

The
Smithfield
Review

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

Volume 24, 2020



Published by the
Smithfield-Preston Foundation
and the Department of History, Virginia Tech

Published online by University Libraries
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia

The Smithfield Review is published each spring by the Smithfield-Preston Foundation and the Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech); it is published online by University Libraries, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Subscriptions are \$14 per year plus sales tax (currently 5.3 percent) and \$3.50 shipping/handling per copy. Individual copies are available from

Smithfield Museum Store
1000 Plantation Road
Blacksburg, VA 24060

or by calling 1/540-231-3947 or e-mailing info@smithfieldplantation.org.

Multiple copies, including the entire set of 24 volumes, are available at a discount. Use the above contact information to inquire about multiple copies and/or sets.

ISSN 1093-9652

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Printed in the United States of America by McNaughton & Gunn

Messages from Our Publishers



The Smithfield Saga

The story of William Preston's Smithfield is quintessentially American, with all the excitement and optimism that defines such a saga, but also with the darkness and troubles that so often, perhaps necessarily, accompany the good. Smithfield's patriarch, Col. William Preston, was an Irish immigrant who followed in the footsteps of his already successful immigrant uncle, James Patton. In the wilds of the Virginia frontier, William became a successful surveyor and militiaman.

In 1755, Colonel Preston inherited a large portion of Draper's Meadows (in what is now Blacksburg, Virginia) from Patton, who was killed when indigenous peoples attacked Draper's Meadows. In 1772, he built a home on this property and named it Smithfield after his wife, Susanna Smith Preston, who was part of the elite of the emerging American society. The success William and Susanna found in western Virginia could not have been imagined in the European homes of their ancestors. America has been, and hopefully always will be, a land where people could hope and aspire to be more, to contribute more, to realize more... From Smithfield, William and Susanna witnessed a steady stream of westward migrants along the Great Wagon Road heading toward their own dreams of success. From Smithfield, William struggled to comprehend and articulate the cause for American independence. He eventually supported this cause by signing the Fincastle Resolutions and leading a militia in its name.

From Smithfield, William and Susanna's heirs went out into the world, making their marks as prominent leaders in the new American republic. Yes, the Smithfield story is full of excitement and optimism, but it is also a story of struggle and oppression. Between 1772 and 1865, much of Smithfield's success was born on the backs of one hundred ninety enslaved workers, and the tide of westward migration that Smithfield represents pushed indigenous peoples who had lived in the region for thousands of years farther and farther from their native homes.

Today, William Preston's Smithfield operates as an independent non-profit museum. Its beautiful grounds and interactive displays encourage guests to think about their places in history and learn from all those who once called Smithfield home: the Preston Family, their enslaved workers, and the native peoples they displaced. It is my hope that Smithfield's values of **courage**, **leadership**, and **education** will inspire a new generation to shape a better future for all those who call Southwest Virginia home.

William Preston's Smithfield is proud to sponsor *The Smithfield Review*. May the hard work and collective wisdom it represents inspire you, its readers, to visit Smithfield. Here you will find the heart and soul of the region *The Smithfield Review* celebrates so well. Productive reading!

With warm regards,



Ryan J. Spencer
Executive Director
Smithfield-Preston Foundation
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Reconsidering Our Shared National Story

We humans love to tell stories about ourselves. It is how we explain, to ourselves and to others, who we are. To relate my own past is to shape how family, friends, co-workers, and strangers come to know me. As interpreters of the past, historians are consummate storytellers. Historians tell stories to help us understand who we are, to help us understand the nature of the communities in which we live, to help us understand what it means to be human. Our stories help us think in new ways about ourselves and, hopefully, improve ourselves and our communities.

Most historians today seek to tell stories that include more perspectives than those considered by earlier generations of historian. Many skilled and brilliant scholars wrote celebratory histories of white settlement in British North America and paid scant attention to enslaved Black people and Native Americans whose stories seemed inconsequential to the march toward democracy and freedom. Historians now consider the stories of the enslaved and the dispossessed to be fundamental to our shared national story; in consequence, we must fundamentally reshape the stories that have been told. We must rethink who we are.

This is why the Virginia Tech Department of History is happy to continue its support for *The Smithfield Review*, a venue for historians to look again at the stories we have been told about the area of Virginia and adjoining states that lie west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I hope that readers and authors will find the *Review* to be a place for looking at our past anew. May we appreciate stories from many different perspectives and traditions and use those stories to create a better future for all.

Brett L. Shadle
Professor and Chair
Department of History
Virginia Tech

A Message from the Editors

Announcements

Marc Brodsky, public services and reference archivist in Special Collections at Virginia Tech, has joined *The Smithfield Review (TSR)* Editorial Board. Marc has helped numerous researchers in his professional capacity, and we relish the opportunity to work with him. Aaron Purcell, head of Special Collections, has left the board after fulfilling the time period he had promised to serve, and we thank him for his contributions.

Changes have also occurred in the leaders of two of our publishers. Attorney and Preston descendent Charles D. Fox IV now heads the Smithfield-Preston Foundation, with historian Ryan Spencer serving as executive director of Historic Smithfield[®]. And in Virginia Tech's Department of History, Professor Brett L. Shadle now chairs the department. The leadership of these gentlemen in publishing *TSR* is indicative of their love of history and recognition of its value.

Contents and Acknowledgments

Volume 24 brings three articles focused on western Virginia and West Virginia during the mid to late 1800s. Two carry us into tumultuous events and difficult decisions required by the circumstances of what essentially was a small civil war inside a larger civil war. The other article focuses on the life of one person, including his singular role in Virginia Tech history.

In the first article, "Crossing into War: Hostages in Civil War Virginia and West Virginia," Randall S. Gooden examines the practice of hostage-taking by two contending Virginia governments (one in Richmond, the other in Wheeling) and the imprisoning of these hapless civilians. Both governors ordered or condoned seizing hostages assumed to disagree with them politically and offered those taken no opportunity to mount a legal defense and no right of *habeas corpus*.

Next, the focus shifts to southwestern Virginia. "The Life and Times of William Addison Caldwell" by Clara B. Cox looks at the first student to enroll at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) in Blackaburg. As Cox explores the life of "Add" Caldwell, she also tells the early story of VAMC, which evolved into Virginia Tech.

The third article, “To ‘whiten’ the Mountains: Abolishing Slavery in West(ern) Virginia, 1861–1863,” returns readers to the West Virginia area and the same time period. In it, Adam Zucconi addresses the role of the divisive issue of slavery in creating a constitution for the Mountain State. Ultimately, that document enshrined a gradual freeing of most enslaved people but gave them few political or civil rights. Lawmakers’ treatment of blacks reflected a desire to “whiten” West Virginia.

Volume 24 also includes Sharon B. Watkins’s book review of *The Blacksburg Drama: A history of Blacksburg in three acts*. Written by Hugh G. Campbell, the book provides a personal historical exploration of Blacksburg and its region. Campbell’s goal was to “organize, generalize, and synthesize” the town’s rich history in a way that presented that history “as the drama that it is.” According to Watkins, he has succeeded in that goal.

Additionally, Ryan Spencer, who manages Historic Smithfield[®], provided a photograph of a special document and its transcription for this volume: an original letter written by Thomas Jefferson in 1771. As an attorney and member of Virginia’s House of Burgesses, Jefferson was asked by James McDowell, a relative of the Preston who founded Smithfield, to provide a legal opinion regarding the bounty for wolf heads in Augusta and Botetourt counties. The letter states that opinion.

The editors and editorial board extend sincere appreciation to these authors and other contributors. Special acknowledgment goes to Barbara Corbett for her graphic design talents and to Dan Thorp of the editorial board for convincing Drs. Zucconi and Gooden to submit their two outstanding articles. We also express sincere gratitude to the Smithfield-Preston Foundation and Virginia Tech Department of History for publishing the journal and to University Libraries, particularly Gail McMillan and Peter Potter, for publishing *The Smithfield Review* online.

Editors: Clara B. Cox (*history@vt.edu*) and Sharon B. Watkins

The Smithfield Review Editorial Board:

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Marc Brodsky

Daniel B. Thorp, History Advisor

Charles L. Taylor, Charter Member

Sherry Joines Wyatt

See volumes 21, 22, and 23 of *The Smithfield Review* online at <https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/smithfieldreview/>.

Crossing into War: Hostages in Civil War Virginia and West Virginia

Randall S. Gooden

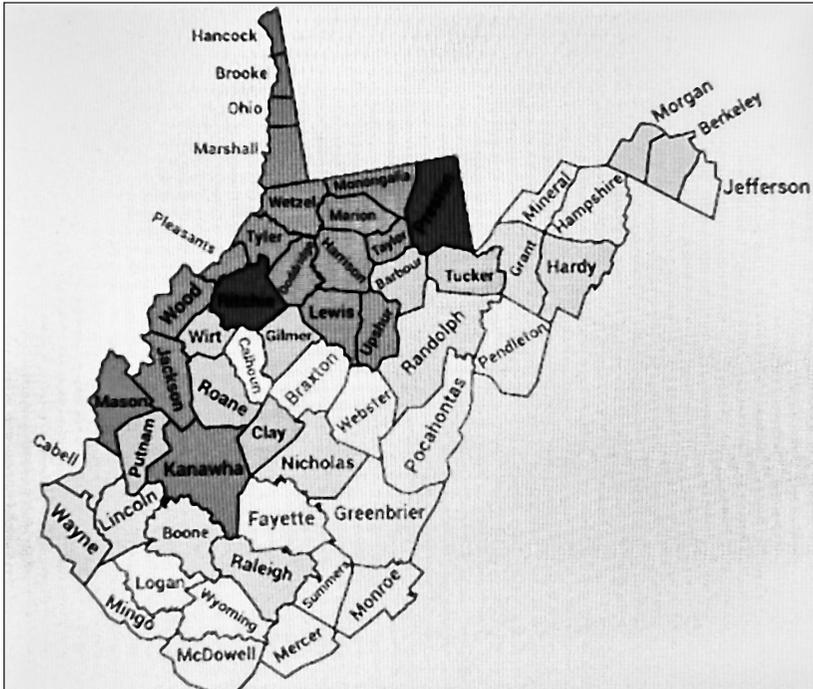
Introduction

Secession and civil war presented Virginia with perhaps the most difficult crossroads in its history. The state's government wrestled with the choice over secession, and when secession came, a substantial part of the state's legislators and local officials—particularly in the west and along the Potomac River—resisted the decision. Resisters declared the state government in Richmond void and organized a state government, based in Wheeling and designed to keep Virginia in the United States. While the state government in Richmond declared allegiance to the Confederate States of America and gave support to its military, the government at Wheeling supported the military efforts of the United States. As an adjunct to the creation of Virginia's pro-Union government, a new state formed in the midst of the Civil War and the dispute over state government legitimacy. West Virginia came into being in 1863 with the permission of the Virginia government at Wheeling and was admitted to the Union as a new state. It established its capital at Wheeling, while the pro-Union government of Virginia moved its headquarters to Alexandria, which had been quickly occupied by federal forces soon after Virginia seceded.

In each of these transitions of government, the people of Virginia stood at forks in the road. Individually, Virginians had to choose whether to follow the government in Richmond, which possessed the institutional legacies of the state, in adhering to the South and the Confederacy or whether to follow the upstart government in Wheeling in order to remain aligned with the United States and retain connections with the North and Midwest. Once West Virginia was formed, residents in the west faced the same choices over allegiance to that new state. Regarding national loyalties, the people of Virginia had to decide whether they were citizens of the Confederate States or the United States and their degree of sacrifice in lives and property to their chosen countries.

For many Virginians, the choices seemed almost natural, determined in large part by geography. Proximity to the Mason-Dixon Line and the Ohio

River increased the affinity of the local people with Ohio and Pennsylvania and heightened the chances that a county would be controlled by Union authorities and military forces. If natural affinity did not exist, then societal and political pressures helped people to decide their loyalties. Likewise, residents of counties east of the Allegheny Mountains felt the same affinities and pressures toward the Richmond government and the Confederacy.



Support for the Union and the New State in West Virginia

- 80-100%
- 60-79%
- 40-59%
- 20-39%
- 0-19%

Support for the Union and the new state of West Virginia and its government varied from county to county and from region to region. The color of each county (see legend) indicates the level of that support based on the results of Virginia's secession referendum, votes on the creation of the new state and ratification of its constitution, and participation in the 1864 presidential and gubernatorial elections. Voter turnout in the secession referendum (where available) or the 1860 presidential election provided the basis for comparison of number of voters. The map shows support based on modern county boundaries (map created by Randall S. Gooden using mapchart.net).

In the counties in between, where affinities were less certain and political control depended upon which military force occupied the area, the choices were less clear. Peer pressure was much more localized. Loyalties could be quite different from one valley to the next. For some, allegiances depended upon local rivalries and personal ties and grudges. For many, a third possibility prevailed as secession and war created a suspended state where, instead of acting, they waited to be acted upon.

A Clarke County correspondent to the *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser* shared this uncertainty as secession brewed in the state. “I have been, and am yet, a Union man—but the truth is, *I am at a loss now what to be,*” he wrote in exasperation. “I feel now like going with the waves, land where I may.” The writer added, “I would like to see the man now who can see beyond the end of his nose, I care not how short it is.” Then, capturing the mood in the middle counties, he wrote. “We on the border do not seem to see things, and feel, as our friends south of us do [emphasis in original].”¹

The contesting state governments of Virginia and, later in the war, the government of West Virginia each used their authority to persuade residents toward a preferred path, and when people hesitated or resisted, they employed strong-arm measures—enforced by military power—to force those individuals along the path or to block their way entirely. Legislatures and conventions defined disloyal and suspicious persons and enacted laws and ordinances to control and penalize those who fit the definitions. A hysterical atmosphere formed in which paranoia challenged practicality. Such was the atmosphere that John C. Vance, a legislator from Harrison County at the Second Wheeling Convention, where Virginia’s pro-Union government was formed, warned that the convention was becoming a “star chamber”—just as the state convention in Richmond had become earlier that spring—as it considered penalties against pro-Confederate citizens within its reach.² Vance, himself, spent several weeks under arrest in Fort McHenry in 1863 under suspicion of disloyalty to the Union.³

One particular measure evolved from the star chamber at Wheeling and is the focus of this article. That measure is hostage-taking, which the pro-Union state government and later the government of West Virginia employed.

Hostage-taking: A History of the Practice

Hostage-taking evokes thoughts of terrorism, of individual vulnerability, and of uncertainty of friend and foe in gray areas between conventional and guerilla warfare. Irene Herrmann and Daniel Palmieri, writing for the *International Review of the Red Cross*, referred to the hostage as a “haunting figure” and noted that among the victims of war, hostages occupy

a special place. “The interest aroused by them is in inverse proportion to their number, for even a single hostage becomes the focus of attention and mobilizes public opinion,” Herrmann and Palmieri contended. They suggested four reasons for this. First, hostage-taking, by its very brutality, holds a strange fascination. Second, a high degree of innocence of the victim, often accentuated by factors such as age, nationality, or profession, underscores the non-involvement of hostages in the events that brought about their capture. Third, the injustice done to the individual weighs upon the collective subconscious like a latent threat to one and all. Finally, a specter of death hangs over hostages. Yet, for all of the focus of attention and mobilization of public opinion about hostages, Herrmann and Palmieri concluded that the hostage, as an individual, remains a little-known figure.⁴

Military forces had practiced hostage-taking as far back as the eighth century B.C.E. During that century, the Chinese exchanged hostages to guarantee friendly relations between antagonists. Sometimes, Chinese armies unilaterally took hostages to ensure pacification during negotiations for an armistice or surrender. Dominant powers also held hostages to guarantee the allegiance of a vassal country. Governments also kept hostages from their own military forces or diplomatic delegations when they were sent to the country’s borders or beyond to ensure that the main body did not defect.⁵

Western powers also practiced hostage-taking in ancient times. In an exaggeration that pointed to the prevalence of the practice, it was said that Caesar had more hostages than soldiers. Throughout their history, the Romans seized hostages to guarantee good faith during negotiations and adherence to the terms of peace agreements once they were concluded. However, the Romans learned early that the keeping of hostages caused logistical problems and proved ineffective in preventing opposition.⁶

The Roman practice continued beyond the time of the empire and became a staple in the war powers of the nation-states of Europe. “Ever since antiquity, such action has constituted a permissible expedient, as frequent in peacetime as during war,” Ellen Hammer and Marina Salvin observed as they reflected upon the history of hostage-taking as European powers battled one another in World War II. In Europe, hostages were taken historically to secure treaties, to force the payment of requisitions, to protect or gain the return of people held by the enemy, for reprisals, and to maintain order in occupied territories. The British ended the use of hostages in treaty-making in the eighteenth century, but they were used for the other purposes into the twentieth century.⁷

The European practice spilled over into the American colonies and was used by colonial forces against one another and against Native

Americans, who had their own customs regarding hostages. When the United States was created, its military forces followed European customs of warfare. At the time of the Civil War, the War Department embodied its concept of hostages into General Order No. 100. Article 54 stipulated that a “hostage is a person accepted as a pledge for the fulfillment of an agreement concluded between belligerents during the war, or in consequence of a war.” It added, “[H]ostages are rare in the present age.” Article 55 followed with the admonition that “if a hostage is accepted, he is treated like a prisoner of war, according to rank and condition, as circumstances may admit.”⁸ Rather than emphasize the right of the U.S. Army to take hostages, the order put written rules in place for hostages for the first time. The earlier U.S. Articles of War in 1775, 1776, and 1806 made no mention of hostages, although the custom informally existed. General Order No. 100 recognized that the Civil War was different. It was a total war, an impersonalized war, which affected the military and civilians alike in very personal ways. Mark E. Neely Jr., in *The Fate of Liberty*, noted that “the practice of taking hostages never seems to have lived up even to the rough standard of justice in General Order No. 100.”⁹ While Neely observed that the practice of hostage-taking

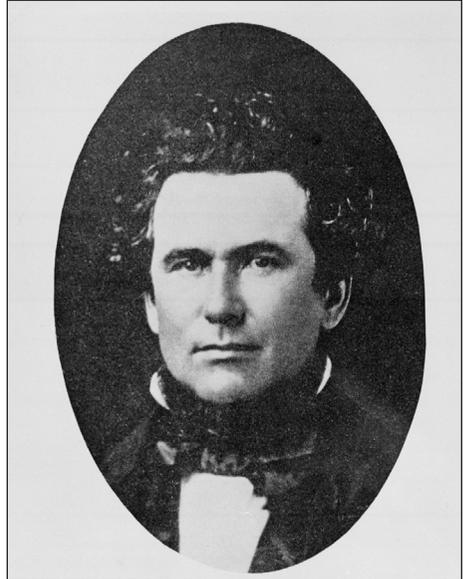


After holding its first meeting in Wheeling’s Washington Hall, the Second Wheeling Convention moved its remaining meetings to the Wheeling Custom House (above), known today as the West Virginia Independence Hall (source: Wikipedia).

declined after the Lincoln Administration issued General Order No. 100, Webb Garrison maintained in *Civil War Hostages* that the “use of hostages continued throughout the conflict.” He suggested that the number of hostages taken is sketchy because of the lack of records.¹⁰

Hostage-taking in Virginia and West Virginia

The evolution of Virginia’s—and later West Virginia’s—authority to seize hostages came from an ordinance of the Second Wheeling Convention, which allowed the governor to arrest suspicious persons. The pro-Union governor, Francis H. Pierpont, in one case, stretched the ordinance to use a suspicious person as a hostage to compel the release of a pro-Union Virginian whom Confederate authorities held as a political prisoner. That solitary case involved Thomas A. Roberts, a member of the Second Wheeling Convention. Following the first session of the convention in June 1861, Roberts returned from the convention to his home in Roane County and began recruiting for the Union Army and soon faced a dangerous situation. Confederate Capt. Albert G. Ingraham, a resident of the county, stationed a company at the town of Reedyville near Roberts’ residence.¹¹ Ingraham intended to capture Roberts, who did not stay in his own house for weeks while “his footsteps were continually dogged by his secession neighbors,” according to his own account, published in the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*. On July 29, Roberts “was pounced upon by twelve men at the house of a neighbor.” His captors tied Roberts to a horse and rode him through the night to Charleston, sixty miles away. There, he appeared before Brig. Gen. Henry A. Wise, who insisted that Roberts swear loyalty to the Confederacy. When he refused and argued with Wise, the general sent Roberts to Richmond for imprisonment.¹²



During Roberts’s confinement, Gov. Francis Harrison Pierpont ordered the arrest of Andrew Parks as a suspicious person. The elderly Charleston attorney had replaced

The Second Wheeling Convention, comprised of delegates representing thirty-four counties, unanimously elected Francis H. Pierpont as governor in June 1861 (courtesy of West Virginia State Archives).

