Inc., 1997), 37–43).
5. Rod Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military School Tradition, 1839–1915* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 39–42.
6. Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines*, 39–42.
7. John Milton Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 373–379, and John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 350–353.
8. Keegan, *The First World War*, 372.
9. Keegan, *The First World War*, 372; Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," *Bulletin of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute* 21:1 (November 1927, Blacksburg, Va.), 18; Carol S. Gruber, *Mars and Minerva* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), 223; U.S. Army Cadet Command, "History of Army ROTC," *www.cadetcommand.army.mil/history.aspx*; and United States of America War Office, "United States National Defense Act," 23–26.
10. U.S. Army Cadet Command, "History of Army ROTC," and United States of America War Office, "United States National Defense Act, 23–26.
11. Anding to Eggleston.
12. Parrott to Anding; McBryde to Anding; Johnson to Anding; and Drinkard to Anding.

13. "Lee Society Has Interesting Program," *The Virginia Tech,* Blacksburg, Va., 16 November 1916), 1, and "Reserve Officer's Training Corps," *The Virginia Tech,* 7 December 1916, 1, 8.
14. Unlike today, the ROTC program in 1917 only accepted college juniors and seniors (United States of America War Office, "United States National Defense Act," 23−26, and "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 18). The percentage of students who joined ROTC was calculated by using the 1918−1919 student yearbook, *The Bugle*. By adding the listed names of students in ROTC companies and comparing that number to regular student enrollment, the author learned that 75 percent of regular students were in an ROTC company (Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, *The War Bugle 1919* (Charlotte, N. C.: Observer Printing House, 1919), Special Collections, Virginia Tech, *spec.lib.vt.edu/ archives/bugle /bugl1919/1919_BUGLE.pdf)*.
15. D. Lyle Kinnear*, The First 100 Years: A History of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* (Richmond, Va.: William Byrd Press, 1972), 240; "War Cripples Athletics," *The Virginia Tech*, 12 April 1917, 1; and "War Spirit Prevailing," *The Virginia Tech*, 2 May 1917, 1, 8.
16. "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 32−40.
17. "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 32−40.
18. Records of Eggleston, 18 September 1918, Box 5, Folder 404; "Sixty-Four VPI Cadets at the Reserve Officer's Training Camp," *The Virginia Tech*, 17 May 1917, 1, 8; and "Y.M.C.A. Rat Reception," *The Virginia Tech*, 27 September 1917, 1.
19. "Y.M.C.A. Rat Reception," *The Virginia Tech*, 1.
20. For a more detailed treatment of the American peace movement during World War I, consult Charles Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement: Ideals and Activism* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 27−50, and Frances H. Early, *A World Without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997).
21. J. R. Parrott, "Little Preachment from the Pew to the Pulpit," to Joseph Eggleston, Records of Eggleston, 31 October 1917, Box 6, Folder 509, and Eggleston to Parrott, Records of Eggleston, 1 November 1917, Box 6, Folder 509.
22. "The Tech Must Do Her Part," *The Virginia Tech*, 24 January 1918, 4.
23. "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 50−57.
24. "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 50−57.
25. "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 50−57; War Department General Orders No.1, Records of Eggleston, 15 September 1918, Box 5, Folder 385; Michael J. Faughnan, "You're in the Army Now: The Students' Army Training Corps at Selected Virginia Universities in 1918" (PhD diss, College of William and Mary, 2008), 2; and Gruber, *Mars and Minerva*, 213−217.
26. Committee on Education and Special Training to Eggleston, Records of Eggleston, 18 September 1918, Box 5, Folder 385.
27. Committee on Education and Special Training to Eggleston.
28. Committee on Education and Special Training to Eggleston.
29. Similar ceremonies were held on campuses across the United States. Including the 600 men who took the oath at VPI, more than 140,000 young American men were compelled to join the SATC between September and October 1918 (Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, *The War Bugle 1919*; Virginia Tech Special Collections, *The Bugle* archive, *spec.lib.vt.edu/ archives/bugle /bugl1919/1919_BUGLE.pdf*; "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 103−107.
30. Western Union Telegram, Records of Eggleston, 4 October 1918, Box 5, Folder 385.
31. Letters exchanged between William H. Jeffreys Jr. and Joseph Eggleston, Records of Eggleston, 10 August 1918, Box 5, Folder 416.
32. W. T. Goodloe to Eggleston, Records of Eggleston, 8 October 1918, Box 5, Folder 439.
33. Eggleston to Goodloe, Records of Eggleston, 21 October 1918, Box 5, Folder 439.
34. Committee on Education and Special Training to Eggleston, Records of Eggleston, 26 November 1918, Box 5, Folder 385.

35. Eggleston to E. K. Hall, Records of Eggleston, 27 November 1918, Box 5, Folder 385.
36. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years,* 247, 249−250.
37. Today, the State Normal and Industrial School for Women is known as James Madison University. It is located in Harrisonburg, Virginia.
38. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 225, and Faith Skiles, "Change Amidst Tradition: The First Two Years of the Burruss Administration at VPI," *The Smithfield Review* 20 (2016), 30.
39. In keeping with turning VPI into a more standard institution, Burruss also proposed that women finally be admitted to VPI. In his proposal to the VPI Board of Visitors in January 1921, Burruss reminded the board of the vital roles women assumed during wartime, both locally and nationally. Further, he reasoned that VPI could no longer legitimize the exclusion of women since they were now full citizens under the law. The board approved Burruss' proposal, and in the following fall session, five women enrolled as full-time students and seven enrolled as part-time students (Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 225; Skiles, "Change Amidst Tradition," 30; and Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech, Land-Grant University, 1872-1997*, 132).
40. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 225, and Skiles, "Change Amidst Tradition," 30.
41. Expanding enrollment was not unusual. Similar rates of growth in student enrollment were happening at other institutions of higher education across the United States. For example, enrollment at the University of Illinois doubled between 1919 and 1922, increasing from 3,000 students to over 6,000. Likewise, enrollment at the Ohio State University grew from 4,000 to 8,000 students (Paula S. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) 123−124).
42. According to Skiles, the veterans' programs established in the wake of World War I allowed VPI to hire its first female faculty member responsible for teaching elementary subjects to incoming veterans (Skiles, "Change Amidst Tradition," 31−32, and Earl D. Gregory Collection, Ms 1972-004, Box 1, Folder 1, Special Collections, Virginia Tech).
43. According to Rod Andrew Jr., the VPI faculty and administration tried in 1891 to prevent the traditional "bucking" session on the day incoming freshmen received their uniforms. When the freshmen resisted the upperclassmen, a "near-riot" ensued, and bucking continued to be practiced without interference in the years afterward (Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines*, 72).
44. Papers of Eggleston, Box 5, Folder 433.
45. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 270.
46. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 270.
47. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 270.
48. Report of Special Committee on Student Life, Records of Burruss.
49. Report of Special Committee on Student Life, Records of Burruss.
50. Julian A. Burruss, "Report to the VPI Board of Visitors," June 1923, Records of Burruss, Box, 32, Folder 1940.
51. Report of Special Committee on Student Life, Records of Burruss.
52. Parrott to Burruss, 23 June 1923, Records of Burruss, Box 7, Folder 455.
53. "Virginia Polytechnic Institute in the World War," 109−110.

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Sketch of the Life of Dr. Harvey Black

John S. Apperson, M.D.[1]

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

[Transcription and Endnotes by Clara B. Cox]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Four children, three sons and one daughter, were born to them, all of whom, with the mother, are still living.[9]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

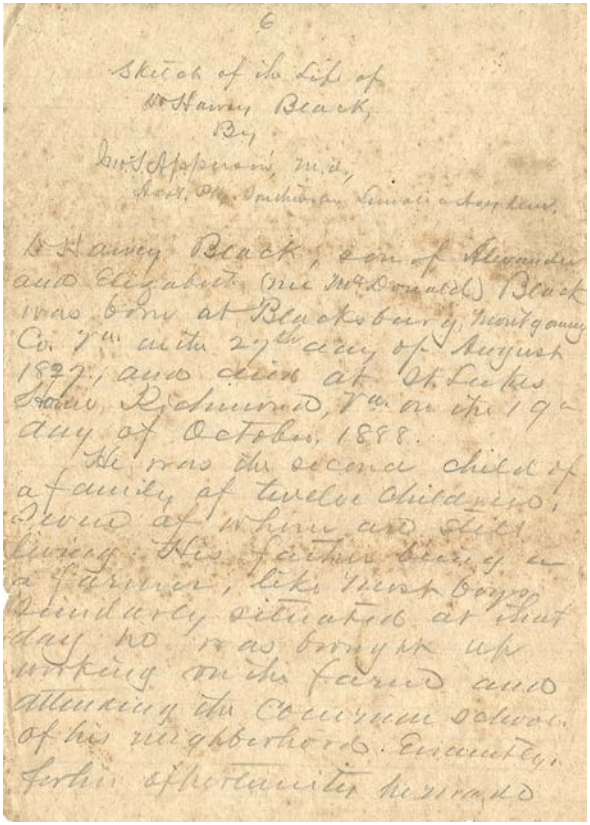
In 1872, he attended a meeting in Staunton of the Medical Society of Virginia and received the merited compliment of being elected President. At the meeting in Norfolk the ensuing year, he presided with dignity and grace, and delivered an instructive address on Irregular Practitioners and Proprietary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

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

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

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

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



Sketch of the Life of
Dr. Harvey Black,
By
Dr. J. Apperson, M.D.,

Dr. Harvey Black, son of Alexander and Elizabeth (nee McDonald) Black was born at Blacksburg, Montgomery Co. Va. on the 29th day of August 1827; and died at St. Lukes Hall, Richmond, Va. on the 19th day of October, 1888.

He was the second child of a family of twelve children, seven of whom are still living. His father being a farmer, like most boys in ordinary circumstances at that day he was brought up working on the farm and attending the common school of his neighborhood. Eventually, forth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brothers, I have done my best,
I am weary, let me rest.[24]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acknowledgments

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

Endnotes

1. Born in Orange County, Virginia, in 1837, John Samuel Apperson helped his father on the family farm until he became a store clerk at the age of 17. Dissatisfied with that occupation, he moved to Smyth County, Virginia, where he cut railroad ties until a doctor successfully encouraged him to study medicine, and he served a medical apprenticeship. Apperson enlisted in the Confederate army at the beginning of the Civil War. In 1862, he was assigned to the 2nd Corps, known as the "Stonewall Brigade," Army of Northern Virginia, as a hospital steward. His supervisor was Dr. Harvey Black.

   After the war, Apperson attended the University of Virginia (1866−1867), earning a doctor of medicine degree. He returned to Smyth County, married Ellen Victoria Hull (1840−1887) in 1868, and practiced medicine for 20 years. He and his wife had seven children.

   He was named to the building committee for the Southwestern Asylum for the Insane in Marion in the late 1880s and served on the hospital staff as assistant physician from 1887 to 1889. Dr. Black supervised the facility until his death in 1888. In 1889, Apperson, whose wife had died two years earlier, married Elizabeth "Lizzie" Arabella Black (1855−1942), the only daughter of Dr. Black and his wife, Mary Kent Black (1836−1911). The Appersons had four children.

   Dr. Apperson left medicine in 1890 and helped found the Staley's Creek Manganese and Iron Company. He was the business executive commissioner of Virginia to the World's Fair 1892−1894 and vice president, secretary, and treasurer of the Marion and Rye Valley Railway 1894−1904. He expanded operations of the Marion Foundry and Company into the Marion Foundry and Machine Works in 1906. He died in Marion (Smyth County) in 1908 ("John Samuel Apperson (1837−1908)" *WikiTree, Where geneologists collaborate, www.wikitree.com/wiki/Apperson-121,* accessed September 12, 2017; "John S. Apperson, M.D." *New River Notes, Historical and Geneological Resources for the Upper New River Valley of North Carolina and Virginia, www.newrivernotes.com/topical_history_biographies_apperson_johns.htm,* listing the source as *Confederate Military History* 3, 704–705; "John Samuel Apperson

(21 Aug. 1837−9 Aug. 1908)," *Students of the University of Virginia, 1825−1874, uvastudents.wordpress.com/2011/08/19/john-samuel-apperson-21-aug-1837-9-aug-1908/,* accessed January 4, 2018; Pat Sullivan, "Dr. John Samuel Apperson," *Spotsylvania Memory, spotsylvaniamemory.blogspot.com/2017/08/,* accessed January 4, 2018; and Sharon B. Watkins, "Alexander Black and His World, 1857−1935, Part I: 1857−1877," *The Smithfield Review* 21 (2017), 20).