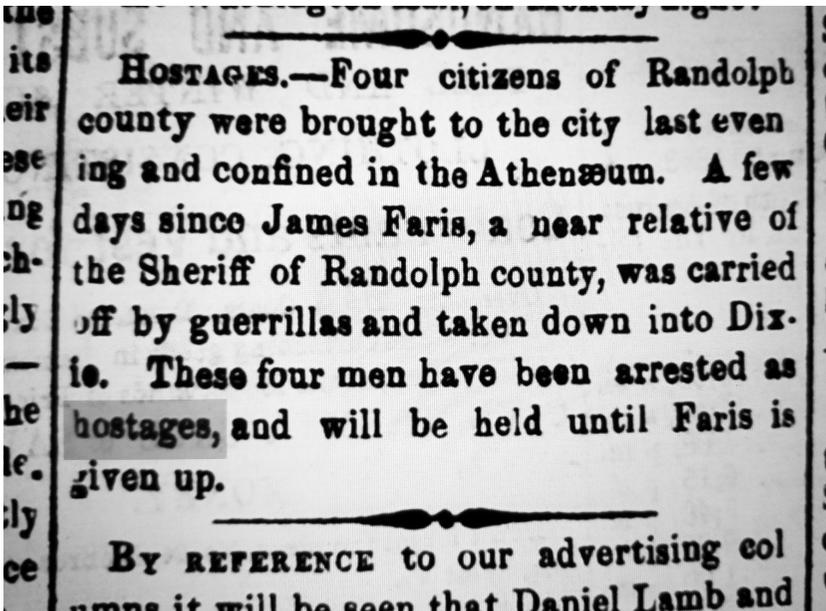
Unionist George W. Summers at the Richmond Convention in 1861 after Summers had left the convention. Parks was considered a leading supporter of the state government at Richmond. Pierpont used Parks as an unofficial hostage for Roberts, even while Parks spent most of his captivity in a Wheeling hospital. While newspapers boldly discussed Parks's status as a hostage, Pierpont avoided use of the term. He knew that his move had skirted the bounds of his authority.¹³

To be sure, hostage-taking was not unusual in the Civil War. The national armies regularly took hostages. For instance, Confederate soldiers captured Dr. William P. Rucker, a U.S. Army doctor, in Nicholas County, and state authorities insisted that he be turned over to the sheriff of Allegany County for trial for murder, horse stealing, and treason. While Jefferson Davis drew a line against the treason charges, Confederate authorities delivered Rucker to state officials. When the U.S. Army sought Rucker's release, the Confederates refused on the basis that Rucker's captivity was a civilian issue. Union commanders in the area responded by taking civilians in Greenbrier County as hostages, and when the case reached the attention of the War Department in Washington, several Confederate Army doctors in U.S. custody were held as hostages.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the taking of hostages under state authority was extraordinary, and the practice by the pro-Union Virginia government and by West Virginia placed Virginians—and West Virginians—at uneasy crossroads. Hostage-taking not only put partisan civilians at risk, but it also placed those who waited to be acted upon in vulnerable positions.

The practice of hostage-taking by the state came about formally as a result of increasing arrests of pro-Union Virginians by the Confederates in 1862. Two events contributed to this situation: President Davis's suspension of the right of *habeas corpus* in the region and the organization of partisan companies on the part of Virginia. The former allowed political prisoners to be detained more easily; the latter provided the means for arrest. To be fair, the Confederate moves took place in the atmosphere of federal arrests of political prisoners and the use of pro-Union Virginia's suspicious persons ordinance. Nevertheless, Governor Pierpont felt the weight of political pressures from his constituents over the arrests. In one such case, Eliza A. Leavens of the Paint Creek area of Kanawha County, whose husband and son had been carried away, pleaded to Pierpont, "Oh! Sir, is not your arm of power long enough, and strong enough, to rescue and protect those who are suffering for their steady adherence to the right, at the hands of these traitors and robbers?"¹⁵

Pierpont asked legislators for authority to take hostages in his address to them in December 1862, and an event soon afterwards pushed the legislature into action.¹⁶ Shortly after New Years Day in 1863, Confederate raiders arrested Sheriff James Trahern in Barbour County and robbed his home and family. The editor of the *Wheeling Intelligencer* expressed confidence “in the belief that our legislature will not let the Barbour county outrage go unavenged to the uttermost,” and with such admonitions, lawmakers passed a hostage law on February 4, 1863. The law stated that the governor

is hereby authorized and requested in all cases of the seizure of the persons of loyal citizens of this state by any parties acting under the authority of the so-called southern confederacy, the pretended state government at Richmond or other military organizations acting in sympathy or concert with them, or either of them, to seize and hold as hostages for the safe rendition of such person or persons so seized and held, so many persons of known disloyal sentiments as in his discretion may be necessary to effect said rendition.¹⁷



Among the advertisements and back-page news, Wheeling newspapers kept track of the hostages and other prisoners brought to the Athenaeum, the military prison in that city (source: *Daily Register*, Wheeling, West Virginia, October 10, 1863, 3).

When West Virginia became a state, it inherited Virginia's laws, and Gov. Arthur I. Boreman received the same authority that Pierpont had held. Under the law, when a Unionist was arrested by the Confederates, a citizen (usually claiming loyalty to the Union) could swear by affidavit before a justice of the peace or notary public that the arrest had occurred, designate people in the area "of known disloyal sentiments," and request the governor to order the seizure of those people as hostages. Usually, several people swore to the arrest and the disloyalty of the hostage candidates. In operation, the governor knew little of local circumstances and often sought the advice of Unionist leaders before taking hostages, but sometimes he simply relied upon the weight of appeals from local residents for hostages to be taken. The governor relied upon the cooperation of U.S. Army commanders in the actual capture and transportation of hostages. County sheriffs, militia forces, and home guard units generally lacked the security, transportation, and manpower to deal with hostages. Once hostages were in custody, the army sent them to Wheeling, where they were housed in the Athenaeum, a theatre converted into a military prison. Some found themselves at Camp Chase in Ohio when the Athenaeum became overcrowded. The state separated the hostages from other political prisoners on paper, but in actuality they found themselves living together along with military prisoners who stayed at the Athenaeum while in transit. In this situation, oversight of the prisoners became shadowy. On one hand, hostages were taken under the governor's direction, but the U.S. Army captured them in most cases, and the army provost marshal in Wheeling held responsibility for their custody. Actual supervision of the hostages and others at the Athenaeum fell to U.S. Army officers and soldiers of the Second West Virginia Exempt Company.¹⁸

Confederate and Union Governments Oppose State Hostage-taking

Neither the Confederate government nor the U.S. government approved of hostage-taking by a state. Brig. Gen. John H. Winder, provost marshal at Richmond, wrote to Confederate Secretary of War J. A. Seddon, "It [the Confederacy] cannot recognize the right or power of the enemy to coerce us into terms by the arrest of non-combatant private citizens." He shared his opinion that "this mode of warfare seems peculiarly acceptable to them and if tolerated must be prosecuted on our part," adding that "we cannot permit ourselves to be seduced into even a quasi recognition of such arrests as legitimate acts of war."¹⁹

On the Union side, officials became aware of and disturbed about Virginia's hostage policy when, soon after the enactment of the hostage

law, Governor Pierpont ordered the seizure of George W. Thompson, a former U.S. attorney, congressman, and Ohio County circuit court judge, as a hostage for the return of Barbour County Sheriff James Trahern, whom Confederate soldiers had arrested. Thompson had been deemed “suspicious” because of his vocal doubts about the constitutionality of Virginia’s pro-Union government and because two of his sons served in the Confederate Army. U.S. District Judge John J. Jackson Jr. issued a writ of *habeas corpus* on behalf of Thompson. Pierpont insisted that the case was a state matter and that the federal court had no jurisdiction. In the end, Judge Jackson ruled that Thompson was a federal prisoner because of the role and responsibility that the U.S. Army had for Thompson’s arrest and imprisonment. The judge released Thompson and banished him from the state, which meant that Thompson moved across the Ohio River to Belmont County, Ohio.²⁰

The situation embarrassed the U.S. Army, and its implications caught the attention of the War Department. On one hand, Thompson was complicating politics and the war effort for the Union, but on the other hand, the army believed that the state did not have the authority to take hostages in order to pressure the Confederacy to release prisoners. Joseph Holt, the judge advocate general of the U.S. Army, advised the secretary of war,

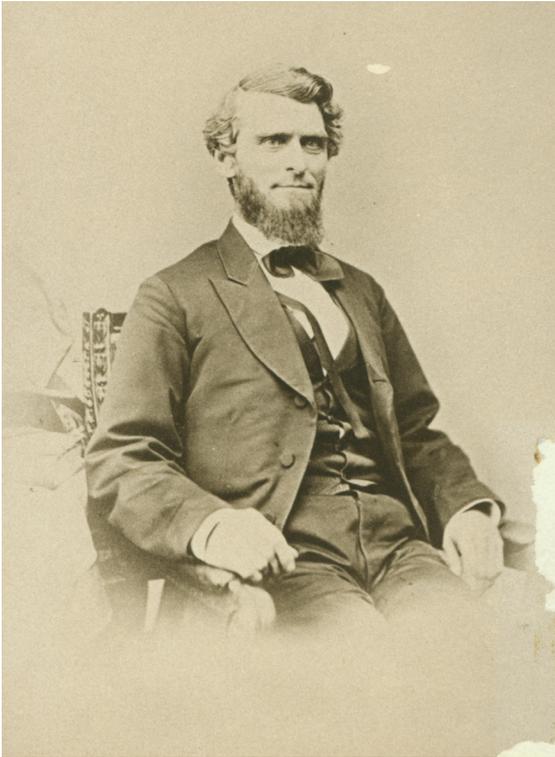
The proceedings of Governor Pierpont in seizing and confining suspected rebels in his vicinity, placing them in a chain gang and holding them at hard labor until certain civilians and officers of West Virginia are released and exchanged by the enemy is certainly an interference with the disposition and treatment of prisoners of war which must needs be very embarrassing to those officers to whom the control of prisoners and their exchange has been expressly delegated by the ordinary police power which he is authorized as governor to exercise.

Holt counseled intervention by the secretary on behalf of Thompson and added that “seizing and holding hostages in reprisal for captures made by the enemy is certainly an exercise of the war-making power, belonging exclusively to the General Government, and which cannot be shared by the Governor of the States without leading to deplorable complications.” In 1864, the War Department notified Judge Jackson that it had no objection to Thompson returning to West Virginia, and he was allowed to return to Wheeling.²¹

For the army, the matter of hostage-taking by the state remained complicated throughout the war. Union authorities at the highest levels, led by Abraham Lincoln, proved sensitive to state rights, particularly in the border states. The Lincoln Administration needed the support of loyal citizens and governments in the upper South and the image that secession was not

universally accepted there. The pro-Union government of Virginia and West Virginia served his purposes. In addition, the reality in the field was that many of the Union regiments in the area came from western Virginia, and their commanders respected the state governments and sympathized with the precarious political and social situations that the governors faced. As an example, when members of the 37th Battalion of the 19th Virginia Cavalry (Dunn's Partisan Rangers) arrested Barbour County Militia Col. William Price in July 1863, Capt. Fenelon Howes, commander of the company of the 15th West Virginia Infantry stationed at Belington, assisted in selecting hostages for Price. Howes insisted to Governor Boreman that the five men whom he had chosen had regularly fed information to the Confederates about Union troop movements in the vicinity of the B&O Railroad in neighboring Harrison, Preston, and Taylor counties. Indeed, Howes personally knew the men involved. Price's son was a lieutenant in his company. Two of the

hostages had belonged to the same Masonic lodge as Howes before the rancor surrounding secession had broken up the lodge. The captain even suggested that more hostages be taken for Price.²²



Arthur I. Boreman, a Parkersburg judge, became the first governor of West Virginia in June 1863 and systemized the hostage-taking procedure that Virginia's pro-Union government had begun (courtesy of West Virginia State Archives).

The dilemma in policy and personal views led Union commanders to take the middle ground. When Governor Boreman sent an order for the seizure of hostages to Brig. Gen. William W. Averell, commander of the Fourth Separate Brigade at Beverly, in September 1863, Averell forwarded the order to the headquarters of the Department of West Virginia in Clarksburg where Brig. Gen. Benjamin F. Kelley commanded. T. Melvin, assistant adjutant general, answered, "The General Comm'd'g cannot regard this

document as a military order, and hence commends the course pursued in forwarding it to these Hd.qrs.” Melvin continued,

But it may properly be regarded and treated as a request from the Chief Executive of the State of West Virginia, and deeming the object sought to be accomplished proper and advisable, and desiring to act in concert and harmony with the State Authorities in all matters relating to the public good, the General Commanding directs, that the arrests be made and the parties turned over, as indicated within.²³

Kelley’s instructions set precedent for the practice of Union commanders regarding state hostages.

The Effects of Hostage-taking on Civilians

Political leaders and military commanders and soldiers certainly faced difficulties regarding the hostage law, but ordinary people bore the brunt of the situation. Hostage-taking presented one more of many crossroads encountered by Virginians and West Virginians. The Jones-Imboden Raid in the spring of 1863 thrust the war upon parts of western Virginia that had enjoyed a respite from full-scale combat, and the Confederate foray into the west created a number of hostage situations. One such episode took place in the upper reaches of the Tygarts Valley in Randolph County, where soldiers under Brig. Gen. John D. Imboden’s command captured John G. Bradley and William S. Phares, both lieutenants in the pro-Union militia. Phares was the brother of Randolph County Sheriff and Deputy U.S. Marshal Jesse F. Phares. In retaliation, Governor Boreman asked the U.S. Army commander at Beverly to take Alfred Hutton, Andrew M. Wamsley, Samuel Wamsley, and Adam See, Confederate sympathizers in the vicinity, as hostages.²⁴

The hostages lived in the same community as the Union men, Bradley and Phares, and knew them and their families. Hutton, See, and the Wamsleys requested that one of them be allowed to travel to Richmond to seek the release of Bradley and Phares from Confederate custody, and the governor granted their request. Hutton and Andrew M. Wamsley undertook the task at their own expense. “I am pleased to inform you that we have been able to procure the release of John G. Bradley,” Hutton reported to Boreman from Richmond,

Wm. S. Phares was ordered to be released, but unfortunately for him during his imprisonment his course both in actions and sentiments was such, that the proof and memorials in his behalf, could not over come them, and the result is that he is still held.



Castle Thunder was an old tobacco warehouse in Richmond that Confederates used as a military prison. Many political prisoners from western Virginia and West Virginia found themselves incarcerated there (source: Famousphotoprints.com).

Hutton added in a vein of familiarity with the Unionists, “I will return just as soon as I find that I can be of no more Service to my friend.”²⁵ Wamsley updated the governor a week later with news that he had taken Bradley with him to Beverly. He told the governor that he had walked approximately one hundred miles from the rail head at Millboro in Bath County while Bradley rode his horse, and Wamsley, who was fifty-one years old, was consequently unwell. Hutton had stopped in Pocahontas County to recuperate from the rigors of the journey and to petition Col. William L. “Mudwall” Jackson for Phares’s release, as Jackson’s men had captured Phares, and Richmond authorities required Jackson’s consent for Phares to be freed.²⁶

During the same time, George D. Mollohan, a Unionist from Braxton County in central West Virginia, suffered as an inmate in Castle Thunder in Richmond. He wrote of his plight to Governor Boreman and painted the picture of a family affected by the war: “Before I was arrested all of my personal private property had been destroyed or carried off, reducing me

to the necessity of supporting my children as a daily laborer.” Mollohan continued, “Thence I left them without any means of subsistence and also motherless and without any material protection.” Mollohan explained that he was beyond military age and “becoming much enfeebled” and feared that imprisonment would result in his death.²⁷

Mollohan’s harrowing experience before reaching Richmond contributed to his physical state. On the night that he was captured, Mollohan dined at the home of Capt. Nimrod H. Hyer of Company F of the 10th West Virginia Infantry along the Little Kanawha River. Hyer’s men had been scouting the area from which they had been recruited, and several had stopped to visit their families, including Hyer. Besides Mollohan, Hyer, and Hyer’s family, four other soldiers and two civilians were present when a force of Confederate partisans sought revenge for the capture and destruction of property at their homes by the 10th West Virginia. A firefight ensued, but Hyer surrendered to save his family, and the captain and his guests were taken on an arduous journey across the mountainous terrain of Webster and Pocahontas counties to the camp of William L. Jackson. The captors tied the prisoners in pairs, but four of the soldiers managed to loosen their ropes, and in the middle of the night, three of them escaped. The partisans released the other civilians but continued to hold Mollohan and refused to give him water. A local historian recorded that “the cruel treatment he received came near ending his life.”²⁸

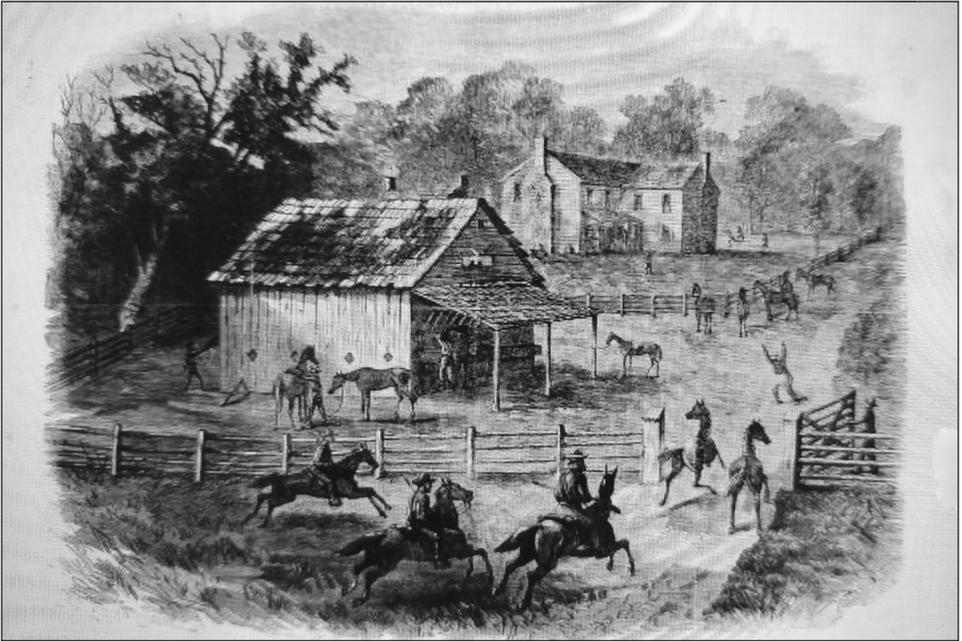
During his captivity, Mollohan appealed to Boreman to arrange for the exchange of him for Conrad Kuhl (pronounced Cool), a resident of Braxton or Gilmer County, who had been held as a war criminal in Camp Chase since 1861. Feeling powerless over the case, the governor instead ordered that two hostages be seized for Mollohan. These were John Laurance, a tanner from Bulltown in Braxton County, and former Virginia legislator and prominent salt maker and slave owner Addison McLoughlin, for whom the county seat of Webster County was named.²⁹

As seen in the Braxton and Randolph county cases, hostages often included older people. Younger men were more likely to be in military service and thus out of reach of arrest. Also, older residents more likely had the standing to make effective hostages since they were more likely to be exchanged and to be successful negotiators in their exchanges. Still, as in the case of Hutton and Wamsley (and Mollohan as a political prisoner in Confederate hands), they also were more likely to suffer from captivity. At least one man died as a hostage of the state of West Virginia. Maj. Joseph Darr, the district provost marshal of the Union Army, ordered the arrest of George Buchanon outside Wheeling in May 1863 without specifying charges

(although he later claimed that Governor Pierpont had ordered Buchanon's arrest in 1862 for failure to comply with a call for the militia to muster). After the state of West Virginia came into being, the commander at the Athenaeum made Governor Boreman aware of Buchanon's imprisonment without charges. Boreman's knowledge of Buchanon came from affidavits from eight men who claimed that Buchanon bore the character of a disloyal man, had denounced the government, and had said that President Lincoln had violated the Constitution by waging war and issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. On the other hand, one hundred thirty-nine people, including eighteen Union soldiers, petitioned the governor to release Buchanon. They claimed that he was, in fact, loyal. Boreman admitted later that he became so annoyed by the petitions that he decided to hold Buchanon as a hostage rather than release him.³⁰

In February 1864, Buchanon himself wrote to the governor and asked for the opportunity to see him. He wished to assist in gaining the release of the unknown man for whom he was held hostage. Boreman refused to see Buchanon. Two months later, Buchanon, who was more than fifty years old, fell ill. He was sent to Wheeling Hospital, but the prison physician, John Frizzell, believed that Buchanon would recover with care available in the Athenaeum and sent him back to the prison. He died on April 10, 1864.³¹ The Republican *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported Buchanon's death with murky details about his arrest and confinement and noted the efforts for his release.³² The Democratic *Wheeling Daily Register* reprinted the report from the *Daily Intelligencer* and added, "[T]he complete history of the case is enough to cause any man to shudder." It admonished, "Some person has incurred a fearful weight of responsibility in this matter, which should rest heavily upon his soul [underlining in original]."³³

Much of the history of hostage-taking in Virginia and West Virginia involved guerrilla actions and civilian grudges and animosities and embroiled families, such as in the Mollohan case. A situation in Doddridge County, in the northwestern part of the state, showed that women often not only were victims but also participated in the grudges and animosities. A pro-Confederate guerrilla band under John Righter operated in the region, often targeting the B&O Railroad and Northwestern Railroad in Doddridge, Harrison, Marion, and Wetzel counties but also plundering homes and farms. In the fall of 1863, a group of women stepped forward and swore affidavits before a justice of the peace to report activity along one of the guerrillas' trails, including rendezvous. Martha E. Kile, Nancy Ann Kile, Ruth Bates, Belinda Booker, Elisa Jane Coffman, Matilda Williams, Susannah Coffman, and Sary Jane Shields identified men involved in a horse-stealing raid in the



Irregular and outlaw forces on both sides often raided homes and farms, as depicted in this sketch by W. D. Matthews, which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1864. West Virginia officials used hostage-taking in an effort to stem the seizure of Unionists by Confederate partisans in such raids (source: Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress).

McElroy Creek neighborhood and accused one man, John Trader, of firing a gun at a house to warn women and children there away from watching him. Petitions to Governor Boreman with one hundred seventy-five names followed the affidavits. The petitioners told the governor that they felt that they were in a “helpless condition.” They pointed out that their “sons, brothers and neighbors has volunteered in the service of our country and has left their familys with the few Union men that is left at home.” The signers wrote that the “Rebels has come and stolen our property and carried it away to Dixey and they are fed and harberd by the Rebels and sympathizers amongst us.” Additionally, they reported that they were left “at the mercy of those prowling Hell hounds and Sesesh amongst us.”³⁴

The *Fairmont National* in Marion County noted the activities of Righter’s men and commented, “It is very evident to every sensible man that were it not that these guerrilla bands have their friends and sympathizers in our very midst, they would not molest us with their visits.” The newspaper suggested that if “these sympathizers do not join with the loyal people in their efforts to suppress this guerrilla warfare, they should be held responsible for the acts of those who are engaged in it.”³⁵

The petitions called for the governor to take C. B. Gain, Thomas Swiger, William M. Bonnell, Samuel Beverline, and Thomas Ash as hostages. The “Loyal citizens of Doddridge County” declared that the five men were “violent Seseshionist” and “un principold Scoundrels and leaders in the Rebel cause and threatens the peace and property of the poor soldier and his helpless family that is left amongst us.”³⁶ In response, Boreman ordered the arrest of Gain, Swiger, Bonnell, Beverline, and Ash as hostages for Thomas Kile and Duckett Gatrell, who were in Confederate custody, and ordered Lt. Jesse F. Snodgrass of West’s Company B of the West Virginia Exempts to execute the order. Snodgrass had added his name to those calling for the men’s arrest.³⁷

A new problem arose, however. Numerous people came forward and stated that none of the hostages was disloyal to the United States or West Virginia. Indeed, one resident pointed out that Swiger served in the Union Army. Others disputed the petitions to the governor and claimed that they had never signed them or consented to their names being included on them. These incidents point to the confusion, uncertainty, and even subterfuge used to implicate enemies as disloyal. The governor depended upon local information that was often flawed, biased, or falsified. Yet, it was not entirely people on the local level who were at fault. The governor often acted in haste in an effort to satisfy local demands or to exact penalties against supposed Confederates. At the crux of the matter, however, was a flawed law, one that allowed for extraordinary arrest and confinement without any appeal beyond the arresting authority.

Conclusion

The hostage law existed simply as a function of war. It is true that the Virginia government in Wheeling and the new state of West Virginia used it in their insecurity toward those who opposed their existence, but the law would never have been passed or enforced in peacetime. As it was, the governors in Wheeling applied the law against people of “known disloyal sentiments,” whether that disloyalty was to the Union or to the pro-Union states. While affidavits, newspaper reports, letters, and voting records show that levels of support that individuals manifested for pro-Union Virginia, West Virginia, and the United States were not always the same, Governor Pierpont and Governor Boreman and their governments equated the three. A person might be opposed to the secession of Virginia from the Union and still oppose secession from the state government at Richmond; a person might oppose the Confederacy and the creation of West Virginia at the same time. Still, within these very complicated dynamics, a simple fact remained.

State governments were vehicles for national governments. In a strict interpretation that perhaps allowed Pierpont and Boreman—and for that matter Gov. John Letcher and Gov. William Smith in Richmond—to make clearer sense of their work, the Wheeling governments supported the Union, and the Richmond government supported the Confederacy, and the national governments used the people and resources of those governments. So, in the end, it is understandable if loyalty to state and nation became clouded for the governors. In that sense, the governors and other state officials crossed into war and continued to cross new boundaries as the war progressed.

To the ordinary citizen, though, the boundaries were more complicated, and sometimes they crossed them without even realizing they had done so. In the case of hostages, they may have qualified as “disloyal” when their sons joined the Confederate forces, when Confederate guerrillas used the trails across their farms, when they provided care to wounded Confederate soldiers, or when an adversary maliciously labeled them. Those who thought that age or inactivity in the conflict proved their neutrality sometimes found themselves in the proverbial “wrong place at the wrong time” and even discovered that their neutrality made them suspect.

This introduction to hostage-taking in Civil War Virginia and West Virginia gives examples of the dilemmas faced by victims of the hostage law and the people for whom they were held as hostages. It is a snapshot of the human toll taken in a largely unknown corner of the war and in the struggle over state authority.

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The Life and Times of William Addison Caldwell: Virginia Tech's First Student

Clara B. Cox

Introduction

The life of William Addison Caldwell, a native of Craig County, Virginia, and an alumnus of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC, today's Virginia Tech), did not differ much from the lives of hundreds of other students who attended the small college in Blacksburg—except in one respect. Caldwell, called “Add” by his family,¹ was the first boy to register when VAMC, an all-male school, opened its doors as a land-grant institution on October 1, 1872.² And he walked twenty to twenty-eight miles³ across two mountains from his home in Craig County to do so.⁴

Except for that singular—and historic—event, Caldwell's life was not particularly remarkable, but because of his determination to get an education, Virginia Tech views him as symbolic “of the change education makes in the lives of those with the perseverance to pursue it.”⁵ This article looks at Caldwell's life, from his family's roots in Craig County through his student days at VAMC and from his professional life following his graduation to his untimely death in Wilmington, North Carolina. Since few documents about Caldwell exist, many of the details of his life must be surmised from materials that provide generalities about Craig County life in his day, give information on the early years of VAMC, or relate to reported events of organizations—such as the VAMC Corps of Cadets—to which he belonged.

The Caldwell Family

William Addison Caldwell was born on January 10, 1856, to George Charlton Caldwell (1832–1904) and his wife, Lorena Elizabeth Givens (1833–1914), in the Sinking Creek area of Craig County.⁶ He was the second of their eleven children, and his siblings were Milton McHenry “Mic” (1854–1939), Frank Braxton (1858–1925), Byron Wiley (1860–1945), Annie Lorena (1862–1939), Permelia Grace “Gracie” (1864–1962), Benton Montgomery (1868–1876), Nellie Blanche “Nell” (1870–1945), Ida L. (1872–1878), Charles Minor “Charlie” (1874–1938),⁷ and Emmett Gambill “Gam” (1877–1960).⁸



Although not all of the Caldwell siblings appear in this photograph, taken after they reached adulthood, it does show most of them: left to right, front row, Milton “Mic,” William Addison “Add,” Frank, and Byron; back row, Permelia Grace “Gracie,” Charles “Charlie,” Nellie “Nell,” and Gambill “Gam” (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).



What was once the Caldwell home place still looks out over farmland that was owned by George Caldwell. George and his wife, Lorena, probably assigned chores, either on the farm or in the house, to their children (photo by Clara B. Cox).

Several generations of Caldwells had lived in Craig's valleys since the 1770s, when King George III of England granted land to their forebear, John Caldwell.⁹ The land, rolling hills bordered by mountains in the Valley and Ridge Province (physiographic region) of Virginia,¹⁰ had once been part of Botetourt County, but that section of Botetourt and parts of Roanoke, Montgomery, Giles, and Monroe (now in West Virginia) counties were joined in 1851 to create the new county of Craig.¹¹

George Caldwell served, at one time, as clerk of Craig County and its circuit courts. In his later years, he moved those of his family who had not left home to Radford, Virginia, and became involved in the real estate business. However, he was a farmer for most of his life and owned land in Craig County that he had inherited from his father, Archibald Caldwell Jr.¹²; his land was valued at five thousand dollars in the 1860 census so it can be assumed that he owned many acres.¹³ His large, two-story frame house, where his children were born,¹⁴ still sits above the base of a mountain, providing a panoramic view of the farmland that he owned and beyond.¹⁵ Growing up on a farm, Add and his siblings surely had chores assigned to them, which was customary for the children of farmers during the nineteenth century.¹⁶ An enslaved person owned by their father before the Civil War¹⁷ most likely aided with the farm work or helped Lorena Caldwell with her household chores or did both.¹⁸

Add Caldwell's father probably encouraged or made arrangements for his children's schooling after he returned from the Civil War, where he served from its beginning to its end in Company C, 22nd Virginia Regiment, reaching the rank of orderly sergeant.¹⁹ According to J. C. Martin, who examined the early history of education in Craig County, "The Confederate [soldier] who had been deprived by the war of such educational advantages as his time afforded was very anxious that his children . . . might have a better opportunity than he [had] had."²⁰ The method of educating Add and his school-age siblings can only be surmised since the county's school records were destroyed by fire, but Craig County historian Jane Echols Johnston said that the Caldwell children most likely attended a one- or two-room school since several existed near the family farm at Sinking Creek. Or, she noted, they may have been taught by an instructor hired to go into their home, another method of education popular in the county among more prosperous residents. Add most likely spent his last year or two as a Craig County student in a public school since that system of education was introduced into the county in 1870.²¹ By 1871, the county could boast of having thirteen public and four private schools.²² After Add reached the age of sixteen, he was ready to move beyond what he could acquire in the education system of Craig County.

VAMC and Add Caldwell

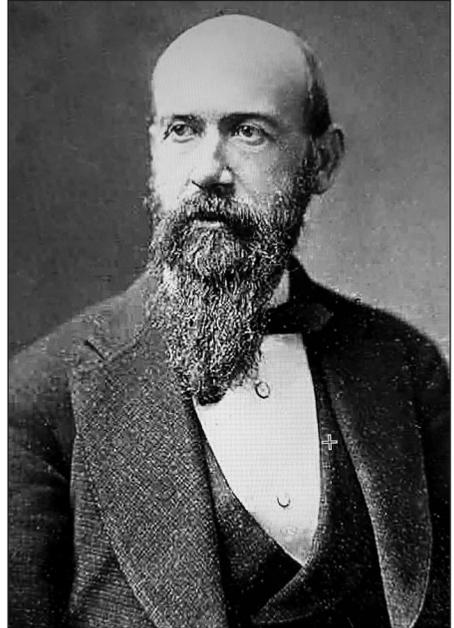
The Commonwealth of Virginia was re-admitted to the Union on January 26, 1870, nine years after the state had seceded to join other Southern states in forming the Confederate States of America. On March 5, 1870, fewer than two months later, the Virginia General Assembly voted to accept the provisions of the Morrill Act, federal legislation enacted and signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War. The act provided each state that accepted its provisions with thirty thousand acres of federal land per member of the state's congressional delegation. The states were authorized to sell the land and use the proceeds "to fund public colleges that focused on agriculture and mechanical arts."²³ Within a week of the General Assembly's vote, nine schools in Virginia had applied to secure the funds that the Morrill Act would make available. Before the General Assembly made its decision two years later, some twenty-four Virginia schools, in what the *Daily Dispatch* in Richmond dubbed the "War of the Colleges,"²⁴ were vying for the funds. Among them was a small, relatively insignificant boy's college in Blacksburg known as the Preston and Olin Institute, which was supported by the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.²⁵

As a result of the planning and efforts of several men associated or formerly associated with the Blacksburg college and the locality's representatives in Richmond,²⁶ the General Assembly designated Preston and Olin as the state's white land-grant institution. The designation required Montgomery County to supply twenty thousand dollars for the college and Preston and Olin itself to donate its property—a three-story brick building and five acres of land²⁷—and change its name. The county and the school acquiesced, and Preston and Olin Institute was converted into Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College in March of 1872.²⁸ Gov. Gilbert C. Walker (1832–1885) appointed a board of visitors, and the board named the college's first president, Charles Landon Carter Minor (1835–1903),²⁹ and a treasurer, V. E. Shepherd. The board also appointed a faculty of three men: Brig. Gen. James Henry Lane, professor of natural philosophy and chemistry, with military tactics assigned as well; Gray Carroll, professor of mathematics, with the added assignment of modern languages; and Charles Martin, professor of English language and literature, with ancient languages also assigned. The board decided to offer a three-year program of study in both agriculture and mechanical arts, although it determined it would delay hiring professors in either area of study until January 1873.³⁰ Hired that month instead was W. B. Harvie as the farm manager,³¹ with John W. C. Davis, professor of technical agriculture and natural history, and Dr. M. G.

Ellzey, professor of technical mechanics, appointed in February.³² At some point before or soon after the college opened, the board also hired a black janitor and assistant to the faculty, Andrew Oliver, who served the institution from its beginning probably until the early to mid-1880s. Oliver's son, named Andrew after his father, worked at the college as a messenger boy.³³ In other action, the board determined that the first-year courses would be the same for all students, and it set Tuesday, October 1, 1872, as opening day.³⁴



Charles Landon Carter Minor (above) was the first president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and probably taught the bookkeeping class taken by Add Caldwell during his third year (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).