2. The hand-written original manuscript can be found in the Black, Kent, and Apperson Families Papers, Ms74-003, Box 2, Folder 8, Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg. Another transcription, which obviously used the same manuscript but is not always verbatim and does not credit the author, can be found in "Sketch of His Life," *Annual Report of the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum at Marion, Virginia, to the General Assembly of Virginia for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1888* (Richmond, Va.: J. H. O'Bannon, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1888), 35-41, *books.google.com/books?id=g3dDAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA12-PA35&lpg=RA12-PA35&dq=dr.+john+s/+apperson+southwestern+lunatic+asylum&source=bl&ots=08a9ebGbTf&sig=hd7TOrXEqrNKATiZ70AAzEgfIw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwibkbzg_p_WAhXhsFQKHQkMAlc4ChDoAQglMAA#v=onepage&q=Southwestern&f=false.* This source was used to complete the transcription since the last page or pages of the handwritten manuscript are missing.
3. Dr. Apperson's professional association with Dr. Black began as early as the Civil War. In April 1861, Apperson enlisted with the Smyth Blues of Smyth County, Virginia, and in March 1862, he was appointed a hospital steward under the command of Black, a regimental surgeon for the 4th Virginia, 1st Brigade. The two doctors worked in that setting until late 1862. When Black received an appointment as surgeon of the field hospital for the Second Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, he took Apperson with him, and they worked in that capacity until the war's end. (Cheryl A. Veselik, *Superintendents and Directors of Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute* (Marion, Va.: Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute, 2012), 1, 2, published online at *www.swvmhi.dbhds.virginia.gov/swvmhi/about-us/superintendents-and-directors-of-swvmhi.pdf).*
4. Black, Kent, and Apperson Families Papers, Ms74-003.
5. Dr. Black was a grandson of John Black, who helped his brother, William, found the town of Blacksburg, Virginia, by donating land to the project. John served as one of the original town trustees ("Dr. Harvey Black: Surgeon In-Charge 2nd Corps Field Hospital, Army of Northern Virginia, Civil War Historical Impressions, *www.civilwarhistoricalimpressions.com/dr.-harvey-black.html,* accessed September 10, 2017; Veselik, *Superintendents and Directors of Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute,* 1; and Peter Wallenstein, "Early Blacksburg, 1740s−1840s, and Special Celebratory Years," *A Special Place for 200 Years: A History of Blacksburg, Virginia,* ed., Clara B. Cox (Roanoke, Va.: Town of Blacksburg, Va., 1998), 14).
6. The "h" at the end of the town's name was used in the original spelling ("Christiansburg, Virginia," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christiansburg,_Virginia,* accessed March 7, 2018. Apperson added an "h" to "Blacksburg" intermittently and also added it to "Fredericksburg."
7. According to historian Lee A. Wallace Jr., on May 19, 1846, the federal government called on Virginia to raise three regiments of infantry to fight against Mexico. "By proclamation on May 23, Governor William Smith announced that he would receive the tender services of 30 companies of volunteers, which were to be organized into regiments after their muster into service (Lee A. Wallace Jr., "The First Regiment of Virginia Volunteers 1846-1848," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 77, no. 1, part one (Virginia Historical Society, January 1969), 46, *www.jstor.org/stable/4247453?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents,* accessed September 8, 2017). Governor Smith appointed John Francis Hamtramck as colonel of the 1st Virginia Volunteer Regiment ("Historic Shepherdstown & Museum," *historicshepherdstown.com/portfolio-item/john-francis-hamtramck/,* accessed September 8, 2017).

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

a plantation he named Smithfield. Today, the manor house, which is surrounded by the Virginia Tech campus, is operated by the Smithfield-Preston Foundation and is open to the public (Laura Wedin, "A Summary of Nineteenth-Century Smithfield: The War Years, Part 2, in production, *The Smithfield Review*).

8. Mary Kent was known to her family as "Mollie" (Watkins, "Alexander Black and His World," 20).
9. Those children were Kent (1853−1909), Elizabeth Arabella (1855−1948), Alexander (1857−1935), and Charles W. (1859−1925) (Watkins, "Alexander Black and His World," 21).
10. Dr. McGuire was the medical director of Jackson's corps and later wrote a description of the death of the general (Dr. Hunter McGuire, "Death of Stonewall Jackson," *Civil War Gazette* 14 (Richmond, Va., 1886), *civilwargazette.wordpress.com/2012/05/10/death-of-stonewall-jackson-by-dr-hunter-mcguire/,* accessed March 7, 2018.
11. The Second Battle of Manassas was fought August 28−30, 1862 ("Second Battle of Bull Run Facts," *HISTORY.NET, www.historynet.com/second-battle-of-bull-run,* accessed January 8, 2017).
12. Aldie is located in Loudoun County, Virginia (Google Maps, *www.google.com/maps/place/Aldie,+VA+20105/@38.9711756,-77.6550501,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x89b66ae2241962f3:0x15a8739d0328a1c8!8m2!3d38.9756745!4d-77.6418724,* accessed January 8, 2018).
13. The act was the Morrill Act or Morrill Land Grant Act, which President Abraham Lincoln signed into law on July 2, 1862. The act provided each state with 30,000 acres of land per senator and representative in Congress. It authorized the states to sell the land and use the proceeds "to fund public colleges that focused on agriculture and mechanical arts" ("Primary Documents in American History: Morrill Act," *The Library of Congress Web Guides, www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Morrill.html,* and Daniel W. Hamilton, "Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862," *Major Acts of Congress*, 2004, *ENCYCLOpedia.com, www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3407400192.html,* accessed 8 January 2016).
14. Since Virginia had seceded from the United States, the commonwealth could not take advantage of the Morrill Act until it had been readmitted to the Union, which occurred on January 26, 1870. Less than two months later, the General Assembly voted to accept the provisions of the Morrill Act ("General Assembly of Virginia," *Staunton Spectator,* March 15, 1870, 2).
15. The Commonwealth of Virginia purchased the "attached farm" and its house, known as Solitude, from Robert Taylor Preston (1809−1880), a brother of James Francis Preston, in October 1872 ("First Report of the Board of Visitors of [t]he Agricultural and Mechanical College," Virginia School Report 1872 (Richmond: R. F. Walker, Superintendent [of] Public Printing, 1872), 1, online at *books.google.com/books?id=C_IsAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA2&lpg=RA1- PA2&dq=resident+preston+and+olin&source=bl&ots=rdYunz5mt3&sig=WJNsS8piocOsnUvjIryul1-bgis&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBmoVChMI14aLyPKxyAIVgho-Ch1SEg0V#v=onepage&q=president%20of%20preston%20and%20olin&f=false).* Today, the house is the oldest structure on the Virginia Tech campus.
16. The legal name of the new land grant was Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College.
17. The name of the college's governing board was the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College Board of Visitors. The governing body is still known as the board of visitors (Clara B. Cox and Jenkins M. Robertson, *History and Historical Data of Virginia Tech, www.unirel.vt.edu/history/administration/board_of_visitors.html,* accessed January 8, 2017).
18. This underlining and all subsequent underlining appear in the original manuscript.
19. At the time, an "alienist" was a psychiatrist or psychologist ("alienist," *Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alienist,* accessed January 8, 2017).
20. Central Depot was a stop on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, halfway between Lynchburg and Bristol, Virginia; thus the name. It served an important function, a major supply line for Confederate forces, during the Civil War and became a target for Union troops. The train stop spurred growth in the area, known as Lovely Mount and since 1891 as Radford ("The History of Radford Virginia," *Find it in Radford, www.visitradford.com/history-of-radford-virginia/,* accessed January 8, 2018; Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, "Battle of New River Bridge (Radford)," *www.civilwar.vt.edu/wordpress/battle-of-new-river-bridge-radford/,* accessed

January 8, 2018; and "Radford, Virginia," *Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radford,_Virginia,* accessed January 8, 2018).

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

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Alexander Black and His World, 1857–1935
Part II: Alexander Black and the Bank of Blacksburg, 1877–1935

Sharon B. Watkins

The article that follows is the second part of an account of the life and times of Alexander Black (1857–1935) of Blacksburg, Virginia. It gives a brief overview of his private and business life after leaving college and then a concentrated account of his role in founding the Bank of Blacksburg and its early success against difficult odds in the serious depression that began in 1893. It then briefly describes the bank's growth in the first decades of the twentieth century and explores the factors leading to the Bank of Blacksburg's conversion from a state to a national bank and its membership in the Federal Reserve System (1920–1922). The decisions made in the early 1920s contributed greatly to the bank's ability to survive the Great Depression (1929–1930s) and America's economic ups and downs since, all the while maintaining its original independence and identity as a local bank.

Overview

Alex Black, as he was known, was a direct descendant of the founding family of his hometown, an early alumnus and lifelong friend of the nearby land-grant college (Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, or VAMC, later known as VPI and then Virginia Tech), and a leading businessman and banker in Montgomery County. His business and financial career stretched from the conclusion of his college studies in 1877 to his death in 1935. In partnerships with several relatives and friends, he established a variety of retail establishments in the small downtown area of Blacksburg, dealt in local real estate, and played a foundational role in creating the first publicly held bank in Blacksburg after the Civil War.

His career illustrates how important family alliances and life-long friendships were in bringing together disparate economic and social groups in a small town in a mountainous rural county in post-reconstruction Virginia. His marriage to Elizabeth (Lizzie) Kent Otey of rural Walnut Spring in 1881 joined the son of a town professional (physician Harvey Black)

Fires were a constant threat to Blacksburg businesses. Here cadets from nearby Virginia Polytechnic Institute work to extinguish a fire in the building owned by Alex Black, where his associate, "Kill" Luster, operated an extensive hardware operation. Black's general merchandise store may be seen to the left of the engulfed building. The building housing the Bank of Blacksburg, which Black helped found and guided as its president for more than four decades, is further uphill (to the left) (photo courtesy of the Alexander Black House and Cultural Center).

with the granddaughter of two of the largest proprietors of land and slaves before the Civil War (James Randal Kent and Dr. James Otey). The young couple typified post bellum efforts to find new and better paths to economic progress for both themselves and their community. They took advantage of old and new modes of production and commerce, of educational progress and increasing population, and of various natural resources that enabled Montgomery County to recover relatively quickly from the dislocations caused by the abolition of slavery and the stresses of war. They helped the local region to avoid the worst of the stagnation and poverty that enveloped the populations of some areas of the southern United States.

In terms of their personal lives, Alex and Lizzie were comfortably well off with their combined family resources. Lizzie inherited a share in the productive family farm, which her VMAC-educated brother managed and worked in a modern fashion. Alex received a good all-around education and a share of the Black family's ownership of several houses and lots in the portion of Blacksburg covered by its original charter. When they

remained childless into their early thirties, they adopted a young girl born about 1890 and named her Mary Louise Black (often called Mary Lou) after older members of their families. They traded a smaller house on Water Street (today's Draper Road) for one on South Main Street. When that house burned in the 1890s, they replaced it with the elegant and expensive home known today as the Alexander Black house. Alex continued to trade, buy, sell, and collect rent on residential and business properties throughout his lifetime; at least twice he financed the construction of substantial new buildings. Lizzie participated actively in some of the acquisitions. When Alex moved beyond real estate into creation of his own business ventures, he began with a general merchandise store; he thereby entered a highly competitive field that entailed both the use of the most modern economic tools (the railroad) to access the national economy and one of the oldest forms of business in the area, a small store featuring an amazing choice of items and willing to run a tab for a good local customer.

National Financial and Economic Conditions

A challenging situation confronted any young person who, after completing his education, chose to remain in a small rural town and pursue a career in general business in the late 1870s. Nationwide, a series of financial panics, stock market crises, recessions, and depressions shook the American economy after the Civil War. Exact terminology differs, but the U.S. saw serious economic dislocations in 1873–1879, 1882–1885, and 1893–1896. The early twentieth century brought problems in 1907 and worse ones in1920. Often these crises were set off by crashes in the basically unregulated urban stock markets or sudden outflows of gold to foreigners from the U.S. Treasury supplies backing up the value of the dollar. Some crises were complicated by power struggles to control crucial railroad networks and by impoverished workers' strikes against large corporations and men of vast wealth. Sometimes the local economy was touched only lightly, sometimes severely.[1] Alexander Black and his business associates suffered the misfortune of investing large amounts of capital to start a full-service bank in Blacksburg about a year and a half before the sharp depression of 1893 impacted both the nation and the small town.