As a member of the cadet corps, Add Caldwell probably had more interactions with Brig. Gen. James H. Lane (above) than any other college official since General Lane oversaw military operations at the college (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).

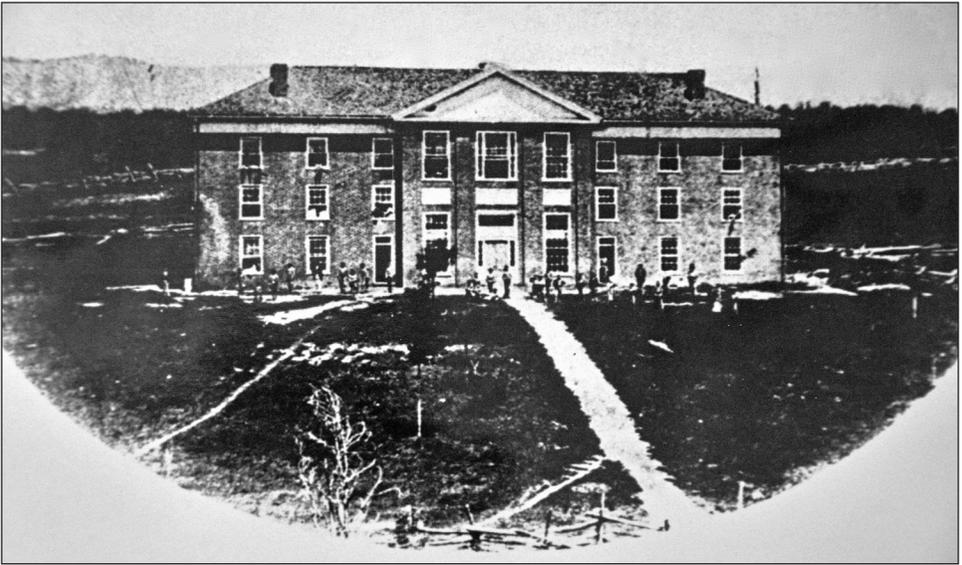
Probably very early in the morning of October 1, two Caldwell boys, Add and his eighteen-year-old brother, Mic, left home to walk to Blacksburg. Their trek was probably twenty to twenty-eight miles, depending on which local foot trails the boys may have followed. Johnston said they would have known about trails across the mountains that would have shortened their walk considerably more than following roads,³⁵ and Virginia Tech alumnus J. Morris Brown estimated the distance at approximately twenty miles after measuring his own excursions from Sinking Creek to Blacksburg.³⁶ The

fact that the Caldwell brothers walked to Blacksburg came to light in 1991, when Mic's then ninety-year-old daughter, Katherine Caldwell Mendez, recalled her father telling her that he had walked with her Uncle Add "to Blacksburg to go to school."³⁷ However, Mic probably returned home since he did not enroll until November 2.³⁸

The first student to show up at the school on October 1, 1872, was William Addison Caldwell.³⁹ What prompted his interest in attending VAMC probably will never be known. He may have read about the new college in a newspaper, learned about it at his Craig County school, or heard of its existence through word of mouth elsewhere. Although President Minor placed numerous advertisements to secure students for the college in newspapers across the state, they did not appear until after Add's enrollment and thus could not have served as an enticement for the teenager.⁴⁰ Virginia Tech historian D. Lyle Kinnear described another possible reason for Add's appearance that day:

The faculty gathered early; President Minor unlocked the front door, and he, [the faculty, and the school treasurer] filed into the building and somewhat nervously, it can be imagined, awaited the arrival of the first student. The wait was much longer than had been anticipated, but finally William A. Caldwell from Craig County "drifted" in. There is a completely unverified tradition that Caldwell's appearance at the college was motivated more by curiosity than by any intention to enroll as a student. Certainly *he had not been nominated for a state scholarship by his county superintendent of schools, as it sometimes has been asserted*. Whatever his real motive may have been, immediately he was given a state scholarship by the faculty and enrolled as the first student in Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College [emphasis added].⁴¹

Caldwell did, in fact, have a scholarship, but it was not given to him by the faculty, as Kinnear asserted,⁴² certainly not according to a report submitted to state officials by President Minor. On December 6, 1872, two months after the college opened, the General Assembly followed a request from the governor and instructed the Senate Committee on Public Institutions to obtain information from VAMC President Minor on the number of students in attendance, dates of matriculation, and counties in the state from which they were appointed. The legislature also requested information on the number of students whose expenses were not defrayed by the state.⁴³ Minor complied on January 6, 1873; his report noted the scholarship status of each student, with two types of scholarships identified.



Constructed in the mid-1850s to house Olin and Preston Institute, which closed during the Civil War and reopened afterward as the Preston and Olin Institute, the Preston and Olin Building provided Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College with dormitory and classroom space (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).

An “A” beside a student’s name meant that he was a scholarship appointee of his county school board, while a “B” beside a name indicated a student awarded a scholarship by the faculty under authorization of the VAMC Board of Visitors. Minor designated those students who had not received either type of scholarship with a “C” beside their respective names, meaning that they had to pay tuition and college fees. In the report, an “A” follows the name of William Addison Caldwell, whose name also tops the non-alphabetical list of fourteen students who matriculated on October 1, an indication that he registered first. Thus, with a scholarship in hand from his county school board, young Add more than likely made that long walk from Sinking Creek with the sole purpose of registering as a student. Mic, the forty-fourth student to register, also received a scholarship, but Minor’s report showed that his came from the faculty.⁴⁴

The scholarships freed each of the Caldwell boys from paying forty-five dollars a year,⁴⁵ at least for their first two years.⁴⁶ Add’s scholarship also signified that his school trustees considered his proficiency while enrolled in Craig County public schools to be the highest (however, see below under Coursework) and his character to be good, per the state requirements to award such a scholarship. The total number of scholarships awarded to VAMC students was limited to the number of members of the House of Delegates.⁴⁷

Other students trickled in over the month—never as many in a single day as the fourteen who had registered on the first day—prompting Minor to write to Gen. Joseph R. Anderson, a member of the VAMC Board of Visitors, during the first month of the college’s operation:

We have now thirty students matriculated, and there are, I think[,] a dozen more, of the vicinity, holding back in hope of some abatement of accommodation in the way of delay such as they have been used to received [sic] from the Preston and Olin Institute. We are corresponding with a good many others, but [it is] plain that our beginning is to be smaller than had been expected by most of those who were best informed in the matter.⁴⁸

By mid-November, newspapers reported that sixty students had registered and “the tide of entrance is steadily flowing on to as full numbers as can be comfortably accommodated.”⁴⁹ By year’s end, ninety-three students had enrolled.⁵⁰ Total enrollment during the college’s first year of operation eventually reached one hundred thirty-two, with all of the students hailing from Virginia.⁵¹ The slowness of student registrations, one newspaper surmised, was because the college was “organized late in the season, when the great body of educating people had already made arrangements for their sons at other schools”⁵²

VAMC Student Add Caldwell

A Family Affair

Each of the four years that Add Caldwell was enrolled in VAMC, at least one of his brothers was enrolled as well. Mic, who matriculated a month after the college opened, was on the rolls again the following year; after a two-year respite, he returned to VAMC for the 1876–1877 and 1877–1878 sessions, but he never graduated. One of their younger brothers, Frank, attended the school during Add’s third and fourth years, when Mic was not there, and the next two sessions, but like Mic, Frank did not graduate.⁵³

School Terms

The first school year at VAMC ran from October 1, 1872, to the last Wednesday in July 1873. After that, the schedule for the academic year was revised so that students had a long winter vacation, which began around Christmas and lasted until late February. The second academic year commenced on August 13, 1873, and ran until December 22, 1873. Thus, Add and Mic Caldwell had about a three-week break before they had to

return for their second year. After closing just before Christmas for vacation, school resumed on February 24, 1874, and continued until the following August 12.⁵⁴ The student-produced *Gray Jacket*, presumably quoting President Minor, provided the justification for the school term, saying the winter vacation was “best suited for an institution of this character” because “the study of farm operations is interrupted at a less important season of the year,” besides “students from other sections of the country, while escaping the severity of winter in the mountains, will remain at College during the most pleasant and healthful part of the year.”⁵⁵

Room, Board, and Other Expenses

The scholarships awarded each of the Caldwell brothers covered tuition of \$30.00, college fees of \$10.00, and on-campus room rent of \$5.00 (if they lived on campus and brought bedding from home). Add and Mic were responsible for other expenses, which the college reported would “not exceed \$150” for the 10-month session for scholarship recipients. Each student living on campus was responsible for paying \$10.00–\$12.00 for furnishings. However, this fee could be eliminated entirely if the student provided “the necessary articles of furniture from home.”⁵⁶

Other fees for each student included \$5.00–\$7.50 for books, which, until 1881, were purchased from merchants in Blacksburg⁵⁷; \$7.50–\$12.50 for laundry; and \$7.50 for fuel and lights. Coal was reportedly “convenient and cheap.”⁵⁸ If a student lived and ate in Blacksburg, he paid \$13.00–\$15.00 per month, which included room rent, fuel, and furnishings. The college also required each student to deposit \$5.00 with the treasurer as a contingent fee to cover property damage, but if any balance of this fee remained at the close of the session, it was returned to the student.⁵⁹ This fee was reduced to \$3.00 for the 1874–1875 session, but an infirmary fee of \$2.00 was added.⁶⁰ Meals cost \$12.00 per month, and for the first session, all students had to eat in town. Since each healthy student was required to be a member of the corps of cadets—Add Caldwell fell into this category—such a student had to purchase his own uniform, which cost \$17.25.⁶¹ That expense increased to \$18.94 for the 1874–1875 session.⁶²

By 1875, expenses for students varied from \$6.50 per month to \$15.00 per month, and it was possible, according to the *Gray Jacket*, “for state students to keep [their] year’s expenses, including books and uniform, within \$110” (by “state student,” the *Gray Jacket* was referring to students with scholarships).⁶³ From the time it opened, the college allowed some students to recoup some of their expenses by working on the farm or in the workshops or by filling any number of other jobs needed to maintain the



According to historian Col. Harry Temple, school officials at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College had to stuff students three per room in an effort to provide lodging on campus when the land-grant school opened in 1872. However, as enrollment grew throughout the year, eventually reaching one hundred thirty-two students, hotels and other forms of lodging in the town of Blacksburg became living options (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).

college, from tending livestock to erecting buildings,⁶⁴ but it is not known if Add was one of these students.

Where Add Caldwell lived while he was enrolled in VAMC may never be known. When the land-grant institution commenced operations, it had the Preston and Olin Building; a five-acre lot; and a two-hundred-fifty-acre estate known as Solitude, which included a house and farm buildings. The estate was purchased on October 1, 1872, from Robert Taylor Preston. Since Preston and his wife, Mary, were allowed to live in the house until their deaths, that facility was not available for use by the college until 1881, when Mary died a year after her husband's demise.⁶⁵ The Preston and Olin Building, while it served as a Methodist-supported college, contained "three recitation rooms, a chapel, and twenty-four lodging rooms."⁶⁶ These lodging rooms, although unfurnished,⁶⁷ continued to serve the same purpose when VAMC opened, but the number of rooms available became inadequate as enrollment grew during the first year. According to Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets historian Col. Harry D. Temple, the building "could not house the entire student body, even with crowding three cadets to a room."⁶⁸ Virginia Tech historian Jenkins M. Robertson also reported that the facility was "not large enough to house the total student body by the end of the first year. Consequently, students had the option of living in town or on campus . . ."⁶⁹ In a survey of historic Blacksburg architecture, architectural historian Gibson Worsham noted:

“The town supported a number of hotels in this period, mostly to house and feed the students at the college.” Worsham also discussed a commercial/residential block constructed around 1870 called Lybrook’s Row, which he said was known as “Hell’s Row” because “early students of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College resided there.”⁷⁰ William Addison Caldwell, as the first student on the scene, had the option of living in one of the on-campus rooms, but a hotel room or other town lodging could have been his choice, although it would have cost him more. With three students per room on campus, those rooms could accommodate seventy-two students, or slightly fewer than fifty-five percent of the 1872 VAMC cadets. With lodging cheaper on campus, it seems more likely that both Add and Mic lived in the Preston and Olin Building, especially since their respective scholarships covered on-campus room rents.

There is no question, however, about whether Add and his classmates ate on campus; they did not. Since VAMC initially had no facilities for providing meals, all students ate in Blacksburg, most taking their board at Luster House (Luster Hotel) or at any of several other hotels.⁷¹ The college began offering meals on campus in 1873, and students who selected that option—called “table board”—paid ten to twelve dollars per month.⁷² With cadets providing the labor and the college furnishing the construction materials that year, several small, frame buildings were erected on campus specifically to serve meals, and students then had the option—until the 1881–1882 school year—of eating in town or on campus.⁷³ Until 1876, these “messes,” as the military calls its dining facilities, were the only buildings added to the campus.⁷

Coursework

According to state educator William H. Ruffner, Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College was designed to be

a truly technical school of secondary grade. Its whole cast will have special reference to the wants of the “industrial classes”; by which are meant those who are directly (not remotely) engaged in producing, developing, or shaping the material products of the State; and its ultimate object is not to educate them out of, but in and for their vocations; and not only to make them more capable of achieving success, but to give them enthusiasm for their work.⁷⁵

Academically, the college was organized into three departments, including a literary department, scientific department, and technical department, to provide three-year courses of study for both agricultural and mechanical

students.⁷⁶ The college adopted a curriculum, which it required every student to follow. According to the first VAMC catalogue, the junior (first) year included arithmetic, English grammar, geography, French or German, physics, Latin and Greek (optional), weekly compositions, algebra, and English composition. As noted earlier, instruction in military tactics was also required for all healthy students.⁷⁷ Based on an extant report card, however, at some time during the next three years, several courses were added to junior year offerings: dictation, penmanship, and farm work (presumably just for agriculture students; shop work was probably required for mechanical arts students).⁷⁸

A couple of months after classes started, President Minor wrote that he was “embarrassed by the fact that the wants of the students who have come to us have forced us to vary materially from the strictly technical training enjoined by the organization Committee’s report.” He reported that a number of them had arrived with “the scantiest preparation,” making it necessary for VAMC to “include much of the work properly belonging to the high schools, or even the grammar schools, thus leaving it impossible to do all that is to be desired in the special technical courses.”⁷⁹ Indeed, the extant report card shows an initial “preparatory year,” when mathematics, English grammar, geography, elocution, dictation, penmanship, Latin, composition (written), military tactics, and farm work were taught.⁸⁰ The fact that it took Add Caldwell an extra year to complete the requirements for graduation points to the likelihood that he was one of those scantily prepared students. If so, his first-year studies would have included at least some of those courses listed above for the preparatory year.

The board of visitors determined before VAMC opened and before President Minor found his students lacking in educational achievement that “two parallel courses of two years each, suited to agricultural and mechanical students respectively” would follow the first year. However, rather than the board of visitors determining the coursework for those two years, it left the duty of preparing “a working programme” to the faculty once a faculty had been appointed.⁸¹

During the last two years of Add Caldwell’s studies and if his education in agriculture followed the board’s intended path, he would have been exposed to the college’s experimental farm of about two hundred forty-five acres. However, based on his one existing report card, farm work was also part of the preparatory and the junior years.⁸² According to VAMC’s first catalogue, “This farm has been well equipped, and the students in the agricultural department will there be taught practically the most improved methods of cultivation, under the direction of the Professor of Agriculture and the Farm Manager.”⁸³

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College

Monthly Report of Scholarship of *W. A. Caldwell*
for the Month of _____, 187*5*.

SCALE OF MARKS: 10 Perfect; 8 Satisfactory; 7 Tolerable, &c.

PREPARATORY YEAR.

Mathematics English Grammar Geography Elocution Dictation Penmanship	Latin Compositions, (written) Military Tactics Farm Work
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JUNIOR YEAR.

Mathematics English Grammar Geography Dictation Physics Penmanship French German	Latin Greek Compositions, (written) Military Tactics Farm Work
---	--

INTERMEDIATE YEAR.

Mathematics 5 Physics 7 Chemistry 7 Natural History 8 Composition and Rhetoric 7 French 5 German 8 Latin	Greek Drawing Compositions, (written) Military Tactics Farm Work
---	--

10
9.5
10

SENIOR YEAR.

Mathematics History and English Literature Moral Philosophy Political Economy Astronomy Book-Keeping	Agriculture Technical Mechanics Mechanical Drawing Compositions, (written) Military Tactics Farm Work
---	--

Absent from Roll Call _____ times.

Remarks: _____

C. L. C. MINOR, President
Secretary Faculty.

The only report card of Add Caldwell known to exist (above) was mailed to his father at the end of Add's third year in college. It reveals some of the changes made in the curriculum after Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College opened (courtesy of Special Collections, donated by Frank Yingling Caldwell Jr).

Young Caldwell's performance in his classes during four years at VAMC is only partially known. His obituary said he graduated "at the head of his class,"⁸⁴ but the reporter most likely confused his status as the college's first student, especially since those grades that survive do not indicate that he was an exceptional student; he took an extra year to complete the three-year program in agriculture; at least two of his grades were below that considered "tolerable" by the college (see below); and he was not included in the list of outstanding students published in the *Gray Jacket* at the time of his graduation.⁸⁵

William Addison Caldwell’s 1875 report card was mailed to his father in Craig County on July 17 at the end of Add’s third year at VAMC.⁸⁶ At that time, the college based grades on a 10-point scale, with 10 being “perfect,” the highest grade a student could obtain; 8 was “satisfactory”; and 7 was “tolerable.”⁸⁷ Add’s courses and grades were as follows:

Intermediate Year			
Mathematics	5	French	8
Chemistry	7 ⁸⁸	Compositions (written)	10
Natural History	8	Military Tactics	9.5
Composition and Rhetoric	7.5	Farm Work	10
Senior Year			
Book-Keeping	5		

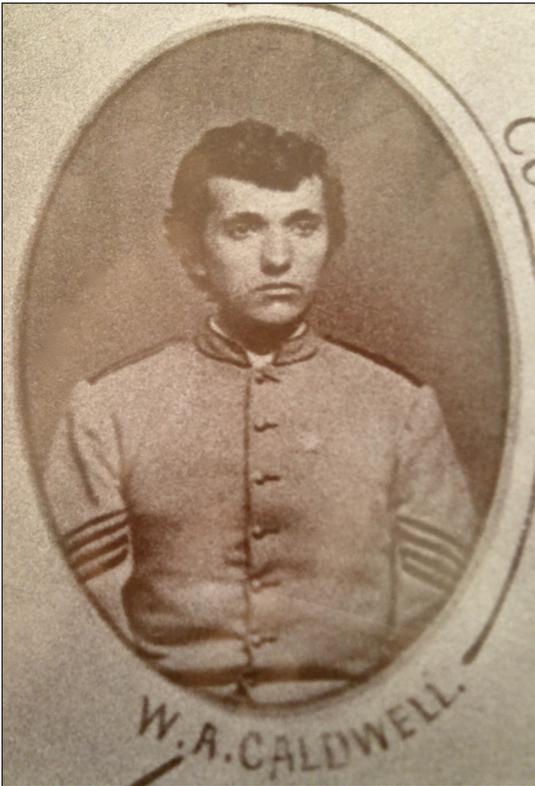
Most likely, President Minor instructed Add in the bookkeeping course since it was one of two subjects the college president taught.⁸⁹

As noted above, VAMC’s two majors had been designed as three-year courses of study before the college opened. Thus, the “Intermediate Year” on the report card probably reflected what would have been Add Caldwell’s second year of instruction, unless his progress was slowed by having to take preparatory courses. Based on the report card, mathematics, history and English literature, moral philosophy, political economy, astronomy, agriculture, technical mechanics, mechanical drawing, compositions (written), military tactics, and farm work awaited Add’s “Senior Year” of studies.

Thus, rather than three-year courses of study, students’ lack of preparation for college forced VAMC to change its plans to include a preparatory year. For those students enrolled in preparatory courses, the junior year became the second year; the intermediate year, the third year; and the senior year, the fourth year. Only twelve students graduated in 1875⁹⁰; presumably, they did not require preparatory work.

The Military Component

As can be noted from Add Caldwell’s grade on the report card, he did very well in military tactics, scoring a 9.5 out of a possible grade of 10 and indicating that his participation in VAMC’s military activities was



Add Caldwell had reached the rank of second sergeant in Company B before his graduation (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).

well above average. The entire college was under military discipline from its beginning until the early 1920s.⁹¹ During the first week of October 1872, a single infantry-type company was formed, with a second one organized as more students enrolled. The cadets drilled twice each week at first, then daily.⁹² Robertson reported that the cadets were “required to meet formations, march to classes, pass room inspections, have military passes when off campus, and conform to other types of military behavior.”⁹³ This military component of VAMC “became a unit of the Virginia State Active Militia under the governor of Virginia”⁹⁴ Students were assigned to one of two companies, A or B, and each wore a standard uniform:

a cap, jacket, and pants of cadet gray, trimmed with black. Add, a member of Company B, attained the rank of second sergeant by his final year in college.⁹⁵

Information about corps’ activities gives us a glimpse into some of Add Caldwell’s life at VAMC, from daily military requirements on campus, listed above, to trips off campus. Each Memorial Day, the corps marched to Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, approximately eight miles away, to honor the Confederate soldiers buried there and returned to campus the same day. On June 21, 1873, the cadets were assembled at 7:30 in the morning and arrived at the resort before 10:00 a.m.⁹⁶ Their precision that day elicited praise from a Richmond newspaper, which reported that the cadets did “both themselves and the officers a great deal of credit. They are a fine, gentlemanly set of fellows, and their behavior during the entire day evinced refinement and careful training.”⁹⁷ Two years later, according to the *Gray Jacket*, parts of the two companies formed one company for the long march, while the remaining cadets rode to the ceremony, prompting

a comment from a General Preston (most likely *Col.* Robert Preston of Solitude) that it was a “d_____ poor militia that had to be hauled about in ambulances.” At least those who marched “won many flattering comments from the assembly.”⁹⁸ Information about whether Add Caldwell marched or rode to the resort that day could not be found.

In an earlier trip taken in 1875 by the corps, the cadets journeyed to Richmond at the beginning of Add Caldwell’s final year in college for the unveiling of a statue of Stonewall Jackson. On the return trip, they spent the night in Farmville, Virginia.⁹⁹ Thanks to the corps, then, Add Caldwell did not spend all of his school days on campus or in the small town of Blacksburg.

Extra-curricular Activities

Since students had to provide their own entertainment, they often relieved their boredom by playing pranks,¹⁰⁰ although several other forms of entertainment were sometimes available. Many nights during the college sessions, dancing was a readily available activity. Students could attend dances at Yellow Sulphur Springs¹⁰¹ or at “the nearby watering places,” except during the winter months,¹⁰² but Add Caldwell’s participation in these pastimes could not be ascertained. Nor could it be determined if he joined in any of the “haphazard” sports organized by students, such as running and jumping; participated in outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, and hunting; or attended one of three churches in Blacksburg on Sundays, a practice encouraged by the college.¹⁰³ However, in later life, he was a member of a Presbyterian church in at least two different localities, so he may have attended the one located in Blacksburg during his college days. Just before he graduated, he received a bible, dated July 4, 1876, from a Mrs. William C. McKemey, a possible indication that he was already a churchgoer.¹⁰⁴

Another extra-curricular activity offered both companionship and entertainment on campus. Initially, students participated in the Virginia Literary Society, which they organized in 1872. Because of its rapid growth during the first year, that society was divided into the Sophsonian Society, which became the Lee Literary Society in early 1873, and the Philomathian Society, which changed its name to the Maury Literary Society in mid-1873. President Minor was a frequent visitor at the meetings of these societies, which focused on public speaking, debate, and creative writing, providing their respective members with valuable training in these areas. They also introduced the first student publication, the *Gray Jacket*, in 1875,¹⁰⁵ which, at least for the first two years of publication, was issued five times a session. The first issue was printed in July of that year.¹⁰⁶

Add Caldwell was a member of the Maury Literary Society and served on a joint committee representing both his society and the Lee society during March of his last year at VAMC. The committee, according to the *Gray Jacket*, concurred with the societies of Washington and Graham-Lee (both student organizations at Washington and Lee University¹⁰⁷) in having a convention in Lynchburg, Virginia, to organize an "Inter Collegiate Association of Virginia." The committee recommended that the VAMC societies "participate in the . . . [c]onvention and send a delegate from each [s]ociety."¹⁰⁸ The following month, delegates from the literary societies of several colleges in Virginia met in Lynchburg to officially organize the intercollegiate association. Colleges represented at the meeting were William and Mary; Richmond; Hampden Sidney; Emory and Henry; Roanoke; and VAMC, which sent S. P. Snavely and R. Withers. During the meeting, the delegates decided that the association would hold oratory competitions, with "each college entitled to one contestant." They set the first competition for the following November in Lynchburg.¹⁰⁹ Beyond Add's committee work to support an organizing convention, it could not be learned if he was involved in any other efforts involving the association. However, by the time the association held its first competition, he had already graduated from college.

According to Colonel Temple, nearly all of the societies' members attended meetings.¹¹⁰ Thus, Add Caldwell probably was among members of the audience when the Maury Literary Society held a public debate on May 9, 1876. Following arguments by both sides, the audience determined "that women suffrage should not be allowed" by selecting the negative team as the winner of the debate.¹¹¹

Add Caldwell's Graduation

William Addison Caldwell finished his coursework in time to join VAMC's second graduating class in the 1876 commencement exercises, which began on Sunday evening, August 6, with a sermon by the Rev. Oscar F. Flippo of Baltimore. The sermon, according to the *Gray Jacket*, "was considered one of much beauty and force," and the Reverend Flippo "greatly endeared himself to the students" by "his genial manners and warm heart."¹¹² A former missionary and minister in Delaware, the Rev. Oscar Farish Flippo (1835–1903) had become editor of the *Baptist Visitor*, a monthly periodical, before moving to Baltimore to assume duties as the pastor of a Baptist church there. Two years after his VAMC sermon, he settled in Virginia to continue his work as a missionary and pastor, which included a pastorate in Roanoke, Virginia, from 1886 to 1893.¹¹³

Colonel Temple reported that on the evening of the next day, a graduation ball was held in the ballroom of the Yellow Sulphur Springs Hotel.¹¹⁴ However, according to historical information posted online via Virginia Heritage, the resort's new hotel was destroyed by fire in 1873 and was not rebuilt until 1888.¹¹⁵ Thus, while the Class of 1876 may have enjoyed a graduation ball, it is unlikely that it occurred at Yellow Sulphur Springs.

VAMC's 1876 commencement exercises continued on August 8 in the Methodist church in town, where Add and his fellow seniors listened to the fourth annual address¹¹⁶ before the literary societies, delivered by Maj. John W. Daniel of Lynchburg, Virginia. Major Daniel chose the theme "The Defense of the Present Age" for his talk, about which the *Gray Jacket* reported, "To say that his address was beautiful, chaste, elegant, and eloquent is to bestow but faint praise upon it." The publication declined to give a synopsis of the presentation "as we would only do Maj. Daniel injustice" but noted that the talk would "increase the wide fame which he has already won as an orator."¹¹⁷ John Warwick Daniel Sr. (1842–1910) was a well-known orator, especially on topics related to the Confederacy, and was often called the "Golden-tongued Orator of the South."¹¹⁸ He was a state senator, an author, and a former member of Virginia's House of Delegates when the VAMC Class of 1876 heard him speak. In the years following his VAMC presentation, he addressed the Democratic National Convention and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.¹¹⁹

The *Gray Jacket* further reported that Virginia Gov. James Lawson Kemper (1823–1895) attended the Daniel presentation and was "loudly called for" and "responded in a brief but able and eloquent speech. His words went to the hearts of his auditors, and many are grateful to him for his kindly words of praise and encouragement." At 5:00 p.m. the same day, the governor and the college's board of visitors reviewed the battalion and "expressed themselves as highly pleased with the 'beauty, precision, and promptness' with which the movements were executed." After the governor complimented the cadets, their Adjutant General Frye presented him with a petition for more guns, which elicited a promise from Kemper not only for the guns but also for "a battery of artillery with harness and all complete." Afterward, at the prompting of the governor, the cadets called on several guests to speak, among them Col. Robert Preston of Solitude; Gen. William Henry Fitzhugh Lee, a state senator and son of Gen. Robert E. Lee; and Daniel Coleman DeJarnette Sr., a former member of Virginia's House of Delegates and the U.S. House of Representatives.¹²⁰

That night, the Maury Literary Society held its fourth annual celebration at the Methodist church. Following orations and debates, Professor Martin

and Thomas N. Conrad, editor of the local *Montgomery Messenger*, former president of the Preston and Olin Institute, and later president of VAMC,¹²¹ presented awards for oratory and debate.¹²² As an active member of that society, Add Caldwell most likely attended the event, especially since it was part of the graduation ceremonies.

On the morning of Wednesday, August 9, President Minor presented diplomas to twenty-seven graduating students, including William Addison Caldwell.¹²³ Afterward, the *Gray Jacket* reported, Gen. Jas. H. Williams of Winchester, Virginia, delivered the annual address to faculty and students.¹²⁴ A member of the state's House of Delegates,¹²⁵ Virginia native James Harrison Williams (1836–1903) had been a prominent member of the Shenandoah County (Virginia) bar, a member of the Iowa state legislature, a newspaper correspondent, and a Confederate soldier before his election to the Virginia legislature.¹²⁶ According to the *Gray Jacket*, “He was followed by Hon. John Dodson.”¹²⁷

Another event on the morning of August 9 concluded the graduation ceremonies for the Class of 1876. The new graduates held an alumni meeting in the Lee Society hall and heard remarks by President Minor and J. Lawrence Radford of Montgomery County.¹²⁸ Radford, a VAMC alumnus who had graduated with the first class in 1875, may have been the same J. Lawrence Radford who was the top landowner, with 1,260 acres of land, in the community that became known as Radford, Virginia.¹²⁹ During the meeting, the alumni association elected officers for the ensuing year, including William Addison Caldwell as secretary, and scheduled the next meeting for the following year.¹³⁰ No information on whether the new secretary attended that meeting could be found.

William Addison Caldwell's Professional Life

Teaching School in Craig County, Virginia

If Add Caldwell was typical of many alumni described in the *Gray Jacket* in 1877, he may well have returned to Craig County immediately after graduating and obtained a job as a schoolteacher. If so, he probably still helped his father, at least some, on the farm. An editor of the *Gray Jacket* complained in 1877 that “so few of our ‘Old Boys’ are farmers” and that “so many of them became teachers.” But, the editor continued,

We must remember that these gentlemen are, as far as we are informed, teaching public schools in their immediate neighborhoods, and that the session of these schools, in most cases, holds only through a part of

the fall, winter, and spring months, leaving cropping months entirely out. Now from what we can learn of the matter[,] our “Old Boys” are farming in summer and teaching in winter; thus they are most aptly filling their places as good citizens and grateful sons of Virginia.¹³¹

Certainly by 1880, Add, Mic, and Frank were living with their parents in Sinking Creek, and all three were teaching school.¹³² At that time, Craig County employed twenty-six teachers, including twenty-two white males and four white females, for its twenty-six public schools.¹³³

Working in Roanoke, Virginia

How long or where Add Caldwell taught cannot be ascertained, but by 1887, he was living in Roanoke, possibly with his youngest brother, Gam.¹³⁴ There, Add worked in the general office of Norfolk and Western Railway.¹³⁵ Since Gam and Frank both worked at one time for Norfolk and Western, the three brothers may have worked there together.¹³⁶ Some evidence exists that Frank was a Roanoke resident at least part of the time while Add was living there (see below). Nonetheless, Add’s work at the railroad office prompted a description of him as “a well known and popular employee.”¹³⁷

During all or part of the time Add resided in Roanoke, he was a member of the First Presbyterian Church.¹³⁸ At some point before leaving the area, he became interested in the real estate business, but whether he derived any income from the sale of property could not be ascertained.¹³⁹ He may also have served as a juror on more than one occasion. The local newspaper listed a William A. Caldwell as a member of the jury pool for the September 1893 term of the Hustings court. His brother Frank may have served with him since the list also includes a B. Caldwell—because of damage to the newspaper, the first name is missing; however, Frank’s middle initial was B.¹⁴⁰ Three years later, Add possibly served on a special grand jury for the criminal term of the court since the newspaper named a W. A. Caldwell as having been summoned for that purpose.¹⁴¹ Throughout his years in Roanoke, Add apparently impressed those around him since a later report of his life in the city noted that “he was highly esteemed.”¹⁴²

Tackling Jobs in Wilmington, North Carolina

Add Caldwell relocated to Wilmington, North Carolina, around 1898¹⁴³ and moved his church membership from First Presbyterian Church in Roanoke to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Wilmington in March 1902.¹⁴⁴ In Wilmington, he worked for several large wholesale firms on the wharf: the Stove Company, Mr. W. B. Cooper (probably William Bryant

Cooper, former governor of North Carolina, who was a prominent banker and businessman in the area¹⁴⁵), Messrs. Blair & Healy, and the C. C. Covington Company, traveling part of the time out of Wilmington.¹⁴⁶ The Virginia Tech Alumni Association reported in 1911 that Add had been a salesman for a molasses firm,¹⁴⁷ and at least two of the firms for whom he worked were involved in the molasses trade: Blair & Healy¹⁴⁸ and the C. C. Covington Company, which was a direct importer of molasses and shipped it throughout the South.¹⁴⁹ W. B. Cooper was involved at various times in the wholesale grocery business, a peanut cleaning operation,¹⁵⁰ and probably the produce business since he was president of the Produce Exchange in Wilmington.¹⁵¹ It could not be ascertained if Add Caldwell worked for him in one or more of these enterprises. No information could be found regarding the Stove Company.

Add Caldwell's death

After Add left the family home place in Craig County, Mic moved to Radford and later persuaded his parents to sell the family farm in Sinking Creek and to move to Radford as well. Two sisters, Gracie and Nell—like their brother Add, the two never married—moved with their parents to a house across the street from Mic. During summer vacations, Add visited his relatives in Radford.¹⁵²

Sometime before 1910, Add's health declined, and Katherine Caldwell Mendez remembered that her favorite uncle underwent surgery for a brain tumor. He recuperated from the operation at his mother's home—his father had died in 1904¹⁵³—spending more than one summer there. According to Mrs. Mendez, the doctor told Add that salt air would be good for him, so he secured a position in the spring of 1910 as a clerk at the Tarrymoore Hotel,¹⁵⁴ which had been constructed in 1905 at Wrightsville Beach near Wilmington.¹⁵⁵ The job, which he probably started around the first of June, was to last until September 1.¹⁵⁶

On June 15, 1910, Add wrote to Katherine (Mrs. Mendez), who had developed a fond attachment for this uncle who would play games, such as "hole in the wall," with her and help her with such chores as capping strawberries.¹⁵⁷ In the letter, which included several pictures of the beach, Add wrote that it had been "too cold and rainy" for the hotel to have many guests but that "by July 1st we expect to have the house full. Don't know how I am going to like my job, haven't had much to do so far." He noted that the hotel was "a fine place to spend the summer" but said he would rather spend it in Radford.¹⁵⁸

Regarding his health, he wrote, “I have not been here long enough to tell whether the salt air is going to benefit me or not.” He continued, “I am feeling about the same, no worse, no better.” He closed the letter by asking Katherine, who was then nine years old, to “[r]emember me to your grandmother [his mother] and with much love to all of you and especially to yourself, I am fondly yours, Add.”¹⁵⁹ The two-page letter can be seen in the Appendix.

Those would be the last words young Katherine—and probably any other family member—would ever receive from him. On June 19, just four days after he wrote the letter, he fainted, sustaining a severe fall that ruptured a blood vessel in his brain (one newspaper named the rupture as the cause of death,¹⁶⁰ while another one claimed that he died from a tumor or abscess on the base of the brain¹⁶¹). He was taken to the James Walter Memorial Hospital in Wilmington, where “it was thought he would recover.” However, he “suffered a relapse, and from that time, he continued to sink rapidly until the end came” on June 29, 1910. Only his younger brother Gam was with him when he died, and Gam accompanied the body to Radford.¹⁶² According to the *Roanoke Times*, “He had been in failing health a long time,”¹⁶³ which corroborates what Katherine Mendez remembered.