One national economic phenomenon did adversely affect strictly local business affairs on a persistent basis, the inadequate supply and circulation of national currency. The amount and type of national currency in circulation in the U.S. was often out of sync with the needs of an industrializing economy generally on a trajectory of growth; rural areas of the west and south with heavily agricultural economies usually suffered most. The National Bank

Act of 1863 allowed banks chartered by the federal government to issue paper money, but the value of such notes had to be secured by the bank's ownership of a certain type of U.S. government bonds that gave their owners the "circulating privilege" to issue new federal currency into the local economy. In consequence, frequently the price of the special government bonds on financial markets, rather than the economy's need for currency, determined the amount of paper money issued by such banks.

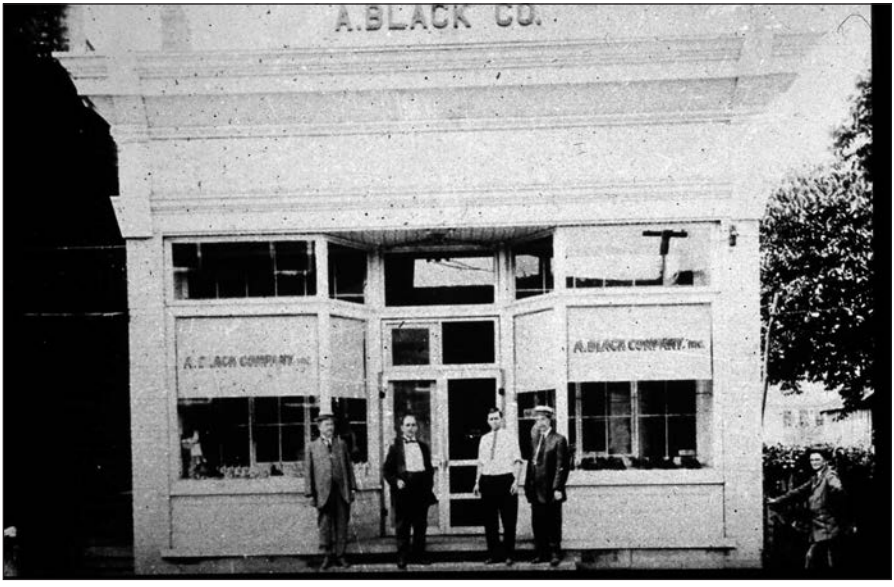
On the positive side, all national banks accepted each other's banknotes at par since the federal government would, if necessary, redeem the bonds held in reserve by each national bank for emergencies. On the downside, national banks were forbidden to give mortgages on farmland and for decades were even forbidden to issue typical business loans.[2] National banks tended to cluster in urban and fast-developing areas; their restricted services and remote physical locations meant they provided little benefit for rural, southern, and interior western regions. To stop competition by state banks issuing banknotes for more limited local use, the federal government imposed a 10 percent tax on all issues of state bank notes. This 1865 measure was probably motivated in part by the passions of the Civil War; left in place for many decades, it punished rural Americans all across the U.S. long after war had ended.

In later nineteenth century battles over backing the national currency with precious metals, Congress demonetized silver and imposed the "gold standard" that required the U.S. Treasury physically to possess a specified weight of fine gold for every dollar issued. The exact weight of gold per dollar varied for a time; in1900, it was standardized when Congress specified that the "unit value" of all types of the dollar was the value of "25.8 grains of nine-tenths fine gold." The treasury was required to hold a gold reserve equal to $150,000,000. At that same time, "existing redeemable money" in circulation amounted to at least $753,000,000, over five times the amount of the treasury holdings. In times of economic crisis, paper dollars were turned in for gold; occasionally the U.S. Treasury could not meet all demands and borrowed huge emergency sums from men of vast private wealth to shore up this value for the dollar. Since the major European nations also adhered to the gold standard and Russia led global gold production, the cost and availability of gold worldwide was beyond U.S. control. These factors could severely impact the national money supply and price levels, causing deflation (as often in the 1890s) or encouraging inflation (as during and just after World War I).[3]

Local Economic Conditions around Blacksburg: The Railroad and General Stores

On the local and regional level, much economic activity and hope centered on the repair and exploitation of the railroad completed across Montgomery County in 1856. The railroad's ante bellum impact had been to expand large-scale agricultural production for distant markets and to increase the size of the attendant enslaved workforce. Its presence also had brought military conflict to the area, as U.S. forces attempted to destroy its ability to carry critical products toward Richmond and to link western and eastern sectors of the Confederacy. After the return of peacetime conditions, the local rails were quickly repaired and, after a struggle for control among competing interests, incorporated into the expanding system of the new Norfolk and Western network. Soon, local livestock, agricultural produce, timber, and mineral products moved to distant mass markets via this regularly scheduled and relatively inexpensive means; the process altered Blacksburg and the county profoundly.

Side by side with this symbol of modern industrial power, humbly stood on a dirt road a second dominant economic force in rural America, the locally owned general store. Many of its supplies arrived by rail, but most of its local customers depended upon animal or human muscle power for their



Alex Black; W. M. Gray; C. E. Cook, store clerk; and C. W. Gardner (left to right) pose in front of the A. Black Company store on Main Street in Blacksburg, Virginia (photo courtesy of the Alexander Black House and Cultural Center).

transportation. Most rural and small-town business was transacted through the extension of credit by local tradesmen and often through the bartering of products.[4] Banks that pre-dated the Civil War had been destroyed or severely crippled, leaving a gap in essential financial services that general merchants filled for several decades. Most of the glittering gold and quick profits of the Gilded Age that invigorated large urban or industrial areas remained there. Relatively little actual currency, whether paper or metallic, was in local circulation and often was hoarded to make absolutely essential payments for real estate taxes or mortgages. For a short time, existing notes of pre-war state banks, slowly staggering toward death, continued to circulate. Some small national bank notes doubtless found their way to general stores, especially in railroad towns. Personal or company promissory notes (essentially written, signed, and dated IOUs) also fulfilled the functions of a circulating medium. Successful storekeepers had to know how much credit to extend for a given paper promise of value. Evaluating the reliability of the issuer and the expense of collection were as crucial as the ability to assess the value of customers' goods presented for sale to the storekeeper (for money) or as direct trades.

The railroad's nearby presence invigorated the general store culture. Even as it carried away local products to distant urban and industrial areas, the train brought to rural and small-town America the manufactured and processed products necessary to complete the exchange, balance the ledgers, and keep rolling stock filled with cargo for an entire trip. Manufactured products were unloaded and stacked by the tracks while local products were loaded into empty cars. In Montgomery County, this visible availability of new goods greatly accelerated local residents' introduction to "store bought" manufactured products that saved labor and time. Countywide, at least forty general stores operated simultaneously in the 1880s, with many clustered at railroad stops such as Big Spring (whose location is still indicated by a road sign on the western edge of Elliston), the main depot near Christiansburg, and at tiny Vicker (still known as Vickers Switch from its railroad days).

Blacksburg merchants were at a competitive disadvantage county-wide, being located at least ten miles from any railroad stop; they depended upon freight wagons to move their goods from and to the rails. Within Blacksburg's town borders, several general stores always coexisted, selling a wide variety and quality of goods. An effort by the town government to levy a business tax upon various enterprises in 1892 revealed a list of five general merchandisers. At first the town calibrated the tax according to some unexplained estimate of value or profit generated; Black's store was charged by far the most (ten dollars) down through competitors paying six

dollars (Eakins and Co.), five dollars (Luster and Co. and also Hardwick Bros.), and only two dollars (Bodell Bros.). After protests, the town council changed to a flat license tax for a given type of business.[5] In this competitive field, Alexander Black made his debut as a businessman and apparently achieved great success by 1892. He and his younger brother, Charly (C. W.) Black, operated the first iteration of Black's store, which later morphed into several different names and formats. Alex also partnered with A. W. ("Kill") Luster in a specialty store selling only a huge array of hardware (which included firearms and other weapons). After more than a decade as a general merchant and dealer in real estate, Alex Black felt sufficiently experienced and financially successful to gather a group of co-investors to join him in launching Blacksburg's first post bellum full-service bank. He made that move in the early 1890s at a time when other factors had converged to make success likely.

Favorable Economic Conditions: VAMC and Agricultural Experiment Stations

One powerful force encouraging growth in the local economy, and hence banking, was the improved condition of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, located within the town of Blacksburg. VAMC had faced some trying times in the 1880s after a brief initial period of rising enrollments and adequate revenues. Enrollments fell from over two hundred per session in the mid-seventies to one hundred and even fewer. The number of staff and size of the budget shrank proportionately. VAMC was not the only land-grant institution facing similar difficulties. As one historian has explained, "Most land grant colleges struggled at first, lacking both students and a body of useful scientific knowledge to teach" about agriculture by using traditional college methods.[6] Originally the federal government did not make regular appropriations for the schools and expected them to flourish with proceeds from their land grants and tuition. In Virginia, the two land-grant institutions also suffered for several years from ongoing political battles between the Readjusters and the Funders. Virginia historian Peter Wallenstein writes that the

> central theme of the early 1880s was political turbulence associated with race, education, and public finance. As Readjusters and Democrats [aka Redeemers] took turns running the state, an extraordinary political conflict framed developments that strengthened elementary education and renovated higher education.[7]

The primarily conservative white Democrats (Redeemers) wished to prioritize state spending by fully funding old bonds and state debts, most reaching back to the 1840s and the frenzy of state-financed transportation improvements. The Readjusters (aka Adjusters) were a biracial coalition including but not limited to Republicans, who pushed to "adjust" downward any payment toward old debts and instead increase greatly current spending on public education and immediate needs for future progress. By 1885, the Democrats had won control over both the legislative and executive powers in Richmond; once in power they proved somewhat flexible. They devoted more money to public education, appointed a stable board of visitors and administration at VAMC, and guaranteed an ongoing budget. VAMC's original mission was widened to include degree programs in arts and sciences such as those found at existing liberal arts colleges, thereby appealing to a new sector of tuition-paying students.

In 1887–1888, the U.S. Congress provided a path to new program materials and financial assistance by creating and funding agricultural experiment stations via the Hatch Act; this enabled VAMC to purchase more land, farm equipment, and animal stock to use for practical demonstrations and teaching. Permanent fiscal relief came in 1890, when the Second Morrill Act provided annual federal appropriations for all land-grant institutions.[8] An influx of new students, employees, and dependable government paychecks provided a more secure future for both the college and the Blacksburg region.

Consolidation of Financial Position Among Members of Black Family

In the late 1880s, the financial future of Alexander Black and his three siblings also seemed to be further secured. Their father, Dr. Harvey Black, died in Richmond while undergoing complicated surgery for advanced prostate disease in 1888. He left behind him substantial financial assets. These included several building lots and rental houses in town, cash accounts in out-of-town banks, and stocks and bonds in numerous ventures. Some of his pre-war investments, such as stock in the railroad and in the spa at Montgomery White Sulfur Springs, still retained value because both the railroad and the spa (briefly abandoned after its use as a Confederate military hospital) were again profitable enterprises. Dr. Black's chief heirs and beneficiaries were his widow and his four children. The three brothers seemed settled, but Mrs. Mollie Black and her unmarried daughter, Lizzie (or Lizzie Belle), were briefly uncertain as to what financial arrangements and housing they would require. This uncertainty was resolved when, a

year after her father's death, Lizzie married Dr. John Apperson, her father's younger associate, and moved to his home in Marion.[9] The elder Mrs. Black expressed fulfillment and joy in helping to raise her grandchildren. The three Black brothers, knowing their sister and mother had found rewarding new lives, perhaps felt more confident as they began to invest at least some of their inheritance in new ways.

Banking Forerunners

As the uncertainties generated nationwide by the Panic of 1883 subsided, brothers Alex and Kent Black decided to devote some of their assets to purchasing stock in a new, publicly owned, state-incorporated bank for Blacksburg. Such a bank had been lacking since the end of the Civil War; the old Farmers and Merchants Bank technically existed another four years after the war in a state of confusion and indebtedness before its legal dissolution. Before 1891, there existed two businesses called "savings banks," operated by reputable town businessmen (notably the Henderson and Thomas families). These small businesses accepted very modest deposits for safekeeping and a small rate of interest; they did not underwrite loans, give credit for promissory notes, or keep on hand significant amounts of cash. Another bank offering more comprehensive financial services had been founded in town in 1889 as a privately held company solely owned and operated by two men. They, too, believed the moment was propitious for reviving greater banking services in Blacksburg.