Add Caldwell’s funeral was held in his mother’s home in Radford. His old pastor from the First Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Dr. William Creighton Campbell (1850–1936), conducted the service, with assistance from three other pastors, the Rev. John L. Einstein, headmaster of St. Albans School in Radford; the Rev. J. Harry Whitmore, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Radford; and the Rev. Paul Seig. On July 1, 1910, William Addison Caldwell was buried in the Caldwell family cemetery on Sixth Street in Radford,¹⁶⁴ where those brothers who had joined him as classmates at VAMC; his parents; and siblings Gam, Charlie, Gracie, and Nellie, all now rest with him.¹⁶⁵

Conclusion

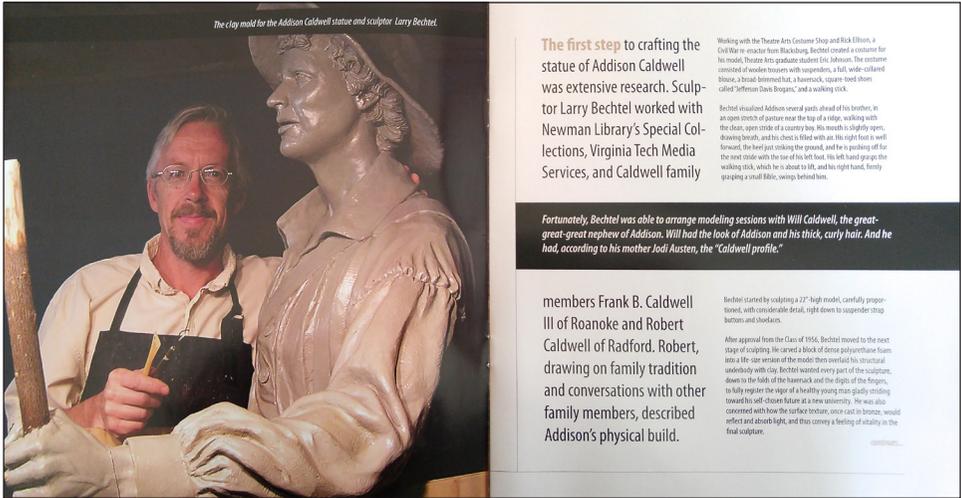
William Addison Caldwell’s twenty- to twenty-eight-mile trek from his home in the Sinking Creek area of Craig County across two mountains to Blacksburg to register at VAMC and his willingness to continue his education for an extra year in order to obtain his diploma in agriculture demonstrate his unwavering focus on furthering his education. Today, his long walk is memorialized by the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, whose first-year cadets and their training cadre make two representative walks annually. The first one, which occurs in the fall, begins in front of Add’s Craig County home and continues across Gap Mountain to Caldwell Fields,



Add Caldwell's mother and siblings buried him in the family cemetery where his father had been interred six years earlier. The Woodsmen of the World placed a marker at his gravesite (left). The words on the marker can be seen more clearly in the second photograph (photos by Clara B. Cox).

an area in the Washington and Jefferson National Forest named for Add; Mic; and their father, George. The second march, held in the spring of each year, starts between Gap and Brush mountains about a quarter of a mile from Caldwell Fields, crosses Brush Mountain, and concludes in the Upper Quad on the Virginia Tech campus; it represents the second half of Add's walk to Blacksburg (no one knows the exact trail he and his brother took).¹⁶⁶

Several memorials also honor Add Caldwell's determination, perseverance, and historical significance, two on the Virginia Tech campus; one in Craig County; and one, Caldwell Fields, in Montgomery County. On campus, a lounge on the top floor of the G. Burke Johnston Student Center bears his name and features a plaque about the Craig County native, all dedicated in 1993 (a portrait of Add, painted by one of his nephews, also hangs in the lounge).¹⁶⁷ The second campus memorial features a marker about Add's life and a statue of him sculpted by Tech alumnus and



The clay mold for the Addison Caldwell statue and sculptor Larry Bechtel.

The first step to crafting the statue of Addison Caldwell was extensive research. Sculptor Larry Bechtel worked with Newman Library's Special Collections, Virginia Tech Media Services, and Caldwell family

Working with the Theatre Arts Costume Shop and Rick Ellison, a Civil War re-enactor from Blacksburg, Bechtel created a costume for his model. Thanks to graduate student Eric Johnson, the costume consisted of wooden breeches with suspenders, a full, wide-collared blouse, a broad-brimmed hat, a haversack, square-toed shoes called "buckles" (two straps), and a walking stick.

Bechtel sketched Addison several years ahead of his brother in an open stretch of pasture near the top of a ridge, walking with the clean, open stride of a country boy. His mouth is slightly open, showing teeth, and his chest is filled with air. His right foot is well forward, the feet just striking the ground, and he is pushing off for the next stride with the toe of his left foot. His left hand grips the walking stick, which he is about to lift, and his right hand, firmly grasping a small ball, swings behind him.

Fortunately, Bechtel was able to arrange modeling sessions with Will Caldwell, the great-great-great nephew of Addison. Will had the look of Addison and his thick, curly hair. And he had, according to his mother Jodi Austen, the "Caldwell profile."

members Frank B. Caldwell III of Roanoke and Robert Caldwell of Radford. Robert, drawing on family tradition and conversations with other family members, described Addison's physical build.

Bechtel started by sculpting a 22" high model, carefully proportioned, with considerable detail, right down to suspender strap buttons and shoelaces.

After approval from the Class of 1956, Bechtel moved to the next stage of sculpting. He carved a block of dense polystyrene foam into a life-size version of the model. Then he covered his structural underbody with clay. Bechtel wanted every part of the sculpture, down to the folds of the haversack and the digits of the fingers, to fully register the vigor of a healthy young man gliding toward his self-chosen future at a new university. He was also concerned with how the surface texture, once cast in bronze, would reflect and absorb light, and thus convey a feeling of vitality in the final sculpture.

These two pages from the booklet, "Building Addison Caldwell," show sculptor Larry Bechtel beside the clay mold of Caldwell (left) and describe Bechtel's research before crafting the mold (right).

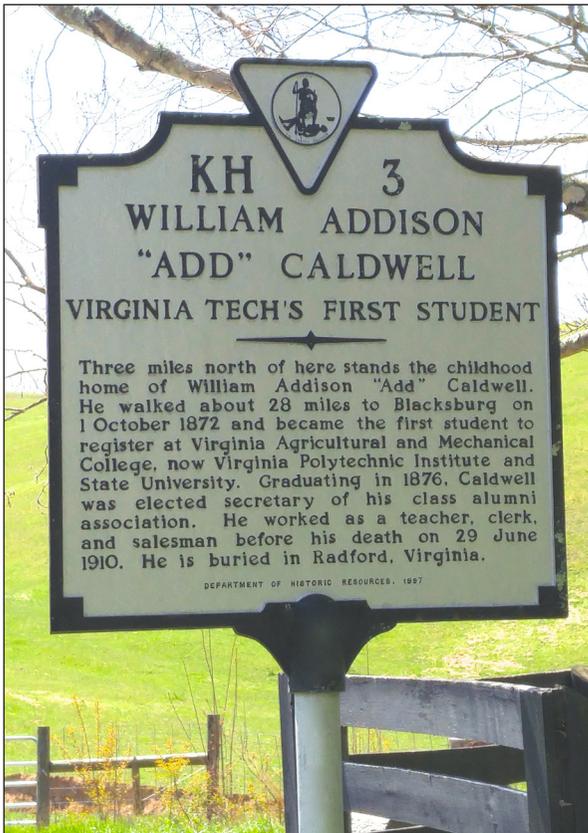
employee Lawrence Reid Bechtel and dedicated in 2006.¹⁶⁸ The statue was moved in 2017 from its position behind Brodie Hall to the Upper Quad. Off-campus, in addition to Caldwell Fields, a state historical marker about William Addison Caldwell, funded jointly by Virginia Tech and Craig County during the university's 125th anniversary celebration, stands beside State Route 42, about three miles from the Caldwell home place.

These varied memorials remind us that a sixteen-year-old boy hiked as much as twenty-eight miles and struggled through an extra year of school to obtain the education that meant so much to him. Through those actions, he not only became an historic symbol of perseverance and determination, but he also set an example for thousands of students who turn to institutions of higher education to acquire the knowledge and skills that can lead to richer lives and better futures.

Acknowledgments

The author owes a debt of gratitude to numerous people, some now deceased, who helped make this article possible. Foremost among them is the late William Addison "Bill" Caldwell, who spurred the research on his Uncle Add Caldwell's life. Mr. Caldwell contributed materials and information and encouraged his relatives to do the same. Consequently, the late Katherine Caldwell Mendez and the late Frank Yingling Caldwell Jr. donated valuable items and provided important biographical data. Mrs.

Mendez's revelation about her father and uncle walking to Blacksburg even led to a new tradition for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. A particular note of thanks goes to Craig County historian Jane Echols Johnston, who generously supplied information about Craig County, and to Linda Smith, for opening the Caldwell home place to the author. Appreciation is also expressed to Louise King, Jim Lemon, Wendy Jean Cox (Royston), and J. Morris Brown, who provided other data relevant to the life of William Addison Caldwell. Additionally, the invaluable assistance of Special Collections at Virginia Tech in locating reference materials and providing graphics is gratefully acknowledged.



A state historical marker about Add Caldwell was erected on Route 42 in Craig County in 1997, the 125th anniversary of his enrollment in and the opening of the college known today as Virginia Tech (photo by Clara B. Cox).

Appendix

Below is the transcription of Add Caldwell's 1910 letter to Katherine Caldwell (Mendez), followed by a photocopy of the original two-page letter, which was donated to Virginia Tech by Mrs. Mendez and is held in Special Collections:

June 15, 1910

Dear Katherine:

I am enclosing you a few pictures of the Beach but you cannot form much idea of the Beach or Ocean without seeing them. The Tarrymoore hasn't much crowd yet, too cold and rainy, by July 1st we expect to have the house full. Don't know how I am going to like my job, haven't had much to do so far. It is a fine place to spend the summer and that is what brought me more than anything else. I will be here until September 1st – Don't know when I will get home, I will have to figure that out after September.

[Page 2]

If I were able to lose the time I would go to Radford and stay all summer. I have not been here long enough to tell whether the salt air is going to benefit me or not – I am feeling about the same, no worse or better. I suppose you are having a good time since your school was out. It is a pity you can't go through life without having more real trouble than you are having now, if you do have to cap gooseberries. Tell sister [Katherine's sister, Sallie] I am going to send her some pictures before I leave here.

There is no post office on the Beach. All mail is sent to Wilmington and delivered twice per day by carriers from that office.

Remember me to your Grandmother and with much love to all of you and especially to your self, I am –

Fondly yours,
Add

TARRYMOORE HOTEL COMPANY

W. J. MOORE, PRESIDENT AND MANAGER.



EVERY ATTRACTION AND CONVENIENCE OF THE SEACOAST.

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, N. C.

June 15 1916

Dear Katherine:

I am enclosing you a few pictures of the Beach but you cannot form much idea of the Beach or Ocean without seeing them. The Tarrymore hasn't much crowd yet, too cold and rainy, by July 1st we expect to have the house full. Don't know how I am going to like my job, haven't had much to do so far. It is a fine place to spend the summer and that is what brought me more than anything else. I will be here until September 1st - Don't know when I will get home, I will have to figure that out after September 1st.

If I were able to lose the ~~time~~
would go to Radford and stay all
Summer. I have not been here long
enough to tell whether the Salt air
is going to benefit me or not - I
am feeling about the same, no worse
or better. I suppose you are having
a good time since your ^{school} was out.
It is a pity you cant go through life
without having more real trouble than
you are having now, if you do have
to Cap gooseberries. Tell Sister I am
going to send her some picture
before I leave here.

There is no Post office on the Bend
all mail is sent to Wilmington
and delivered twice per day by carrier
from that office.

Remember me to your Grandmother
and with much ^{love} to all of you and
especially to your self, I am

Fondly yours,
Add

Notes

1. Add Caldwell, letter to Katherine Caldwell (Mendez), June 15, 1910, 2, original in Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.
2. C. L. C. Minor, Communication from the President of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, Enclosing a Statement of the Number of Students in Attendance, etc. to W. A. Anderson, chairman, Committee on Public Institutions, Senate of Virginia, January 8, 1873, Library of Virginia, Richmond. Minor's report lists Caldwell first among the students who registered on October 1, 1872, and the list is *not* in alphabetical order. Three Virginia Tech historians also named him as the first to register: Duncan Lyle Kinnear, *The First 100 Years: A History of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute Educational Foundation, 1972); Jenkins Mikell Robertson, comp. and ed., *Historical Data Book* 65: 4 (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, April 1972), Centennial Edition; Harry Downing Temple, *Bugle's Echo: A Chronology of Cadet Life at the Military College at Blacksburg, Virginia* 1 (Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Alumni, Inc., 1996). Craig County historian Jane Echols Johnston also said that Add Caldwell's status as Virginia Tech's first student was general knowledge in Craig County, Virginia. Clara B. Cox, interviews with Johnston, 1990, 1991.
3. The mileage from Blacksburg to the Caldwell home place in Sinking Creek via today's roads is approximately thirty miles. Walking on trails across the two mountains between Blacksburg and Sinking Creek would cut the distance a *minimum* of two miles. It is more likely, however, that the distance for Add Caldwell in 1872 was approximately twenty miles. Cox, telephone interview with J. Morris Brown, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 29, 2020. A Virginia Tech alumnus, Brown accompanied the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets on each of its two annual Caldwell Marches (the corps marches half of the distance in the fall and the other half in the spring) and measured the mileage with a Global Positioning System. The corps estimates the total distance at twenty-six miles, but Brown recalled that his GPS indicated that each march was approximately ten miles.
4. Cox, telephone interview with Catherine Caldwell Mendez, July 17, 1991. The late Mrs. Mendez was a daughter of Mic Caldwell and a niece of Add Caldwell, both of whom attended VAMC and were enrolled during the school's inaugural session.
5. Bronze plaque, William Addison Caldwell, William Addison Caldwell Lounge, G. Burke Johnston Student Center, Virginia Tech. The lounge was dedicated and the plaque unveiled on March 19, 1993. The invitation to the dedication of the lounge also carries the words that appear on the plaque (invitation and dedication program in author's possession).
6. George Charlton Caldwell, Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/82774294/george-charlton-caldwell>, accessed February 7, 2020; "George Charlton Caldwell," Geni, <https://www.geni.com/people/George-Caldwell/6000000039578212861>, accessed February 7, 2020; William Addison Caldwell, Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/82774812/william-addison-caldwell>, accessed March 9, 2020.
7. Although the author could find no verification, she believes that Charles Minor Caldwell was named for the first president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, especially since Caldwell was born while his older brother Add was a student at the college and probably had President Minor as an instructor.
8. William Austin II and Rebecca H. R. Austin, *Caldwell–Eakin–Lemon–Reid and Related Families*, self-published, n.d., 33; William Addison Caldwell, Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/82774812/william-addison-caldwell>, accessed February 13, 2020; Jim Lemon, "Descendants of Archibald Caldwell," October 8, 1997, copy in author's possession; Tombstone Transcription Project, Craig County, Caldwell Cemetery II – Craig County VA, location: Rt. 624 near Mt Carmel Church, copied March 26, 1995 by Randy Abbott and Ruth G. Hale, <http://files.usgwarchives.net/va/craig/cemeteries/caldwell02.txt>, accessed March 7, 2020.

9. Caldwell Family History, <https://www.msirelandusa.com/family-history>, accessed February 9, 2020. There is some confusion about this matter since two men named John Caldwell migrated to Virginia. See Hendon and Caldwell Families of North Carolina and Virginia, 1649–1998, chapter 2—Caldwell Family, North Carolina Digital Collections, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p15012coll1/id/62635/rec/1>, accessed March 7, 2020.
10. Virginia Department of Transportation, Region 1: Valley and Ridge, http://www.virginiadot.org/Projects/vtransNew/resources/VSTP_%20by_Chapter/Chapter%206%20by%20Region/Chap6_1ValleyRidge.pdf, accessed February 9, 2020.
11. Craig County, <https://craigcountyva.gov/history-of-craig-county/>, accessed February 9, 2020; Craig County, Virginia, Genealogy, https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Craig_County_Virginia_Genealogy, accessed February 9, 2020; Mabel Lee Damewood, *About Craig Valley: A Mini History of Upper Craig County* (New Castle, VA: Craig County Historical Society, ca. 1980).
12. Hendon and Caldwell Families of North Carolina and Virginia.
13. “Obituary, George Charlton Caldwell,” *Roanoke (VA) Evening News* 9: 53, June 15, 1904; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1860 census, Free Inhabitants in the Valley of Sinking Creek in the County of Craig in Virginia, June 11, 1860.
14. Cox, interview with William Addison “Bill” Caldwell, 1989 (no month or day in author’s notes). Bill Caldwell was a nephew of and was named for Add Caldwell.
15. Author visits to the Caldwell farm, 1991 and October 1, 1997.
16. John Buescher, “Families on the Farm,” teachinghistory.org, National History Education Clearinghouse, <https://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/25754>, accessed February 9, 2020.
17. Craig County, 1860 U.S. Census, compiled by Johnston.
18. ushistory.org, *Slave Life on the Farm and in the Town*, U.S. History Online Textbook, <https://www.ushistory.org/us/6d.asp>, accessed February 9, 2020.
19. Application of Widow (Lorena E. Caldwell, widow of George C. Caldwell), Confederate Pension Rolls, Veterans and Widows, collection #: CP-3, 179; roll # 179, Library of Virginia. According to the application, George Caldwell was wounded several times and retained a Minié ball in one of his legs until his death. See also “Obituary, George Charlton Caldwell,” *Roanoke Evening News*. The Confederate service of the 22nd Regiment, Virginia Infantry, began in July 1861, and the regiment was disbanded in the spring of 1865 (22nd Regiment, Virginia Infantry (1st Kanawha Regiment), Confederate Virginia Troops, Battle Unit Details, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=CVA0022RI>, accessed February 13, 2020).
20. J. C. Martin, “Beginning of Craig County Public School System,” *New Castle Record*, New Castle, Virginia, June 8, 1951, reprinted in *Bits and Pieces of Craig County Schools* (New Castle, VA: Craig County Retired Teachers Association, 1976).
21. Cox, interviews with Johnston; William F. McDermott, *Craig County Schools: Antebellum to 1910* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1976), 7; M. E. Julienne and B. Tarter, “Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia,” July 26, 2016, in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Public_School_System_in_Virginia_Establishment_of_the, accessed February 13, 2020. Add Caldwell received a scholarship from his county school board to attend VAMC, and the recipients of those scholarships had to be white males attending public schools. *Daily State Journal* 4, no. 273 (Richmond, Virginia), September 7, 1872, 1.
22. William H. Ruffner, *First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), 159, 188, 193, Hathi Trust Digital Library, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008924596>, accessed February 15, 2020.
23. “Reconstruction Timeline: 1867–1877,” *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War*, PBS, www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/states/sf_timeline2.html; “General Assembly of Virginia,” *Staunton Spectator*, March 15, 1870, 2; “Primary Documents in American History: Morrill Act,”

- The Library of Congress Web Guides, www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Morrill.html; Daniel W. Hamilton, "Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862," Major Acts of Congress, 2004, ENCYCLOPEDIA.com, www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3407400192.html, accessed January 8, 2016.
24. "Local Matters: Progress of the War of the Colleges," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond), 42: 25, January 29, 1872, 1. The newspaper reported on the colleges, universities, and academies that had been rejected by the House of Delegates to receive the land-grant funds and predicted that the "Preston and Olin Institute, in Montgomery county, will be disposed of to-day."
 25. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 30; William H. Ruffner, J. R. Anderson, and W. T. Sutherlin, "Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College," plan of organization and instruction, presented to the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College Board of Visitors, August 14, 1872, Yellow Sulphur Springs, Virginia, published in pamphlet form and adopted by the board as its annual report to the Virginia General Assembly (n.d.), 1; Cox, "Olin and Preston Institute and Preston and Olin Institute: The Early Years of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: Part II, *The Smithfield Review* 20, 2016, 15–19.
 26. Those men included the Rev. Peter Harrison Whisner, Dr. Harvey Black, and Thomas Nelson Conrad, all associated with Preston and Olin Institute, and Sen. John Penn, Del. Robert A. Miller, and Del. Gen. Gabriel C. Wharton, all members of the Virginia General Assembly. Cox, "Olin and Preston Institute and Preston and Olin Institute: Part II, 15–19.
 27. "General Information: Historic Statement," *Catalogue, Preston and Olin Institute, Session 1869 and 70* (Baltimore: Preston and Olin Institute, n.d.), Special Collections, Virginia Tech. The building was later converted into a two-story shop building.
 28. An Act to Appropriate the Income Arising from the Proceeds of the Land Scrip accruing to Virginia under Act of Congress of July 2, 1862, and the Acts Amendatory Thereof, Virginia Acts of Assembly, approved March 19, 1872, 312–315. For a detailed discussion of Preston and Olin Institute and its drive to secure the land-grant funds, see Cox, "Olin and Preston Institute and Preston and Olin Institute: Part II, 1–26.
 29. According to the *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser* (Alexandria, Virginia), August 16, 1872, 2, quoting from the *Lynchburg Republican*, "We but express the sentiments of all who know Prof. Minor when we say that a better selection could not have been made, and we congratulate the Board of Visitors and the public generally upon the fortunate selection of an accomplished scholar and genial gentleman, by whom the interests of the College will be ably and faithfully guarded."
 30. Ruffner, Anderson, and Sutherlin, *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 27, 35.
 31. "Farm Manager Elected," *Daily Dispatch*, January 11, 1873, 1.
 32. *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, February 13, 1873, 2; *Daily State Journal*, February 12, 1873, 1.
 33. A. J. Oliver, letter to Harvey B. Apperson, Roanoke, Virginia, date unknown, written in response to Issac Diggs, "The First Faculty," *The Virginia Tech*, date unknown, reprinted in the *Techgram*, Virginia Tech, August 1, 1934, copy of letter's text in author's possession. Oliver's letter gave his father's ending year at VAMC as 1887, but historian and *The Smithfield Review* history advisor Dan Thorp said that Andrew Oliver and his family appear in the 1885 Iowa state census. Thorp, e-mail message to Cox, March 5, 2020.
 34. Ruffner, Anderson, and Sutherlin, *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 27, 35.
 35. Cox, interviews with Johnston.
 36. Cox, telephone interview with Brown.
 37. Cox, telephone interview with Mendez.
 38. Minor to Anderson, Communication from the President.
 39. In addition to President Minor implying Add's number one position in his report to Anderson, several Virginia Tech historians citing Add as the first student to register at VAMC, and Johnston's statement that his position as the first student was part of the oral tradition in Craig County (see note 2 for citations), that fact has also been passed down in the Caldwell family.

40. In the past, this author assumed that Add Caldwell may have seen one of President Minor's newspaper advertisements before he registered, but the president did not place the ads until he realized that the school was not reaching the anticipated enrollment.
41. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 68.
42. Cox, telephone interview with Kinnear, July 16, 1991. Kinnear said that he checked state records and could not find a list where the superintendent of schools recommended William Addison Caldwell.
43. "General Assembly of Virginia," *Daily State Journal*, December 6, 1872, 1.
44. Minor to Anderson, Communication from the President. See also Robertson, *VPI Historical Data Book, Bulletin of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute* 42: no. 3 (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, January 1964), 8.
45. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1872-73* (Richmond: Clemmatt & Jones, 1873), 13-14, Special Collections, Virginia Tech.
46. According to the Act to Appropriate the Income Arising from the Proceeds of the Land Scrip accruing to Virginia under Act of Congress of July 2, 1862, and the Acts Amendatory Thereof, Virginia Acts of Assembly, 313, scholarships would last two years, but on the recommendation of the faculty, "any student may be returned by the said trustees for a longer period."
47. An Act to Appropriate the Income Arising from the Proceeds of the Land Scrip accruing to Virginia under Act of Congress of July 2, 1862, and the Acts Amendatory Thereof, Virginia Acts of Assembly, 312.
48. President Charles L. C. Minor, letter to Gen. Joseph R. Anderson, October 1872, Special Collections, Virginia Tech.
49. *Lynchburg Daily Virginian*, November 18, 1872, quoting the *News Messenger*.
50. Minor to Anderson, Communication from the President.
51. *Gray Jacket* 1: no. 3 (Blacksburg: Lee and Maury Literary Societies, September 1875), 3, Special Collections, Virginia Tech; E. A. Smith, *A Brief History of the College, Bulletin of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute: Semi Centennial* 15, no. 4, May 1922.
52. *Lynchburg Daily Virginian*, quoting the *News Messenger*.
53. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1872-73*, 7; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students 1874-75* (Lynchburg, VA: Virginian Book and Job Print., 1875), 6; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1875-76* (Lynchburg: Virginian Book and Job Print., 1876), 6; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1876-77* (Lynchburg: Virginian Book and Job Office Print., 1877), 6; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1877-78* (Lynchburg: Virginian Book and Job Print., 1878), 6, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, <https://wayback.archive-it.org/all/20180521171601/https://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/catalog/> accessed March 13, 2020.
54. Robertson, *VPI Historical Data Book*, 1964, 8; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1872-73*, 12.
55. *Gray Jacket* 1: no. 3, September 1875, 3.
56. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1872-73*, 13-14.
57. John Perry Cochran, "The Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alaska, 1961, 201.
58. Advertisement placed by VAMC President Charles Minor, *Lynchburg Daily Virginian*, October 1, 1872, 1.
59. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1872-73*, 14.
60. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1874-75*, 14.
61. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1872-73*, 14.
62. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1874-75*, 15.
63. *Gray Jacket*, September 1875, 3.
64. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1872-73*, 14, 16.
65. Gibson Worsham, "Solitude Historic Structure Report" prepared for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, 1997: 3, 4, <https://docplayer.net/11522539-Solitude-historic-structure-report-prepared-for-virginia-polytechnic-institute-and-state>

- university-blacksburg-virginia.html*, accessed March 6, 2020; Michael J. Pulice, "The Log Outbuilding at Solitude: An Architectural and Archaeological Investigation of Virginia Tech's Second Oldest Building," master's thesis, Virginia Tech, 2000, 10, <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/33657/MpsThesis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, accessed March 6, 2020.
66. Ruffner, Anderson, and Sutherlin, "Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College," 1, 3.
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 87. Information provided at the top of the report card.
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 90. Temple, *The Bugle's Echo* 1, 86.
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 94. Temple, *The Bugle's Echo* 1, 30.
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110. Temple, *Bugle's Echo* 1, 45.
111. *Gray Jacket*, May 1876.
112. *Gray Jacket* 2: no. 1, August 1876, 3.
113. George Braxton Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 5th series, 1902-1914, with supplement (Lynchburg: J. P. Bell Company, 1915), 72-74, https://books.google.com/books?id=yt8pAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA75&lpg=PA75&dq=baptist+visitor+edited+by+Oscar+flippo&source=bl&ots=Wcw2JKfiaT&sig=ACfU3U19CTt3_TZuDv9BeWlsDlkjO1lqw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiqg9Po-ODnAhUshOAKHVUGASoQ6AEwA3oECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=Flippo&f=false, accessed February 20, 2020; George Presbury Rowell, ed., *American Newspaper Directory* (New York: George P. Rowell & Company, 1879), 140, https://books.google.com/books?id=-aAQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA140&lpg=PA140&dq=rev.+oscar+f.+flippo+baltimore+md&source=bl&ots=9hzOKdIv7&sig=ACfU3U1PH2ID12_jz3nTTObCeGzOM3VPTQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwJ78MG19uDnAhWymXIEHZsdCeIQ6AEwAHOECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=rev.%20oscar%20f.%20flippo%20baltimore%20md&f=false, accessed February 20, 2020.
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123. *Gray Jacket*, August 1876, 3–4; Robertson, *Historical Data Book*, 1972, 8; Temple, *Bugle's Echo* 1, 109.
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127. *Gray Jacket*, August 1876, 3.
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132. U.S. Census Bureau, 1880 Census.
133. Virginia School Report 1871–1920, 14.
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135. "W. A. Caldwell Dies in Wilmington," *Roanoke (VA) Times*, July 1, 1910.
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137. "W. A. Caldwell Dies in Wilmington," *Roanoke Times*.
138. Louise King, First Presbyterian Church, Roanoke, telephone message for Cox, n.d. King said that the church registry "shows a William A. Caldwell member from April 1, 1887, to March 28, 1902, when he transferred membership to Wilmington, North Carolina."
139. "W. A. Caldwell Dies in Wilmington," *Roanoke Times*. Interestingly, Add's nephew and namesake, William Addison "Bill" Caldwell, was also involved in the real estate business. Bill Caldwell's business was located in Radford, where Add's father had been engaged in the same occupation before his death.

140. "Jurors for the September Session," *Roanoke Times*, September 2, 1893, 1, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071868/1893-09-02/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1871&index=0&rows=20&words=A+Caldwell+William&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=Virginia&date2=1910&proxtext=William+A.+Caldwell&y=6&x=15&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>, accessed March 17, 2020.
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150. Cotton Exchange History, Wilmington's Favorite Local Shopping Destination, <http://www.shopcottonexchange.com/cotton-exchange-history/>, accessed March 3, 2020; *The Spice Mill* 35: no. 1 (Spice Mill Publishing Company, 1912), 60, https://books.google.com/books?id=jxwxAQAAAMAAJ&pg=PA60&lpg=PA60&dq=w.+b.+cooper+wholesale+grocery+business+wilmington+nc&source=bl&ots=k_3eK8lgid&sig=ACfU3UIAKeoan3Z20rp9mbC7GUWPPd0D5w&hl=en&ppis=_e&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjEjenU07nAhVulXIEHeZtAOIQ6AEwAXoECAwQAQ#v=onepage&q=w.%20b.%20cooper%20wholesale%20grocery%20business%20wilmington%20nc&f=false, accessed March 3, 2020.
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157. Cox, telephone interview with Mendez.
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159. Add Caldwell, letter to Katherine Caldwell (Mendez), 2.
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162. "W. A. Caldwell Dies in Wilmington," *Roanoke Times*; "Obituary, W. A. Caldwell," *Evening Dispatch*.
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164. "William A. Caldwell," *New Castle Record*, New Castle, Virginia, July 16, 1910.
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About the Author: A member of *The Smithfield Review* Editorial Board since 1998, Clara B. Cox currently serves as co-editor of the journal. A Virginia Tech retiree, she holds a master of arts in English from the university. Her work on Tech history has appeared in books, magazines, journals, and newspapers, and she has written the text of some sixty-five building biomarkers and other brass plaques on campus. Additionally, she edited and co-wrote the Blacksburg, Virginia, bicentennial history book and has written the text for several state historical markers, including one about William Addison Caldwell, Tech's first student, and William Black, founder of Blacksburg.



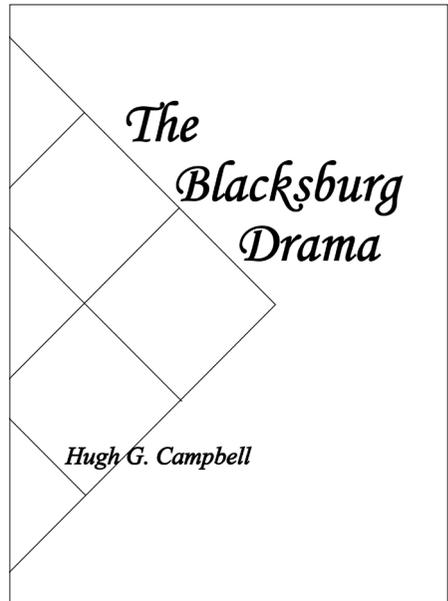
Book Review:

***THE BLACKSBURG DRAMA: A history
of Blacksburg in three acts***

Sharon B. Watkins

Only a few years after concluding two decades as editor and guiding spirit of *The Smithfield Review*, native Floridian Hugh Campbell has distilled his extensive knowledge and obvious affection toward his adopted hometown of Blacksburg, Virginia, into a personal and intriguing view of the town's last three centuries. As he tells his prospective readers at the beginning, his book, *The Blacksburg Drama: A history of Blacksburg in three acts*, is for those "who want to know more about the essential elements of Blacksburg's history but do not want an overdose of historical dates, events, and names" ("A Note from the Author," page v).

Structured as an historical drama in three acts, each divided into numerous scenes with a list of leading characters and events, the work depicts the Blacksburg area as the setting of dynamic human activity in a geographical background that is frequently described and remains a dominant backdrop throughout the epic story, stretching from early native American tribal people through the challenge of the computer age at Virginia Tech, the university that dominates much of Blacksburg today. One who enjoys nature or poring over historical maps soon can visualize the backdrop: a mountain plateau at about two thousand feet elevation, straddling the



The Blacksburg Drama, which relates the history of the town of Blacksburg, Virginia, in a unique way, was written by Hugh C. Campbell, who has lived in the town for decades.

Eastern continental divide and endowed with numerous meadows for grazing or cultivation and with copious sources of fresh water and small streams. And starting with the oldest trails and hand-drawn maps, Campbell provides visual updates of the drama he describes, presenting repeatedly the old maps and property lines with the built geography of new property lines, new roads, and human constructions that altered the appearance but not the essence of the place. This is definitely not a history dominated by the specters of prominent gentlemen in stiff portraiture since only one person is so depicted: William Ballard Preston. On the other hand, some seven-dozen maps or depictions of buildings and their surroundings enliven the pages.

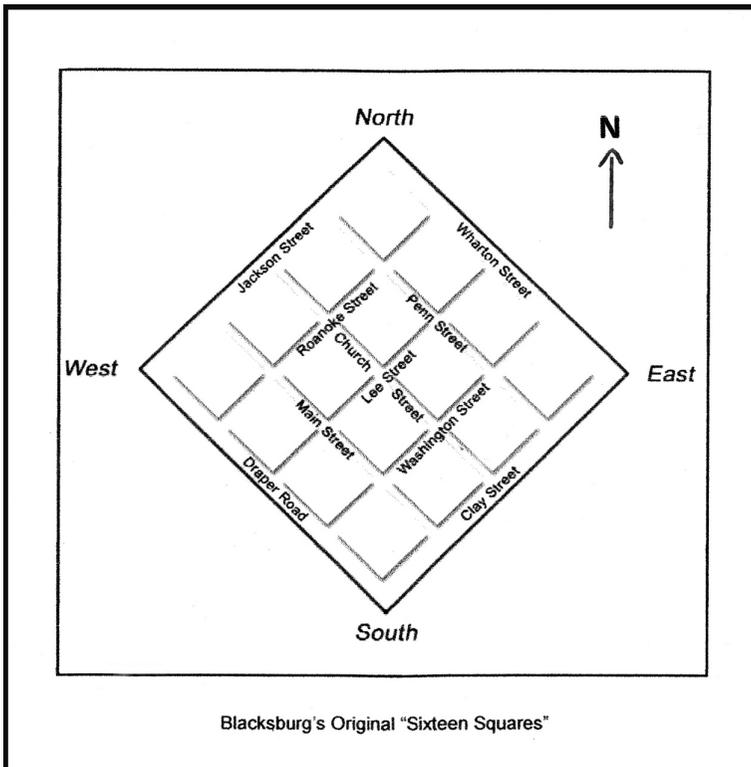
The author divides the principal human movements across this landscape/stage into three acts framed by the timespans of pre-1774, 1774 to 1862, and 1862 and beyond. The fact that the specific years of 1774 and 1862 are not often chosen as the two most pivotal years in U.S. history between the advent of native tribes and the present day re-enforces the author's specifically local focus. Our first thought should be "What happened that affected Blacksburg so strongly in 1774 and 1862?" rather than thinking in terms of nation, region, or state. One response—the establishment in Blacksburg of Smithfield Plantation by William Preston and his family—provides the key both for Act 1, "The Pre-Smithfield Years (before 1774)," and for Act 2, "The Smithfield Years (1774–1862)."

In Act 1, Campbell gives a fairly brief summary of the presence of mostly unidentified Native American tribal people who followed the rivers and the game and made the first trails, which still underlie many major roads today. The advent of European peoples bent principally upon agricultural exploitation ("The First Settlers") comes next, with discussion of land grants and the presentation of the property lines this produced by the 1750s. Next treated are the events that arguably launched Blacksburg into mainstream American and European history, the 1755 killing and abduction of local European settlers at Draper's Meadow (now a part of the Virginia Tech campus) by stressed and dispossessed Shawnee warriors.

This embroiled both Blacksburg and several regional tribal nations in the early stages of the struggle for colonial and global domination waged for many decades between Great Britain and France. This particular installment of that global struggle was called the French and Indian War in North America and the Seven Years War by Europeans; this round of outright combat came to an end with an agreement among Europeans (not Americans) in 1763. Britain proceeded to enact measures to consolidate its control over eastern North America, to repair the damaged royal finances, and to take measures aimed at ending native peoples' hostility and quarrels

with Britain's colonies. New lines were drawn upon maps and the color of regions changed.

Around Blacksburg, the line of European settlement had been pushed back eastward as settlers fled the Indian attacks; the advent of peace unleashed a flood primarily of white settlers, some taking enslaved black people along to new homes in the west. In this rush came two families of Scottish background who left major contributions to Blacksburg's story, the Blacks and the Prestons. The Blacks had purchased land earlier and divided various parcels among multiple generations of the family. A few decades later, two Black brothers carefully surveyed some of their land, neatly drawing sixteen sizeable squares, each bearing four building lots, all laid along a grid composed of five proposed straight roads intersecting five others at right angles. Even today, the imprint of these original sixteen squares are obvious in the roads of old downtown Blacksburg. This early planned community was incorporated by the state as an official town in 1798.