Dr. William B. Conway, a physician and pharmacy owner who had come to Blacksburg in 1871, was known to the public because of his profession and was popularly viewed as the leader in "Conway's Bank."[10] Equally important in "the firm of Conway and Hubbert" was former Lutheran minister William Essiah Hubbert (1844–1915). A native of Roanoke County, Hubbert completed his education at Roanoke College in Salem in 1867 and ably served the only Lutheran congregation in downtown Blacksburg, Luther Memorial, from 1877 to 1888. During his tenure, he led a fundraising campaign to construct a new church building. Rev. Hubbert proved adept not only at raising monies but also at handling complicated transactions, keeping scrupulous records, and displaying keen knowledge and judgment in financial matters. He married Florence Virginia Ribble, daughter of a prominent Blacksburg physician, and the couple resided in the Ribbles' family home to the west of town. He withdrew from full-time ministerial service in 1888 and entered the world of local business and finance, where he enjoyed a reputation for probity and financial acumen.[11]

Despite their earlier success in financial and business matters, the Conway and Hubbert bank apparently encountered problems within a short time. A privately owned bank such as theirs had inherent limitations on how much operating capital it could generate with only two owners contributing money; furthermore, it presented possible dangers for its owners, each of whom bore complete and unlimited legal and financial liability for any bad debts, mistakes, or court judgments. Evidence of their encountering difficulty turned up later in the records of the Bank of Blacksburg. In the minutes of the board of directors meeting of September 19, 1898, it is noted that W. E. Hubbert "paid this Bank $500 on bad debt held formerly by the firm of Conway and Hubbert, other parties to the obligation being insolvent."[12] This entry implies that at its foundation, the Bank of Blacksburg agreed to take over transactions still underway at Conway and Hubbert. Presumably this freed both of those men from facing total liability for clearing up all outstanding business. Hubbert, who assumed the highly important role of cashier of the projected new bank, had been required to shoulder the financial liability of $500 from his previous position. In 1898, he paid off the debt because he wanted to buy shares in the Bank of Blacksburg, which he could not own free and clear while he owed it the $500.

Joining Together for a Publicly Held State Bank

The specter of unlimited liability may explain why, after only two years in their own business, Conway and Hubbert joined with Alexander Black and his fellow investors in creating a larger publicly held state bank. Other Blacksburg investors may have been encouraged by the recent successful creation of the state-chartered Bank of Christiansburg in 1888–1889. Statistics concerning national banks gathered by the Federal Reserve System reveal that local businessmen in Blacksburg and Christiansburg were following a growing nationwide trend by turning to the device of a state-chartered bank to meet the needs of their local economy. Information presented by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia shows that in 1865, the number of national banks in the U.S. outnumbered state banks by 1,294 to only 349. In 1885, both types of banking had expanded, with 2,689 national banks to only 1,015 state banks. However, the early 1890s showed a reversal of growth patterns for the two major types of banks. By 1892, in only seven years, the number of nationally chartered banks had risen to 3,759, while the number of state banks had more than tripled to 3,733 and soon outnumbered national banks.[13] Virtually none of these new state banks issued their own bank notes because of the prohibitive cost of paying the 10 percent federal tax on the value of their notes.

What the state banks could do, and the national banks could not, was to provide mortgage money for modernizing regional agriculture and to make business loans of various sizes to the local companies and individual entrepreneurs who were growing town and rural economies. Multiplying local state banks also improved physical accessibility to full services and cut the cost and time of doing such business. For a Blacksburg businessman to reach banks in Christiansburg, for example, he had to travel on horseback or by horse-drawn vehicle over dirt or gravel roads that traversed steep grades and often muddy bottom areas; typical travel time one way was between an hour and a half to two hours. The telephone, railroad, and daily mail service all lay in the future.

By organizing a community of business investors and a public offering of shares in a state bank, Black and his colleagues benefitted the entire community over the long run. The new enterprise could obtain a higher capitalization and limit the possible loss of each stockholder to the actual amount of his investment. Without doubt, one of the most notable achievements of Alex Black's business career was to convince numerous town businessmen to undertake limited risk in pursuit of far greater benefits. After spearheading creation of the Bank of Blacksburg in 1891, he then served as the president of its board of directors and chief executive for four and a half decades.

Obtaining the Virginia State Charter for the Bank of Blacksburg, June 1891

The decision to create a state-chartered bank rather than a national one was imposed by prevailing circumstances. The original stockholders could not easily raise enough capital to meet the higher financial requirement for a national charter; nor could they keep on hand the federally required level of reserves. Furthermore, state banks had more freedom to provide business loans, accept deposits, and finance farm improvements than national banks; these services were needed locally and these powers would bring profitability when carefully exercised. All of the national hurdles would have been difficult for a start-up bank in a rural town without modern transportation to overcome in 1891. By 1921, the situation had changed sufficiently that the Bank of Blacksburg could continue its local lending and investment, increase its capitalization, and surrender its state charter in favor of a national one (see below).

The formal petition to create "a body corporate under the laws of the Commonwealth" to be named the Bank of Blacksburg was filed in the Circuit Court of Montgomery County on May 23, 1891. This original

document has been preserved by the Bank of Blacksburg, along with multiple volumes of historical records.[14] The initial capital of the new bank was to be at least ten thousand dollars and no more than fifty thousand dollars, with each share priced at one hundred dollars. The bank's ownership of real estate was not to exceed five hundred acres of land and the buildings used to carry out its business. The liability of each individual stockholder was specifically limited to the value of his investment. The petition indicated that the new bank wished "to conduct a banking business in all of the branches except issuing notes for circulation." Among the usual items, such as making loans, receiving deposits, and so forth, was listed the power "to buy and sell on commission" a wide variety of securities and notes, including "foreign and domestic exchange, stock certificates of debt, and shares in chartered companies."

This description of the intended scope of the bank's business reiterates the wide variety of items that were used as a medium of exchange as well as collateral for loans in an era when there was relatively little U.S. currency available in the area. Expert evaluation of other paper instruments was a crucial service to buyers, sellers, and those seeking loans. The petition to incorporate was witnessed by a deputy circuit clerk and approved by a state judge on the condition that the new "Company shall pay its dues and taxes to the Commonwealth in lawful money of the United States and not in coupons"[15] (representing stock or dividends).

In the petition of incorporation and the state's approval of it, there seem to be several notes of caution. The decision not to issue Bank of Blacksburg bank notes was dictated by the onerous federal tax; it also helped the new bankers to avoid getting in over their heads by issuing notes that, if all were returned for redemption in U.S. currency or gold during an economic panic, could possibly overwhelm their reserves and capital. The limitation on ownership of real estate was another reasonable precaution for the time, an attempt to discourage real estate speculation that too often in U.S. history had fueled local booms followed by disastrous crashes. It should be added that the bank could extend mortgages or loans with real estate as collateral; the limitation was on actual ownership of real estate. The state of Virginia was also careful to protect itself by requiring that payments due the state be made in U.S. currency and not in stock or other notes bearing promises to pay.[16]

Original Personnel Creating the Bank of Blacksburg

Interestingly, the original petition to incorporate named W. E. Hubbert as the president of the new Bank of Blacksburg and Alexander Black as the vice president. The board of directors consisted of W. B. Conway (listed first), Kent Black, A. W. Luster, Alex Black, and W. E. Hubbert. Three

additional men signed the petition: G. T. Gray, J. T. Hardwick, and W. J. Hardwick. Proposing W. E. Hubbert in the petition as the president of the Bank of Blacksburg (hereafter referred to as "the Bank" if used without qualifiers) may have reflected the petitioners' desire to demonstrate to potential investors that their new financial venture was guided by someone with previous banking experience. Featuring Hubbert as president and Conway as first among the corporation's directors may also have offered continuity to those already dealing with the Conway and Hubbert firm. On the other hand, Hubbert's legal liability for bad debt from the earlier private bank may have disqualified him from the primary leadership role among investors, who immediately selected Alex Black as president once incorporation was granted. It is notable that Conway prominently supported the petition and afterward quickly exited the banking business; he became neither a stockholder nor an employee of the new bank.

Stockholders and Officers

After the sale of stock had taken place and the stockholders had met together for the first time, they created a realignment of offices. Alexander Black was selected president of the board of directors; John C. Grissom, the vice president. W. E. Hubbert was hired as the cashier. The handwritten report of the first meeting of stockholders showed that the stock was held as follows:

N. R. Stanger	29 shares (the largest single investment)
A. Black	27 shares (years later, increased to 30)
J(ohn) C. Grissom	14 shares
(Prof.) J. E. Christian	10 shares
A. W. Luster	10 shares
K(ent) Black	10 shares
J. L. Eakins	2 shares
W. J. Hardwick	1 share
C. N. Knox	1 share (represented by proxy)
H. S. Hubbert	1 share (Henry Hubbert, son of W. E. Hubbert)

The First Officers and Members of the Board of Directors

The purchased shares numbered 105, showing that the Bank was originally capitalized at $10,500, achieving the minimum set forth in its charter with just a bit to spare, $500 (5 shares). Clearly brothers Alexander and Kent Black, with 37 shares, represented the largest single block of stocks without directly controlling a majority of the shares. John C. Grissom, the new vice president, had a significant holding of 14 shares and long business experience in a family livestock and butchering business. The largest stockholder, N. R. Stanger, did not immediately serve as a bank officer, possibly because he had played little or no role in organizing or signing the petition for incorporation of the Bank. His family had been in Blacksburg since at least 1808, with different members owning and then reselling two of the original town lots. N. R. Stanger undertook various business enterprises after the Civil War, including general merchandising and real estate. He may have purchased his shares in the bank using proceeds from a recent successful land transaction. In April 1891, Stanger had sold to heirs of William Ballard Preston a small tract of land crucial in the heirs' effort to reconstitute most of the 1862 Smithfield properties. Stanger's interest and ability were recognized in June 1892, when he was elected to the board of directors by the stockholders in their annual meeting. He then regularly attended the scheduled meetings of the board throughout the 1890s.[17]

William E. Hubbert: Cashier, Bookkeeper, Clerk, and Secretary

Crucial to the operation and daily success of the new Bank was its first and for many years only full time employee, W. E. Hubbert. He served as head cashier from 1891 until his terminal illness and death in 1915. The meaning of the term "cashier" has changed greatly in U.S. usage in the last century or so. In 1891, a bank's cashier was its chief financial officer or comptroller, or both. When banks were listed in business directories or print advertisement in the late 1800s, generally the name of the cashier was listed first and the president second.[18] In addition to conducting business with customers and recording in detail every transaction for every day in the bank's ledgers, a cashier such as Hubbert had many duties. He produced summaries of the bank's overall condition at various intervals and reported these to the officers and directors. He served as secretary, recording the minutes of meetings of the board and of the annual shareholders' meetings; obviously his secretarial duties made him very well informed about bank business. Additionally, he carried out administrative duties such as drafting correspondence with distant bank partners (called "correspondent banks") and conducting business on behalf of the bank with outside companies. For

Hubbert, some of his more unusual tasks included investigating the types and prices of burglar alarms and of bank safes, arranging for telephone service as soon as lines in town were complete, and even obtaining a handgun for use by the bank's night watchman.

It was typical for the cashier or his family members to own shares of stock in the bank. As the person responsible for conducting daily business and specifically executing orders by the board, Hubbert was a well-paid and highly trusted employee. He earned an annual salary of five hundred dollars (the same as Alex Black, the Bank president) and was provided a bond of five thousand dollars by the Bank as a protective guarantor of his work. His exquisite script in flowing ink fills the first fifteen years of virtually all of the bank's records. When he became very ill with pneumonia in 1915, the Bank officers awarded him the post of cashier emeritus and a stipend equal to half of his salary so long as he lived.

The First Year of the Bank's Operation

The first twelve months of the bank's operation seemed busy and optimistic. Money appeared readily available to lend and to make repayments. Each month, the board (president, vice president, and one or more directors) met one or two times and authorized loans (discounted notes) to various individuals and a few companies. In these early months, there were no specific policies in place to guide evaluation of every applicant's qualifications for a loan or to set the interest charged the borrower and the term of the loan, often expressed in days. The board made decisions on each application individually, apparently based on their consensus concerning the applicant's overall prospects (and those of any co-signers). This almost informal approach worked well for most parties while the overall economy was faring well. A few applicants were turned down for a loan; many more were directed to get a colleague or person known to the Bank to co-sign for a loan. Loans tended to be small, from one hundred dollars to three hundred dollars, and relatively short term, such as thirty to ninety days.

The First Annual Meeting and Annual Report, June 1892

After a year of operation, the "Annual Report of the Directors" to the general stockholders' meeting (June 3, 1892) announced growth "in every department" and accuracy in the tally of all accounts and records. Gross resources and liabilities balanced at $21,011.72. Net earnings for the year totaled $902.27. Of that sum, the amount of $250 was held back in reserve to pay interest on certificates of deposit and "interest equitably coming to those holding paid up bank stock." At the suggestion of the board, owners of

certificates of deposit (CDs) received 6 percent annual interest for the past year, to be reduced to 4 percent in the coming year. Stockholders received a 12 percent annual dividend per share of stock "calculated on the amount of money paid in." This qualifier implied that some stock had been purchased partly on credit backed up by high quality securities (such as government bonds and at least one life insurance policy) rather than full cash payment. The stockholders agreed and then re-elected Alex Black as president and J. C. Grissom as vice president. From amongst themselves they elected an additional four directors, namely N. R. Stanger, A. W. Luster, Dr. Kent Black, and VAMC professor J. E. Christian (ten shares). The new board met immediately, rehired W. E. Hubbert under the same terms as before, and undertook to "meet the second Wednesday in June and every other Wednesday thereafter at 3 PM."[19]

The Bank's Second Year, June 1892–July 1893

Over the summer and autumn months, there seemed to be a leveling off or downturn in local business and less confidence in lending bank money based on a general consensus of directors present. The Bank found itself being offered payment in highly discounted notes and receiving requests for loans from individuals who seemed unlikely to make prompt repayment. Requests came from borrowers to extend the term of a loan or to roll over an unpaid balance after a partial payment was made. The interest rates charged (and paid on deposits) in the previous year began to seem too high, even to the bankers. The board began to discuss creating a written policy to guide their loan and discount policy.

Regularization of Policy Governing Key Aspects of Business

On October 24, 1892, the Bank's board gave final approval to a discount policy to be applied to all loans and promissory notes. They decided that "the minimum discount on sums of $25.00 and over for 30 days or more" would be $1.00. The "minimum discount on sums below $25.00 would be 50 cents." The board's selection of $25 as essentially a benchmark for a sizeable loan and a minimum discount rate that worked out to 4 percent for 30 days reinforces the picture of a time when money was in very short supply and the cost of obtaining it was sufficient to begin shrinking business initiatives. The Great Recession of 1893 had not yet arrived in full force, but its approach in one small Virginia town was noticeable.[20]

The last two months of 1892 saw further regularization of bank procedures by a group of businessmen who were themselves new to the business. These efforts included delineating the publicly accessible areas of

the bank, where business was transacted with customers, from the private office reserved for the deliberations and work of officers and stockholders. At that time the Bank operated from a few rented rooms on the ground floor of a hotel on Main Street, previously the location of the Blacksburg Savings Institute. To designate the area appropriate for the public coming to do business, the board purchased a large desk to serve as a counter over which all business was to be transacted. At the cost of twenty-five dollars, the desk/counter must have been impressive indeed. In the same vein, they decided that only a Bank officer or employee could transport Bank correspondence to and from the post office about a block away.[21]

Board members also began to wrestle with questions of placing print advertisements in crucial publications and recruiting new customers. They decided to advertise the Bank of Blacksburg's services for the first time, placing their notice in the VAMC publication *The Gray Jacket.* They considered offering savings accounts for children, encouraging them to hoard their coins in miniature banks that the board could purchase and distribute; this project was not further pursued. An order was placed for professionally printed checks to supply to their customers as the new year approached.[22]

Holding the Line in a Time of Recession and Deflation

By February of 1893, the focus of board efforts became staving off contraction and financial loss rather than growth of the bank's business. For the first time, the directors decided that one chronically unpaid promissory note must be "put out for collection" by more forceful legal means; they also foreclosed on a lot in Salem that had been serving as collateral. One excellent client who showed his good faith by paying off one-half of his due note was granted additional time to pay the remainder.[23] Extreme caution had set in. The Panic of 1893, described by one historian as "a spectacular financial crisis," included the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange and a flood of gold leaving the U.S. Treasury for Europe. Since every dollar was then required by law to be backed up by a specific weight of fine gold, the money supply contracted, prices fell, businesses failed, wages were slashed, and workers went on strike.[24] As the local and national economy continued to contract, the Bank of Blacksburg made a careful review of overall conditions in late March 1893, and the board agreed upon a new policy whereby the bank would automatically refuse applications for loans to any customer whose name was not already on the approved list, "believing it was not safe to further increase the discount list."[25]

Expansion in Leadership and Stockholder Base in 1893

During these challenging months, most decisions were made by the official board of directors, minus one ill absentee (Prof. James R. Christian). Four individuals—President Alex Black, Vice President Grissom, and Directors W. R. Stanger and Kent Black—bore the weight of leadership. Combined, they owned by far the greatest amount of stock and were trusted by the other stockholders and by the depositors of the Bank. When Christian's illness forced him to resign, informal consultation with numerous stockholders led to inviting Prof. Robert C. Price, who had recently purchased Bank stock, to join the board. Price's addition brought the board back to full strength until someone permanent could be named at the June 1893 stockholders meeting. The newcomer to the board was not a newcomer to the community as his family had been among the earliest settlers of Montgomery County. Price's selection, like Christian's before him, also served to demonstrate the openness of the bank's leaders and shareholders to the college community and their desire to harmonize town and gown interests for the benefit of both.[26]

Other purchasers of stock since June 1892 included Prof. R. T. Bray, Mrs. M. S. Petty, Mrs. M. A. Crumpaker, W. E. Hubbert Jr., and Florence Hubbert. As this listing clearly indicates, several women had become stockholders very early in the bank's history. In the case of the Hubbert family, the bank's cashier did not yet own stock, but his son and two women in the family did as the years passed. When J. C. Christian became too ill to serve effectively as a director, he entrusted ownership of his shares "to a female relative." In these two cases, assigning stocks to a woman seems to have served to separate stock ownership from the regular business activities of a male relative and perhaps to have placed some safe or socially appropriate assets at the immediate disposal of family members upon the death—or insolvency—of the man who still seemed to "cover" them financially in most matters. This may have been the case for Mrs. Crumpaker as well since her family members were successful orchardists in the region. Later, Mary Louise Black, the adopted child of Alex and Lizzie Black, also appeared at an early age on the list of stockholders.[27]

Issues before the Annual Stockholders Meeting in June 1893

Because economic and financial conditions had worsened significantly in 1893, the bank's directors decided to make special preparations for the upcoming stockholders' annual meeting. First, they appointed a subcommittee of four directors to study and report on all aspects of the Bank's current situation. Those chosen were Luster, Grissom, R. C. Price,

and Kent Black. On May 8, this subcommittee formally proposed to the board that no dividends should be paid for the year and that all earnings should be deposited into the "surplus fund" of liquid assets to meet future obligations. After a lengthy discussion, any decision was deferred for one week. Then, at the formal suggestion of J. C. Grissom, a less drastic solution was crafted: a 3 percent dividend would be paid, covering the first six months of 1893. Then if the situation had improved in December, the same amount would be paid for the remaining six months of the year.[28]

This proposition must have been disappointing to stock owners who gathered on June 31, 1893. The previous year, the original stockholders had earned a 12 percent annual dividend. Investors had since purchased another forty-one shares in hopes of strong returns. But the stockholders agreed by a large majority with the directors' proposal after board members reported that the Bank had $1,335.05 to its credit. However, a majority also reacted by passing a resolution to limit the total number of shares in the bank to one hundred fifty. Apparently, they sought thereby to ensure a maximum possible return on each share. On the negative side, limiting the number of shares would limit the bank's ability to raise additional capital from new investors unless existing shares began to sell at a premium (above the original one hundred dollars per share price). The board then moved and a majority approved an additional proposal that in the future, if it seemed appropriate to authorize further issues of stock, the decision could be made by a unanimous vote among a quorum of the board of directors.[29]

With these questions decided, a large majority of the stockholders reiterated their faith in the existing leadership to guide the Bank through probably the worst financial years in Blacksburg since the Civil War. They reelected all six men to their previous positions. Only the Bank president drew a salary; the $250 stipend proposed in 1891 for the vice-president had disappeared. After the shareholders' meeting adjourned, the board of directors retired to their office sanctum and re-appointed W. E. Hubbard as cashier, teller, bookkeeper and secretary combined. He remained the only employee, and in recognition of the many important functions he filled, he was awarded an increase in salary to $550, more than President Black himself was paid.[30]

The Ongoing Depression; James K. Henderson Joins Shareholders

As June wore on, the board spent much of one meeting discussing the ongoing "stringency of the money market." In a protective mode probably not unknown in other college towns, they resolved not to grant any new loans until the local college had completed its current session

and students had dispersed.[31] In July, the board accepted the application of local businessman James K. Henderson, a frequent customer of the bank, to purchase the remaining unissued original shares of bank stock at a premium price of $110 per share. Henderson had discounted numerous short-term notes through the Bank and always repaid on time; furthermore, the Bank had accepted discount requests by others when Henderson had co-signed the note. His stock purchase increased the Bank's capitalization and produced "excess revenue" that was immediately placed in the surplus fund.[32] Henderson's family had experience with savings banks and he played an active role after becoming a member of the board that autumn (September 1893). In the following decades, Henderson became vice president of the Bank (continuously reelected from 1920) and then president after the death of Alexander Black (1935).[33]

The Bank continued to press debtors to repay as much as possible on their loans and to grant extensions to those who did so. Cashier Hubbert "was advised to insist on as large payments as possible in renewals," surely one of his least enjoyable tasks. Loans became more difficult to obtain. In a board meeting held on September 25, 1893, the officers cautiously explored "the present financial pressure, which all admit is getting easier."[34] With that mildly positive conclusion, the detailed account of the first years of the Bank of Blacksburg must come to a close. Unfortunately, a sizeable sheaf of the large journal pages containing the reports and records from early 1894 through late 1896 are missing and could not be located.

The Late 1890s and the 1910s

The latter years of the 1890s reveal a situation somewhat improved over that of late 1893. Dividends were fixed at "the usual semi-annual dividend of three percent" and payable by the cashier upon request. The records were thoroughly scrutinized by the entire board twice a year and corrections made. Most loans were rather small ($12.50) to modest in size (a few hundred dollars), with one to a clergyman for only $50 secured by a life insurance policy. So long as deflation gripped the country, small sums wielded enormous purchasing power per dollar. The largest loan, $700 to a professor to improve a farm, was secured by a mortgage on the farm "in a form approved by the bank's attorney."[35] Certificates of deposit could not exceed $100 and would earn 3 percent. Sums beyond the first $100 would be accepted for safekeeping but would not earn any interest unless the discount committee of the board later decided to allow some. The discount committee was a new step in loan approval; a subcommittee of the board of directors now vetted all loan applications before the full board of directors

reviewed them. Foreclosures did occur, perhaps one or two a year. The overall picture was one of caution and constraint.

The salary proposed for the vice president in the Bank's first optimistic year ($250) had apparently been permanently eliminated. W. E. Hubbert's pay had increased, as he had taken on more and more tasks; he was authorized to use part of his own salary to hire his son, Henry, to assist him part-time as needed. Each board member was paid the princely sum of fifty cents for each board meeting in which he "actively" participated. Evidently the possibility of theft by a desperate person was real in those hard times because the Bank in 1897 hired a security guard to spend the night inside the building, providing him a handgun and a bed near the vault. The watchman soon had one of the first telephones in town to summon assistance if needed (November 1898) as the Bank was eager to take advantage of this new technology as soon as the wires were strung from the new poles.[36]

The annual meeting of June 1898 revealed changes that had affected the Bank in these tight times. Only eight stockholders appeared at the meeting, owning a total of ninety shares. Four of the attendees were members of Hubbert's family, together controlling an impressive thirty-three of the ninety shares represented. The two Black brothers, Grissom, and Henderson, controlled the balance. The meeting approved the 3 percent semi-annual dividend, reelected all the officers and board, and adjourned.[37] Later that year, Webb E. Stanger, now in possession of much of the original Stanger stock, surrendered twenty-six (of twenty-nine) shares at face value to the Bank to obtain funds for other debts. After consulting a lawyer as to the proper procedure, the Bank sold the shares "in blocks as may seem equitable" to five different investors, three of them members of the Hubbert family. It was upon this occasion that the head cashier, W. E. Hubbert, paid the bank five hundred dollars in consideration of bad debt that the Bank of Blacksburg still held as a successor to the private bank run by Hubbert and Conway. Clearing this liability allowed Hubbert to assume full and clear ownership of Bank stocks. Alexander Black had increased his holdings to thirty shares and thus owned the largest single amount of stock, and Kent Black still held ten. By the annual stockholders meeting in mid-1899, all five Hubberts together owned fifty shares, the Blacks forty shares, and James K. Henderson had increased his shares to twenty. With one hundred ten shares, these three families easily controlled a majority ownership of the Bank.[38]

Expansion and Growth in the Early 1900s

By the first years of the twentieth century, economic and financial matters had improved and the depression lifted. The Bank, personified

by Alexander Black, played a major role in organizing and chartering a company to revive the local anthracitic coal mines near the small settlement of Merrimac and to build a spur railroad from the mainline in Christiansburg, not only to the new colliery, but to downtown Blacksburg as well. With the paperwork in place, the bank authorized loans, including one of four thousand dollars to the Virginia Anthracite Railroad Company in October 1904. Some physical improvements were made to the bank facilities, implying less financial pressure felt by the bankers. The Hubbert family continued to remain prominent in the Bank, with Henry S. Hubbert becoming a director and young Florence Hubbert earning twenty-five dollars a month in the bookkeeping office. Miss Hubbert was only one of several women who worked first behind the scenes in the office but later at the public customers' counter as tellers. The dividend paid to shareholders in 1906 rose to 4 percent per share and interest on CDs increased somewhat.[39] In urban areas, the Panic of 1907, caused (primarily) by irregularities in the New York stock and financial markets, caused distant bank failures, but recovery was quick[40] and Blacksburg seemed little affected.

The 1913 Federal Reserve Act and World War I (1914–1918)

Events of great importance in terms of local and national banking occurred in the decade of the 1910s. A notable piece of legislation, the Federal Reserve Act, passed Congress in 1913 after two years of political maneuvering and compromise. It was a significant step toward meeting one of its stated goals, providing a flexible national currency whose volume could expand as the economy expanded and then contract gradually when the business cycle turned downward. If deflation threatened, the currency supply could increase to prevent catastrophic drops in prices and production. If inflation threatened, the currency supply could be diminished to slow price increases. These goals were pursued through actions of the twelve Regional Federal Reserve Banks. In theory the regional banks could exercise some flexibility in responding to local problems. The twelve Regional Reserve Banks were owned by the stockholder-owned banks who joined the system and met the requirement in reserves to join. The head of each Regional Reserve Bank was appointed by the U.S. president and was accountable to national officials. It was hoped this would enable a degree of central coordination and quicker action in response to the nation's recurring financial crises and allow public policy makers a role to balance that of the member banks.

The outbreak of World War I in Europe the next year (1914) quickly altered and greatly stimulated the American economy, as the U.S. declared

its neutrality and traded with both sides in the international conflict. As increasing output of military items, food, and consumer goods were shipped to a battered Europe, American farms, mines, and industries flourished. Inflationary pressures enticed even marginal resources into production; locally, land generally left uncultivated and seams of poor quality coal were worked because the inflated prices made them profitable. Frequently, European combatants—especially the British and the French—financed the purchase of such products through loans from private American business sources. Inflation accelerated during the war boom, particularly after the U.S. joined the war in 1917.

One result of the economic expansion of the war and its immediate aftermath, both in Montgomery County and nationwide, was the expansion of banking to provide funds for expanded production. On the strictly local level, changes were obvious. The size of loans by the Bank of Blacksburg increased as inflation moved prices up. The local land-grant college, which (unlike many) had retained a strong element of military training and organization for students, was utilized by the U.S. Army in 1917–1918 as a ready-made training institution (see "'Living in a New World': World War One and the Decline of Military Tradition at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1916–1923," beginning on page 29). The army brought hundreds of additional men to campus to train them in technical skills and crafts necessary to the military, and it enlisted cadets into ROTC units. These programs brought thousands of additional government dollars to the campus and town.[41]

The Bank of Blacksburg Enters a New Era, 1915–1922

The period 1915 to 1922 led to changes in personnel, ownership, and operations in the Bank of Blacksburg, changes that left the bank well positioned to survive dislocations caused by World War I as well as the crisis of 1929 and the Great Depression. Following the death of W. E. Hubbert Sr. in 1915, more than one new employee was required to fill the gap left by his death. The Hubbert family's concentrated investment in the Bank steeply diminished and the Hubbert children looked elsewhere for employment. By 1920, the Hubberts had entirely disappeared from the list of stockholders present in person or by proxy at the annual meeting on July 1.

At the same meeting, James K. Henderson was elected as vice president of the Bank and remained in that position for the next 15 years. John C. Grissom, an original investor and long time vice president, was no longer on the stockholder list (although W. B. Grissom was). New directors were also named. Indeed, after this meeting, Alexander Black

was the only remaining original organizer/investor to hold any office in the bank, and similarly, no salaried employee dated from that era. Two of his closest original colleagues, his older brother, Kent, and W. E. Hubbert, were deceased.[42]

From 1914 onward, Alexander Black himself seemed to have made the Bank less of a priority in his own life. In that year, he and his wife began making lengthy sojourns in northern and central Florida. Their stays gradually lengthened and stretched finally to four months (with Alex occasionally returning to Blacksburg for business). In 1917, Lizzie and Alex purchased a small winter home near Lakeland, Florida. While Alex could and did communicate with his colleagues at the bank via telephone, telegraph, and speedy mail trains, it seems safe to surmise that he was not exercising close supervision. The year 1918 was a difficult one for him and his immediate family. Lizzie Black underwent serious medical problems and surgery from which she never entirely recovered. Their daughter, Mary Louise Black Luster, had died of the Asian flu epidemic while Lizzie was hospitalized. Mary Louise had been married for only two years, and she died with no children to survive her.

Considering a list of those attending the July 1, 1920, stockholders' annual meeting, it is apparent that ownership of the Bank was dominated by two groups of shareholders. One consisted of the extended family of Alex Black and his siblings. Alex's widowed sister, Elizabeth Black Apperson, and her son, Harvey Apperson; his brother C.W. Black and his wife; and Kent Black's widow all appeared as stockholders. Another group of shareholders appeared to represent a renewed interest in the Bank by local business and professional men and their families, such as W. M. Lybrook, J. E. Williams (later dean of the college at VPI), A. W. Drinkard, C. M. Broce, W. M. Palmer (also a distant relative), J. T. Hardwick, and the Bank's head cashier of several years, J. W. Bland. A canvas of the group showed that 330 shares were present in person, with an additional 57 shares represented by proxy. Those present approved a 4 percent dividend, totaling $2,000 for all shares. Total shares, then, were valued at $50,000 and presumably numbered about 500, assuming most shares had carried the same purchase price of $100.[43]

There appeared at this annual meeting a sense of rallying around and preparing for action as the Bank of Blacksburg prepared to mark its upcoming thirtieth birthday and move its business operations to a new building on the northwest corner of Main and Roanoke streets. This spirit may well have been accentuated in response to the fact that, for the first time, serious banking competition had arisen in Blacksburg. Other merchants and bankers in 1920 obtained a state charter for the Farmers and Merchants

Bank of Blacksburg. This new publicly owned bank had, if not thrown down the gauntlet, at least opened for business as a competitor. Such a fact must have prompted Bank of Blacksburg stock owners to review and assess their own financial and professional position.[44]

Officers elected in 1920 included Alex Black as president (salary unchanged at $500) and James K. Henderson as vice-president (no salary but paid modestly for attending board meetings). The board of directors was composed of W. B. Ellett, J. T. Hardwick, W. M. Lybrook, J. D. Stanger, and J. E. Williams. The board quickly confirmed J. W. Bland as chief cashier (salary of $1,200) and J. M. Kessler Jr. as assistant cashier (salary of $1,200); these two men ran daily operations and supervised two or three bookkeepers, who were paid about $900 each. Both their excellent salaries and their ownership of bank stock indicated that Bland and Kessler were accomplished bankers, in the tradition of W. E. Hubbert. At many coming board meetings and on various records and correspondence, Henderson or Bland (often both) signed on behalf of the bank, indicating the absence of Alex Black.

The Financial Panic of 1920 and the Recession of the Early 1920s

Soon, larger economic factors began to suggest that fundamental changes in operations were needed to maintain a high level of banking service. Nationwide, the years 1920–1922 ushered in yet another panic, a monetary crisis wherein gold flowed out of the federal treasury, shrinking the money supply and depressing prices. American farms, mines, and industry had expanded their output greatly to meet wartime needs; with the war concluded and Europe resuming peacetime economic activities, the U.S. market was flooded with overproduction. Americans who had responded to the wartime drive for greater output now found themselves with large inventories, little demand, and tumbling prices. Those who had borrowed to finance expansion found it difficult to pay their debts, and some faced foreclosures or bankruptcy.

One problem plaguing Blacksburg was, yet again, the lack of circulating medium. The Bank had sufficient assets, but sometimes not enough cash, to carry out its business. Quarterly reviews revealed that one of the Bank's greatest expenses was to pay interest and transportation fees for shipments of currency borrowed from larger distant banks. The board of directors was required to meet for each such request for a loan, further slowing the flow of money and products. Increasingly, the Blacksburg Bank had to turn to the National Exchange Bank of Roanoke and even to Richmond's National State and City Bank (*sic*) to borrow currency for routine transactions. In

Blacksburg, the seasonal needs of agricultural and processing activity accentuated this problem, and the cyclical nature of college business and student spending may have added to it.

The difficulties and cost of obtaining currency in this way was pointed out by a regular bank inspection by the State Corporation Commission (SCC) in mid-1921. To facilitate the flow of money, the examiner suggested that Bank officers be allowed to borrow currency from their Roanoke and Richmond suppliers without waiting to call a special board of directors meeting. The board agreed in a letter to the SCC in August 1921; yet they knew this did not address the underlying problem.[45]

Another difficulty facing the bank was that it had maintained a fairly low level of capitalization in relation to overall inflation since about 1900 and in relation to the size of loans it was being asked to underwrite. Figures for 1920 revealed that the bank was capitalized at about $50,000. That amount seemed small when considering that on May 5, 1920, the directors had gathered at a special meeting and agreed to grant "a credit line of $33,000 to William M. Lybrook." Several months later, a loan of $1,600 was granted to a Blacksburg artisan, and others for $1,500 and $15,000 were approved. In 1921 came a loan of $10,000 to Harvey Apperson, secured by a deed of trust on land and a house in Salem. A large amount of money seemed to be flowing out in exchange for assets that could not quickly be turned around. One interesting transaction occurred on September 21, 1920, when the cashier was authorized to sell to Alex Black "$10,000 in United States Certificates of Indebtedness owned by the bank." Possibly this was a device by which the bank converted a top quality asset, a U.S. government bond, into currency and other more liquid assets.[46] The state examiner again indicated areas of concern, urging the bank to increase the reserve fund set aside to pay taxes and to place all paid employees under security bonds to enhance overall bank security.

Making the Transition to a National Bank and the Federal Reserve System

In early 1921, the officers and directors started the year with discussions about "general banking business," and two directors were deputed to "check upon all COLLATERAL (*sic*) held by the bank and to report on same as soon as possible."[47] Alexander Black was not present at board meetings in late December or January; Vice President Henderson and Cashier Bland signed the minutes. A newly elected director, James H. B. Fogelman, was sent in October to attend a meeting of "Group Five Virginia Bankers" in Roanoke, and there was more discussion of "general banking business" following his

Today's National Bank of Blacksburg can be seen at the left, with the first building specifically constructed to house the bank and its second location visible across Roanoke Street. The bank's third location, across the street from the second site, is reflected in the windows of the current building. All three locations pictured here faced Main Street (photo by William E. Cox).

positive report.[48] After many meetings and discussions, the majority seemed ready to move forward.

On November 22, 1921, a board meeting with Alex Black in the chair welcomed an "agent" from the Federal Reserve Bank in Richmond, who explained the workings and advantages of joining the system. At the same meeting, an assistant cashier from the National Exchange Bank of Roanoke talked about the advantages of converting to a national bank. Later conversations indicated that the Bank should increase its capital stock to seventy-five thousand dollars in order to obtain a national charter. This process also involved selling large amounts of bank bond holdings previously used as collateral to secure the repetitive loans of cash made to the Bank of Blacksburg by the Roanoke and Richmond national banks. The bonds sold at this time were high quality collateral for a state-chartered bank. However, to become a nationally chartered bank, an institution had to invest in a specific type of U.S. bond, which carried a "circulating privilege" that conveyed the right to issue U.S. national banknotes directly into circulation. Exchanging the old bonds for those with the circulating privilege was necessary to obtain a national charter and then bring much needed national currency to the area.

All of these steps were approved by a special stockholders' meeting, and on June 6, 1922, the board of directors signed "all papers necessary for the conversion of the Bank of Blacksburg into the National Bank of Blacksburg." Shortly thereafter, the Bank completed all the requirements to join the Federal Reserve System as well.[49] This entailed paying in resources to become a partial owner of the Federal Reserve Bank in Richmond, where a large reserve fund contributed by all owner banks was held. Member banks could borrow from this accumulated reserve fund to meet problems in cash flow and pay the lowest interest rate commercially available (often referred to as the federal prime rate for short-term loans of money). When the pressure eased, the bank repaid its loan. The ability to move large amounts of reserves to help banks under pressure was to become the salvation of many national banks when faced by a run on resources by fearful depositors after the crash of 1929.

The Bank of Blacksburg continued to thrive after transforming itself into a new and more flexible institution. Alexander Black remained its titular president well after he had ceased to play an active role. The decisions he and his colleagues made in the early 1920s had created the National Bank of Blacksburg and had given it the strength gained from membership in the Federal Reserve System. On Tuesday, September 24, 1929, the Bank's regular weekly balance sheet showed capital stock of $75,000, a surplus of $23,000, deposits of $260,000, and a total credit balance of $588,074. It had come a long way from its beginnings in 1891 and had gained the ability to survive the imminent stock market collapse and the following Great Depression, which saw over five thousand American banks fail by March 1933. The National Bank of Blacksburg continues in 2018 to retain its identity as a local bank owned and operated by members of its local community.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my thanks to James Rakes, longtime president and leader of the National Bank of Blacksburg, for the bank's support for *The Smithfield Review* over the years and for his assistance in encouraging my research for this article. I also wish to thank the employees of the bank who introduced me to the wonderful items in the bank's "history closet" located at its headquarters on South Main Street and who enabled me to work on the documents there. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Alexander Black House and the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation for sharing their expertise and their files with me; historian Hilary Harrison provided a wonderful selection of historic photographs. I owe special thanks to the community's recently deceased friend and mentor, Nina Black Apperson

Little, great niece of Alexander Black. She and her son, Craig Little, have preserved and shared her memories of her grandmother, Lizzie Black Apperson, and her great uncle, Alex, and made many tangible contributions to the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation. Finally, thank you to Hugh Campbell, founding editor of *The Smithfield Review,* for encouraging me to study the life and career of Alexander Black and to undertake this project on the Bank of Blacksburg.

Endnotes

1. A recent readable and easily accessible treatment of both economic and financial matters is presented by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia at its website under the title "The State and National Banking Eras, A Chapter in the History of Central Banking" at *www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/publications/economic-education/state-and-national-banking-eras,* accessed March 3, 2018.

   For an overview of terms and cyclical downswings, see Paul S. Boyer, ed., "Depressions: Economic," in *The Oxford Companion to United States History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 182–185. For greater detail on various economic matters mentioned in this article, see a standard text in economic history such as that by Gilbert C. Fite and Jim E. Reese, *An Economic History of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973 and other editions). Some economic matters became politically contentious, such as requiring the U.S. Treasury to hold a stated weight of fine gold to maintain the exact value of every dollar in circulation (known as the gold standard). The presidential election of 1896, in the wake of a terrible depression, revolved around this issue. Detailed discussion of such complex national phenomenon is simply beyond the scope of this article. Currency issues are discussed in the next paragraph of the text.
2. "The National Bank Act of 1863," *Oxford Companion to American History,* 557–558; Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, "State and National Banking," 8–12.
3. The precise figures on Treasury gold reserves and currency in circulation are cited in Jonathan R. T. Hughes, *American Economic History* (Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1998), 555. Conventional wisdom of the late 1800s assumed that the rising price levels of inflation favored borrowers since the value of each dollar (in purchasing power) borrowed in the past remained greater than the value of each dollar repaid in the future. Under deflation, the reverse was true, as the value of each dollar (in terms of purchasing power) increased over time and made it difficult to pay off debt as prices fell.
4. An excellent account of and appreciation for local general stores may be found in Sherry Joines Wyatt, "Business and Commerce: Community Centers and Places of Profit," *Virginia's Montgomery County,* Mary Elizabeth Lindon, ed. (Christiansburg, Va.: Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Arts Center, 2009), 390–394 and *passim.*
5. Joanne M. Anderson, "Business and Industry in Blacksburg," *A Special Place for 200 Years: A History of Blacksburg, Virginia,* Clara B. Cox, ed. (Roanoke, Va.: Town of Blacksburg, Va., 1998), 164.
6. Roger L. Geiger, "Morrill Land Grant Act," *Oxford Companion to United States History,* 515–516. The rise and fall of enrollments are reflected in the original *Catalog* for each academic year at VAMC.
7. Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 231.
8. Wallenstein, *Cradle of America,* 242.
9. See the biography of Dr. Apperson in Clara B. Cox, transcriber, "Sketch of the Life of Dr. Harvey Black by John S. Apperson, M. D.," *The Smithfield Review* 22 (2018), 62–63, endnote 1.

10. Dr. Conway briefly described the building that housed their enterprise but said nothing about their business in his remembrance, "In Old Blacksburg," published in *Home News* (Blacksburg, Va., September 9, 1916), Virginia Tech Libraries, Special Collections for Blacksburg Bicentennial.
11. *Roanoke College Directory of Alumni* (Salem, Va.: Roanoke College, 2004), 471. Online resource *www.findagrave.com,* accessed November 10, 2017. For the Ribble family, see James Otey Hoge Jr., "The Diaries of James Armistead Otey," *The Smithfield Review* 6 (2002), 100, editor's footnote 29.
12. The historical records possessed by the Bank of Blacksburg are inscribed in large bound ledger books dating from 1891. The first ledger is simply titled *Records* and is arranged chronologically with each entry designated as minutes of the board, annual meeting, report on bank's present condition, and so forth. This book covers 1891 through mid-May 1894 and then more than two years are missing. The account resumes in a second ledger book, beginning with November 9, 1896, and carrying forward without interruption. For the sake of clarity, the original ledger entries will be cited simply as Bank, *Records,* nature of entry, followed by the date. Thus the material concerning Hubbert is found in Bank, *Records*, board of directors meeting, September 19, 1898.
13. Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank, "State and National Banking Eras," 8.
14. Bank of Blacksburg, *Petition to Form A Corporate Body under the Laws of the Commonwealth, May 23, 1891,* in possession of the National Bank of Blacksburg.
15. Bank, *Petition.*
16. These limitations deserve further comment and clarification. The Bank of Blacksburg could and sometimes did foreclose on unpaid mortgages, primarily on houses and building lots. In order not to exceed the legal limit on its ownership of property, the Bank would sometimes sell property quickly. In at least one case, the Bank foreclosed on a Blacksburg residential property being let to a tenant. It then transferred a major interest in the property to Alex Black as payment for a bank debt ($500) owed him. That afternoon he visited the newly acquired property and arranged for the same tenant to stay on and continue to pay the same rent. The complicated transaction is shown in Bank, *Records,* board of directors meeting, June 27, 1898.

    The requirement to pay all taxes, local as well as state, in acceptable U.S. currency affected individuals as well as businesses. Rural and working-class people often found it very difficult to accumulate enough gold or U.S. currency to pay property taxes and poll taxes; failure to pay the latter prevented one from voting.
17. For the successful transaction of Stanger with Janie Preston Boulware and her husband, see Wirt H. Wills, "The Genesis and Dissolution of William Preston's Smithfield," *The Smithfield Review* 8 (2004), 36. Stanger was elected director in Bank, *Records,* notes for annual stockholders' meeting, June 3, 1892.
18. For example, a photocopy of a page of *Hill's Business Directory, 1897–1898* shows listings for two major banks in Montgomery County. Under Blacksburg is listed "Bank of Blacksburg (W. E. Hubbert, cashier)" and under Christiansburg appears "Bank of Christiansburg (Charles I. Wade, Cashier)"; in neither case is the president or other bank employee or director mentioned. See reproduction in Wyatt, "Business and Commerce," 395.
19. Bank, *Records,* list of shareholders present and business at annual meeting, June 3, 1892; summary of condition of Bank, May 31, 1892; meeting of board of directors, June 3, 1892.
20. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, October 24, 1892.
21. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, November 7 and November 21, 1892; January 2 and January 16, 1893.
22. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, November 7 and November 21, 1892.
23. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, February 27, March13, and March 27, 1893.
24. Summary of the results of the panic of 1893 in Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *Oxford Companion to American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 613.
25. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, March 27, 1893.

26. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, April 22 and 24, 1893.
27. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, April 24, 1893; Bank, *Records,* stockholders' meeting, list of stockholders present in person or by proxy, June 1,1893.
28. Bank, *Records,* May 8, 1893 (erroneously written as "1892" in original), May 15, 1893.
29. Bank, *Records,* Report on Shareholders' Meeting, W. E. Hubbard, June 1, 1893.
30. Bank, *Records,* board of directors (meeting immediately after shareholders adjourned), June 1, 1893. The author found no written evidence that the $250 vice presidential salary had been paid in earlier years either.
31. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, June 19, 1893.
32. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, July 8, 1893; Henderson as Bank customer *passim.*
33. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, September 25, 1893; July 1, 1920, for selection as vice president, then after each annual meeting until selection as president in 1935. According to Conway, "In Old Blacksburg," the Hendersons had operated a private savings bank, Montgomery Savings Bank in Blacksburg; such a bank accepted small deposits and paid interest; it did not operate as a full-service bank making loans, discounting paper, etc.
34. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, August 28 and September 25, 1893.
35. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, December 14, 1896.
36. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, March 8, 1897, and November 14, 1898.
37. Bank, *Records,* List of Stockholders and Report on Shareholders' Meeting of May 31, 1897, prepared by W. E. Hubbert.
38. For the Stanger and Hubbert arrangements, Bank, *Records,* board of directors meeting, September 19, 1898.
39. For railway loan, Bank, *Records,* board of directors, October 31, 1904; Report on Shareholders' Meeting and board of directors, June 1, 1906.
40. Johnson, *Oxford Companion to American History,* 613.
41. Daniel C. Newcomb, "Living in a New World: World War I and the Decline of Military Tradition at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1916–1923," *The Smithfield Review* 22 (2018), 29−52.
42. Bank, *Records,* report on annual shareholders meeting and subsequent meeting of board of directors, July 1, 1920. Kent Black had collapsed and died on a Blacksburg sidewalk in 1909.
43. Bank, *Records,* annual meeting of stockholders, July 1, 1920. Six members of the Black and Apperson families were represented.
44. The author does not mean to suggest actual enmity between the banks' personnel; all involved were local men often well known to each other. Clearly there was room for another full-service bank since this one also survived the Great Depression. The Farmers and Merchants National Bank of Blacksburg lost its original name and its independence in 1962 as it became part of the expanding system of the National Exchange Bank of Roanoke (see "Farmers and Merchants Bank," *Roanoke Times* (Roanoke, Va.), August 29, 1962).
45. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, August 30, 1921.
46. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, May 5, 1920; October 11, 1921; and September 4, 1920. Sale of U.S. Bond to Alex Black, September 21, 1920.
47. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, January 3, 1921, and January 15, 1921.
48. Bank, *Records,* board of directors, October 24, 1921, and November 8, 1921.
49. Bank, *Records,* June 6, 1922; all nine members of the board of directors were present and affixed their names in alphabetical order.

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Brief Notes and Documents

A Letter from Janie Preston Boulware Lamb[1]

Mrs. Brockenbrough Lamb[2]
"Smallacres" Sunset Lane,
Richmond, Virginia.

Mr. J. Adger Stewart,[3]
4780 Crittenden Drive
Louisville, Kentucky.

My Dear Mr. Stewart:

Thank you very much for sending me the *Filson Club History Quarterly* containing Mr. Tapp's able account of John Floyd.[4] It is a great addition to my collection of Preston family documents I am trying to collect. There is so much of interest about this fascinating clan and the thrilling times in which they lived that I get a real thrill when a new item comes to me.

Thank you, too, for Cousin Anne Lee's letter, and today the copies of the Floyd and Lewis letters come. It is so very thoughtful of you to give me these, and I do appreciate them. I do want to give Cousin Anne Lee a copy of Letitia Lewis's letter, as Cousin Anne has not got one, and she should have it as the sequel to Mrs. Floyd's letter, which Cousin Anne has. She tells me that the original of Letitia Floyd's letter was in the possession of a descendant, Mrs. Daniel Trigg of Abingdon, Virginia, and was published in the Richmond paper, as you know.[5] She tells me that the rats ate the original, but fortunately it was published in the papers for all to read first. (One consolation I have for our Preston Papers[6] being in Madison, Wisconsin, eighteen volumes of them, is that the rats did not get <u>them</u>,[7] and they are well preserved for us to copy, at least.) And, by the way, we hope to get copies of them some day to put in our Virginia Historical Society here.

But, to return to the Floyds. The letter from Mrs. Letitia Floyd's daughter, Mrs. Lewis, was given to me in Blacksburg, a copy, I mean, two summers ago by Dean Price[8] of the V.P.I. College there. He is a Historian and has written some good papers on Southwest Virginia History, and knew I would like a copy of this letter. I will ask him where he got it, and let you know. I am sure he must have told me at the time, but I do not remember.

I sent Cousin Preston Davis a copy, or rather, I got Dean Price to send him a copy, to use in his book he is writing on the Preston Family. I believe "Cavan" is the name of the Floyd home at the time of Letitia's writing,[9] but will check on this too, and let you hear.

I am much interested in the restoration of the Floyd-Breckenridge Burial Ground, and would like to hear more about it as the work progresses.[10] The folder of the Garden Club of Kentucky tour looks most intriguing, and "Liberty Hall"[11] is, of course, the most interesting place of all. Some day I hope to come on the tour and see all the places I have read of with such interest.

About "Smithfield" today, my brother, William Ballard Preston Boulware[,] and I own it, and we rent the farm to the V.P.I. College which adjoins it. The old house is lived in by a College Farm laborer, I regret to say, but we keep it weather-proof and in pretty good order. The farm is in beautiful shape, it looks like an English place – beautifully cultivated, and used for the agricultural department of the College, and for experiments in growing things. One of the things the College specializes in [is] growing roses, and the experimental plots are well worth seeing. The most exquisite roses are there in profusion. Though, of course, not one can be cut.

[page 2]

A good many visitors come to Smithfield and I have a Visitor's Book there and the woman who lives in the house has a copy of my magazine account of the place to show people when they ask questions. She keeps the house clean and neat, and of course the old grave-yard up on the hill is of great historical importance.[12]

Colonel William Preston himself and his wife, Susanna Smith[,] are buried there, and their eldest son, General John, and their third son, William[,] who married Caroline Hancock and went to Kentucky, and many others too numerous to mention. Many of the tomb stones are gone with Time, but I have a drawing of the place showing many. And we hope some day to restore it as the Floyd-Breckinridge one in Kentucky you wrote me about.

And, the lovely old house should be a Shrine of History, as the Brown home, Liberty hall, is. But these things take Time and Money, with a capital M, you observe, and with my large family of five children and my busy Lawyer husband,[13] it is hard for us to go often to Smithfield and to spend the time and money required, as you can well understand. Some day, if we live long enough, and finish our very expensive program for our children, which we are now in the midst of, I hope to make Smithfield a Shrine, and restore the graveyard. This is a large order, and I just hope I live long enough to do it. Cousin Preston Davie [*sic*] is much interested in the plan, but at the moment, with conditions as they are, we are not making any great progress. Last summer I had the space measured to build a stone wall round the grave-yard, but the man has never sent in the estimate yet.

The huge powder plant being constructed at Radford, seven miles away, is taking every workman in that part of the country.[14] I am driving up to the mountains, to Blacksburg, next week, and will see what has become of our estimate. We go to Smithfield every summer for about a week, and sometimes drive up there for a few days in between times, as now. There is a little Hotel in Blacksburg called "The William Preston," which is quite comfortable.[15] I must confess it always gives me a shock to see that name in Neon lights. I never thought I should.

From the Highway, Route 11, Blacksburg is only seven miles from Christiansburg, and the College there is very handsome. I believe it is built on original Preston Grant land, and the home of Colonel Robert Preston, called "Solitude[,]" is on the Campus now, and owned by V.P.I. The third Preston place there is called "Whitethorn" and is now owned by the Heath family, a widow and her young son. These three Preston brothers, Robert, James[,] and William Ballard, lived at these three places just outside of Blacksburg, and now Smithfield is the only one left in our family.[16] If you drive to Smithfield[,] you will see the most beautiful country on the world. You probably know this already.

I was delighted to see you had been in touch with Prof. Green about his book. I am keen to see it when it comes out.

Please forgive this long letter, but you see I am writing about my pet hobby and never know when to stop once I get fairly started.

Thank you again for all the items of thrilling interest to me which you have given me. I await with eager delight all the news you will receive from the Wisconsin papers. Who knows what may be unearthed about the early history of the family in those pioneer days? Though Letitia Lewis assures us that nothing can ever be uncovered that is not of the very finest and best. Hurrah for Letitia!

Again please forgive this lengthy epistle! Will you find time to read it? I believe you will.

Sincerely yours,
Janie Preston Boulware Lamb.

April 23, 1941.

Endnotes

1. A copy of the original letter can be found at Historic Smithfield© and was used for this section of *The Smithfield Review;* the original is located at Preston Papers, Joyes Collection, Mss\A\P937, box 6, folder 66, Filson Club Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (note: this endnote and those that follow were added by the editor).
2. Janie Preston Boulware Lamb (1891−1964) was a fifth-generation descendant of Col. William and Susanna Smith Preston. She donated the Preston plantation, Smithfield, to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities in 1959, stipulating that the 200-year-old house be opened to the public ("House Joint Resolution No. 167," 2014 Session [of the Virginia House of Delegates], *lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+ful+HJ167E+pdf*). Lamb was the daughter of Aubin Lee Boulware and Janie Grace Preston Boulware. She married Brockenbrough Lamb in 1915 (Find a Grave, "Janie Preston Boulware Lamb," *www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=84803216).*
3. Joseph Adger Stewart (1877−1954) was a businessman in Louisville, Kentucky, who provided genealogical research and correspondence materials regarding his various family lines, which traced back to the eighteenth century or earlier, to collections held by The Filson Historical Society in Louisville (The Filson Guide, "Guide to Selected Manuscript and Photograph Collections of the Filson Club Historical Society," (1996), *www.filsonhistorical.org/archive/guide7.html*). He wrote several articles for the historical society's *Filson Club History Quarterly* from January 1934 to 1936 (The Filson Historical Society, "Index to the *Filson Club Historical Quarterly*, 1926−2002," *filsonhistorical.org/wp-content/uploads/FCHQ_index1.pdf*).
4. Hambleton Tapp's article on Floyd, entitled "Colonel John Floyd, Kentucky Pioneer," appeared in the *Filson Club History Quarterly* in January 1941 (The Filson Historical Society, "Index to the *Filson Club Historical Quarterly*). The subject of Tapp's article was Col. John Floyd, a native Virginian who became a schoolteacher and surveyor, eventually working at Smithfield for Col. William Preston. Floyd's second wife was Jane Buchanan, granddaughter of Col. James Patton (for information on Patton, see Jim Glanville and Ryan Mays, "The Mysterious Origins of James Patton, Part I," *The Smithfield Review* 15 (2011) 35-64) and a niece of Col. Preston. The Floyds moved to Kentucky (Kentucky Genealogy Trails, "Biographies: John Floyd," 2017, *genealogytrails.com/ken/floyd/johnfloyd.html,* and Letitia Preston Floyd (Wirt H. Wills, introduction; June Stubbs, transcriber), "John Floyd, Kentucky Hero, and Three Floyds and Prestons of Virginia," *The Smithfield Review* 2 (1998), 39–52"). One of the couple's sons, also named John, married his cousin, Letitia Preston, a daughter of Col. Preston (Jim Glanville and Ryan Mays, "A Sketch of Letitia Preston Floyd and Some of Her Letters," *The Smithfield Review 19* (2015), 77–120, and Glanville and Mays, "Letitia Preston Floyd: Supplementary Notes," *The Smithfield Review* 20 (2016), 69−78).
5. For information on Letitia Floyd's letters, see Glanville and Mays, "A Sketch of Letitia Preston Floyd," and Glanville and Mays, "Letitia Preston Floyd's 'My Dear Rush' Letter," *The Smithfield Review* 20 (2016), 79−109.

6. Most likely, Lamb was referring to "The Preston and Virginia Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts" (Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1914), *ia800201.us.archive.org/29/items/cu31924029802950/cu31924029802950.pdf*.
7. Underlining appears in the original letter.
8. Harvey Lee Price was dean of agriculture at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI, now known as Virginia Tech) from 1908 to 1945. Price "spent hundreds of hours tracing the ancestry of numerous Montgomery County families" (Clara B. Cox, "In Retrospect: Harvey Price: Rebel Turned Role Model," *Virginia Tech Magazine* 29, no. 4 (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2007).
9. According to Glanville and Mays, Letitia Preston Floyd moved into a log cabin in Burke's Garden, Virginia, about two years after her husband died and named her new home Cavan (Glanville and Mays, "A Sketch of Letitia Preston Floyd," 102).
10. Lamb probably was referring to the Floyd-Breckinridge Cemetery in Jefferson County, Kentucky, which was restored in 1918 by The Filson Club (Find a Grave, "Floyd-Breckinridge Cemetery," *www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=73160*).
11. Located in downtown Frankfort, Kentucky, Liberty Hall was the home of the Browns, an important family in Kentucky. The family patriarch, John Brown, a native of Virginia, studied law with Thomas Jefferson; practiced law in Danville, Virginia; and was a member of the Continental Congress, representing Kentucky. He petitioned Congress to separate Kentucky from Virginia, and in 1792, largely as a result of his efforts, Kentucky became the country's fifteenth state (Kate Hesseldenz, "Liberty Hall Historic Site," *ExploreKYHistory*, *explorekyhistory.ky.gov/items/show/195*). Among contributions to The Filson Historical Society by the recipient of the letter, J. Adger Stewart, were materials related to Liberty Hall.
12. See Laura Jones Wedin, "The Preston Cemetery of Historic Smithfield Plantation, *The Smithfield Review* 7 (2003), 48−76.
13. The Lamb children were Janie Preston, Brockenbrough "Brokie" Jr., Aubin Boulware, Margaret G., and Sarah Fauntleroy. Mrs. Lamb's husband, William Brockenbrough Lamb, later became a chancery court judge in Richmond ("Obituaries: Lamb, Brockenbrough Jr.," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), February 28, 2016, *www.richmond.com/obituaries/lamb-brockenbrough/article_a2b05ad6-afcf-5f05-8703-4334563632e3.html,* and "James Patton Preston, Smithfield Prestons," *www.suddenlink.net/pages/fpreston/sfjamepr.htm#JANE)*.
14. Radford Ordnance Works, later known as Radford Army Ammunition Plant, was dedicated in the early 1940s. It was constructed to enable the U.S. to build its ammunition supply as the country began strengthening its national defense in case of war, which already raged in Europe (Dennis Kitts, "The Radford Ordnance Works and the New River Ordnance Plant: The World War II Years," unpublished manuscript).
15. In "History of Blacksburg, Virginia," Mrs. S. A. Wingard, the author, mentions the William Preston Hotel, which she said was built on the site of one of three tanneries located in Blacksburg (Wingard, "History of Blacksburg" (1939), *spec.lib.vt.edu/bicent/recoll/wingard.htm*, accessed April 3, 2018). In a survey of historical architecture in Blacksburg, Gibson Worsham included photographs of the hotel, located on the corner of Main Street and the extension of College Avenue and now occupied by Sharkey's restaurant, and wrote, "Ellett's Drugstore Building of 1900 . . . was refaced in 1934 by the Roanoke architectural firm of Eubank and Caldwell to create a portion of the William Preston Hotel" (Gibson Worsham, "A Survey of Historic Architecture in the Blacksburg Historic District, Montgomery County, Virginia" (Blacksburg, Va.: Town of Blacksburg and Virginia Department of Historic Resources, autumn 1996−spring 1997), 40−41, *dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/SpecialCollections/MY-059_Survey_Historic_AH_BlacksburgHD_1997_WORSHAM_report.pdf*, accessed April 3, 2018).
16. For biographical information on the Preston brothers, see Laura Jones Wedin, "A Summary of 19th-Century Smithfield, Part I: The Years Before the Civil War," *The Smithfield Review* 18 (2014), 79−95. Smithfield was the home of Ballard Preston, while James Preston owned Whitethorn and Robert Preston owned Solitude.

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