William Black donated land for the creation of the town of Blacksburg. His plan for the proposed town included five streets intersected by five perpendicular streets, creating sixteen squares (source: *Town Architecture* by Donna Dunay).

The Preston household was unlike any other moving to the area since it involved dozens of people, including relatives, indentured servants, trainee employees, and slaves. The *paterfamilias* William Preston was an experienced surveyor; land speculator; plantation owner; and, crucially, an accumulator of royal political offices and administrative posts in newer counties created by the royal government of Virginia. Campbell points out that Preston used his connections further east to dominate local governmental and military affairs and to control the surveys and sales of massive acreages stretching as far away as mid-Kentucky. In 1774, he moved his office and his home to the very edge of European settlement both to fulfill his public duties and to profit more successfully from his land speculations. He ordered construction of a two-story wooden house modeled on the mansions of Williamsburg and laid out a property of several thousand acres as his home base and named it Smithfield.

Within a few years, however, Preston realized that all of his hard-earned rewards were in danger. He had invested his career and fortune in the very lands that the British government, following the outlines of a royal Proclamation in 1763, seriously intended to reserve for use by Native Americans to pacify belligerent tribes. The bulk of Preston's huge land claims were declared permanently off limits to white settlement. Thus was made the leading patriot of the Blacksburg area. Preston soon abandoned his royal superiors and took up the cause of violent revolution and American independence. He died partly as a result of his exertions in battle in the year 1783, just as peace and the freedom of the United States were being negotiated in Europe.

The remaining scenes of Act 2 reveal the dozen Preston children, armed with dazzling amounts of inherited land and the best education privileged people living near the frontier could obtain, making skillful marital, political, and economic alliances with elites across Virginia—and beyond. They became powerful in the state, producing several governors and an array of state legislators, lawyers, and administrators. Politically, the brightest star among the Prestons was the third-generation owner of Smithfield, William Ballard Preston (usually called Ballard). He became a thoughtful and important politician at the national level, joining the new Whig Party and working in Congress (which included Illinois Representative Abraham Lincoln) to ease crises arising over fears that slavery would expand into new states; he served at the federal cabinet level in the 1850s and opposed the secession of Virginia even after the events surrounding Fort Sumter. With President Lincoln's approval, he travelled to Washington to seek some political solution to avert tragedy, or at least to keep Virginia

in the United States. Such efforts proved unsuccessful and Ballard Preston returned home, endorsed secession, and died not long afterwards in 1862. Preston's political failure and death compose one reason author Campbell chose to end Act 2 of the Blacksburg Drama in 1862, in the midst of the Civil War; Ballard's demise signified on the larger scale the death knell of the dominant agrarian aristocracy who had ruled the rural Southern states since American independence. Many members of the extended Preston clan moved away and many sold much of their land; some Prestons remained in the area and made contributions to civic and economic life, but they no longer dominated.



Col. William Preston constructed a home for his family, which he christened Smithfield in honor of his wife, Susanna Smith Preston. Today, the Smithfield-Preston Foundation owns and maintains the restored eighteenth-century home (courtesy of Anne J. Campbell).

The second reason for placing 1862 at the end of Act 2 and the beginning of Act 3 lies in the passage of legislation in the U.S. Congress that year, even as civil war raged. The Morrill Land Grant Act promised to each state a sizeable grant of publicly owned lands; in return for this valuable gift, each state would create college-level studies in agriculture and mechanics (technical subjects and engineering), either at existing public institutions or newly created ones. Thus was born the federally subsidized land-grant universities that originally emphasized a kind of education not often available at the religious and privately funded colleges already in existence.

Virginia's leaders became aware of this legislation and considered various possibilities during the brief period of Reconstruction, and as soon as the rights of statehood were restored, they were prepared to act quickly.

The lawmakers decided to create two land-grant universities, one for African-American students and one for white students. The choice of a site for the white land grant ultimately fell upon Blacksburg after Montgomery Countians agreed to put up twenty thousand dollars and a local boy's academy offered its building and acreage; nearby farmland was sold to the school by Robert Preston, a brother of Ballard, and a campus was quickly created. In 1872, a year after Reconstruction ended, the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College began accepting students. As this small college grew and developed, its importance to the Blacksburg area increasingly grew as well, leading to the present research and teaching institution known as Virginia Tech. This massive publicly funded organization dwarfed what otherwise would be another small town characterized by its rural surroundings and centuries' long history.



Constructed in the mid-nineteenth century, the Preston and Olin Building was used as a dormitory/classroom and a college machine shop for more than five decades before fire destroyed it in 1913 (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).

The last portion of Campbell's book interweaves the development of town and campus together and emphasizes the improvement of life for local citizens (especially in the realm of public education for children), the options for freedmen who remained living in the area, and massive changes in the physical appearance of town and campus. New roads and buildings in changing architectural styles transformed not the backdrop of mountains and meadows, but the environment created by modern humans. Campbell

presents a stage spectacle through multiple photographs and maps, revealing a dynamic dance of campus and town. To his credit, the author describes alterations of which, the reader surmises, he does not approve, and he makes a case for preservation of the historic buildings and streets, which remain in the town, for cultural and educational purposes.

The author concludes with an orderly and thoughtful consideration of the goals, difficulties, and achievements of the various leaders of the Virginia Tech administration. Campbell came to Virginia Tech (or Virginia Polytechnic Institute as it was known then) as a relatively young mathematics professor and stayed on the job for more than thirty-five years; thus he has often described events and processes through which he has lived. He deals with larger national and regional issues, including student unrest in the 1960s and 1970s and the transformation of methods of governance and representation for students and faculty alike that resulted. Familiar campus buildings take on new life for the reader as Campbell explains the plans and achievements of their namesakes. Men such as Eggleston, Burruss, Newman, and Cassell all become real people, culminating with President T. Marshall Hahn.

To this reader, the account of an issue almost unique to Virginia Tech was highly enlightening: the controversy over whether to and how to continue to require military training and uniforms of all students for four



Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute President Julian A. Burruss made significant changes at the college, known popularly at the time as Virginia Polytechnic Institute, or VPI (today's Virginia Tech). Two of the more notable ones were reducing the requirement for male students to be members of the corps of cadets from four years to two and the admission of women as full-time students (courtesy of Special Collections, Virginia Tech).

or even two academic years when virtually all other land-grant schools had dispensed with such training. Many alumni of the school lobbied vigorously in favor of retaining the military elements, while administrators pointed out the negative effects and limits on student body composition such retention imposed. Virtually all female students were excluded from the Blacksburg campus student body, and the majority of college-aged young men in the state who had no interest in a military career did not bother to apply. Furthermore, the curriculum and university events were skewed toward the military in a new age that favored wider choices, especially at a publicly funded state university.

In conclusion, Hugh Campbell's book is indeed not an "ordinary" history book and neither is it a "usual" sort of memoir. Its framework as a play, a dramatic presentation of Blacksburg, Virginia, and Virginia Tech, allows for a personal touch and thoughtful meditation about a small town and a large institution from colonial days to computer age. It is worth reading and contemplating, both its text and its many visual stimuli.

Editor's Note: Hugh Campbell's book is available at the Historic Smithfield[®] museum, the Montgomery Museum of Art and History, and the Alexander Black House.

About the Reviewer: A member of *The Smithfield Review* Editorial Board, Sharon B. Watkins currently serves as co-editor of the journal. In addition to this book review, she has written various articles for the journal over the years and has helped compile several indices. She holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with a minor field in economic history and international economics. Dr. Watkins taught at Western Illinois University and Virginia Tech before her retirement.

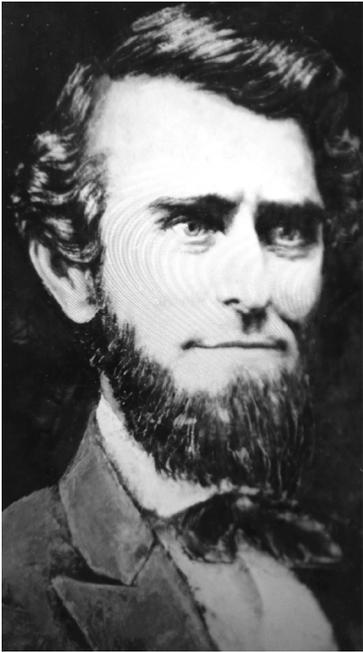
To “whiten” the Mountains: Abolishing Slavery in West(ern) Virginia, 1861–1863

Adam Zucconi

(A note from the editors: Readers will find some of the language in this article offensive, but the quotations wherein such language appears are historically accurate and are used to reflect concepts of race and color prevalent in western Virginia/West Virginia during the Civil War era.)

On June 20, 1863, West Virginia entered the Union as a slave state. In his inaugural address as the state’s first governor, Republican Arthur Ingraham Boreman characterized the Mountain State’s creation as a manifestation of the intrastate sectional tension that had threatened to dismember Virginia multiple times over the preceding years. Eastern Virginians had “always” considered the trans-Allegheny an “outside appendage” or “territory,” Boreman insisted, as constitutional, political, and economic structures favored eastern Virginians at the expense of their transmontane neighbors. Empowered by the “original Constitution of the State,” eastern Virginians had “collected heavy taxes from us” to construct “railroads and canals in the East” while they “withheld appropriations from the West.” West Virginia’s “natural channels” meant that “[o]ur markets, our trade[,] and our travel” occurred with northern and western states, generating “little intercourse” between eastern and western Virginians. Differences in “nature, our commerce, travel, habits, associations, and interests” coupled with eastern Virginians’ support for the “fatal doctrine of secession” strengthened Boreman’s interpretation that “two peoples” occupied the same state, making the Old Dominion’s dismemberment inevitable.¹

Boreman’s memory of Virginia’s sectional history reflected the difficulty of leading a state still grappling with the issue of slavery. While Boreman’s inaugural address suggested that West Virginians chose the Union over slavery as evidenced by residents’ adoption of a gradual emancipation clause, conditions on the ground failed to match that lofty idealism. Northwest Republicans had emerged as vocal supporters of abolishing slavery to save the Union and to hasten West Virginia’s creation. “Shall we object that slavery is destroyed . . . if the Union is thereby saved,” Boreman questioned.² Republicans, aided by the presence of federal



Arthur Ingraham Boreman
(source: West Virginia Department
of Arts, Culture, and History)

troops and their close identification with the statehood movement, stressed that slavery's abolition in western Virginia would liberate white residents from the political slavery imposed by eastern slaveholders.³

Republicans' eagerness to abolish slavery encountered intense opposition. Conservative northwesterners—some who expressed varying degrees of support for statehood while others outright opposed it—worried about the broadening scope of war, notably Republicans' supposed flagrant dismissal and denigration of civil liberties and constitutional guarantees. “[W]aging . . . a war for the abolishment of slavery in the southern States is in open violation of the Constitution,” the *Clarksburg Patriot* insisted.⁴ A war to save the Union had evolved into a war to destroy slavery, a development that unconditional unionists before the war had not sanctioned and now

strongly opposed. John S. Carlile maintained this position, arguing that directions from congressional Republicans to create a free state amounted to congressional dictation and political submission, not liberation.⁵

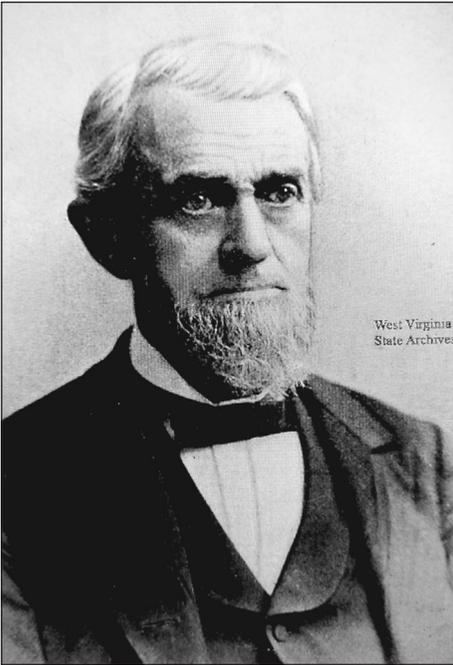
West Virginians' conflicted thoughts on slavery reflected the messy divorce of slavery and democratic politics. Since the war's beginnings, residents witnessed slavery's dissolution as slaves escaped their masters and fled to Union lines or into the non-slaveholding states. These “contraband” provided witness to the war's devastating impact on the institution Confederates wished to preserve; now the war threatened the viability of slavery. Armed with the daily reminder of slavery's collapse, residents wondered how to reconstruct white liberty without black bondage. Emancipation on the residents' terms seemed appealing, particularly as most West Virginians loathed abolitionists and feared their influence in their new state. Statehood promoters campaigned on the premise that racial hierarchy would survive without slavery in the new state. An exodus of slaves and freed blacks following statehood would produce a demographic “whitening,” supporters declared, preserving the new state for white residents only. The few remaining freed blacks would labor in menial, service-oriented positions, a visual manifestation of the racial hierarchy

West Virginians sought to perpetuate. Restrictive laws, including corporal punishment, extended antebellum justice on African Americans into the statehood years. Though slavery would eventually cease to operate, the institution’s shadow would linger and shape West Virginia.

Statehood and Slavery

The Constitutional Convention convened in Wheeling on November 26, 1861. Critical issues lay ahead for delegates, notably defining the state boundaries; identifying a name for the new state; and, above all, settling the issue of slavery.⁶ In approximately one month, delegates had decided the first two issues along with approving a new voting method.⁷ But some delegates feared that the convention’s progress outpaced residents’ desires. A “body of radicals and extremists” seized control of the convention, First and Second Wheeling Convention delegate John J. Davis lamented, and threatened to “change *in toto* the character of our State government.” Such men wanted to “give us a Yankee constitution and laws,” a prospect that “will defeat the whole movement in West V[irginia].” With the question of slavery still left unsettled, Davis feared that these “radicals and extremists” would institute changes without first consulting their constituents. Many westerners, Davis believed, considered government-sanctioned emancipation anathema and that delegates should avoid such a consideration.⁸

While the convention settled some debates, the “more difficult question of slavery is as yet untouched,” Wheeling banker Chester D. Hubbard observed. And without a resolution on slavery, the “whole movement for division . . . can not be accomplished at present.” Hubbard identified the different poles occupied by residents on the issue of slavery. He noted that some western Virginians “prefer saying nothing about slavery in the constitution while others are for putting the declaration in” the document. Proponents of the former, like Waitman T. Willey, argued that members should “say nothing, [and] do nothing” concerning slavery, ultimately hopeful that the war would hasten slavery’s demise. Members of the latter, including Gordon Battelle, were “disposed to give the subject an airing,” ultimately believing that a frank conversation about slavery would remind residents about the institutions’ deleterious effects and that the region’s future development should mirror that of its northern neighbors.⁹ “We may say that we are a Southern State, and that we ought to have a negro policy, just as many foolish people in Western Virginia have said for years past,” the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* declared, but such pro-slavery thoughts only “mock, deride, and curse us.”¹⁰ Still, few delegates appeared to agree with Battelle. After conversing with Peter G. Van Winkle, delegate Henry



Chester Dorman Hubbard (source: West Virginia Archives & History)

Dering cheerfully reported that only “a handful” supported Battelle’s position and that delegates “will not have any trouble in keeping the vexed question out of the Constitution.”¹¹ Hubbard agreed, suggesting that the convention should “indicate our future policy on this question” but offer no firm declarations concerning slavery’s future. By late 1861, slavery’s future in the proposed West Virginia—as in the nation—remained uncertain.¹²

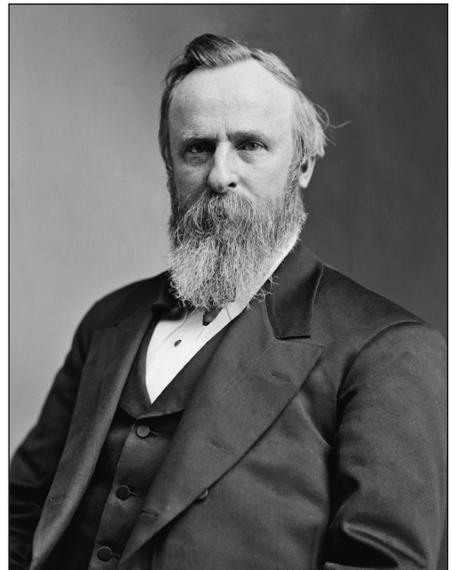
The uncertainty surrounding slavery’s future in the proposed state reflected tensions across the nation and in the proposed state. Slavery provided structure and meaning to the political acts, privileges, and benefits white western Virginians had secured after decades of conflict and compromise with their eastern

brethren. With slavery and democratic politics inextricably interwoven, the destruction of the former threatened the latter, a scenario northern abolitionists and some delegates appeared to disregard. As the *Clarksburg National Telegraph* averred, “fanatical abolitionists” like Battelle who advocated emancipation “cling to the ebony, woolly-headed god of their idolatry.” Battelle should labor for the “preservation of the liberties of the twenty millions of white people who are fighting to retain their free institutions than to be wasting time in endeavoring to liberate the few thousand slaves of West Virginia.” But if Battelle and his ilk succeeded in foisting emancipation upon West Virginians, what other legislation would they enact? Would they seek racial equality at the ballot box?¹³ Unless free-state advocates could ensure the perpetuation of racial hierarchy without slavery, West Virginia’s prospects as a free state appeared fleeting.

While white western Virginians debated slavery’s future in the proposed state, actions undertaken by black western Virginians helped further the cause of emancipation. Enslaved blacks in western Virginia, like those in eastern Virginia, the Sea Islands along the South Carolina coast, and other areas where Union troops presided, had begun self-emancipating. By the summer of 1861, runaway slaves, or “contrabands,” became commonplace

across western Virginia. In October 1861, an “old Virginia negro” from Wirt County accompanied four companies of Union soldiers who had returned to Wheeling. The escaped slave “belongs to a man now in the rebel army.”¹⁴ As Union Brig. Gen. Benjamin F. Kelley pushed further into the mountains in late 1861, more slaves took the opportunity to self-emancipate. In Romney, “[q]uite a large number of contrabands . . . tumbled” into the Union camp “expecting to be set free,” though the general planned to confine them until their masters reclaimed them.¹⁵ In southern Western Virginia, future president Rutherford B. Hayes encountered numerous runaway slaves while stationed as a Union soldier in Fayetteville during the winter of 1861–1862. Hayes witnessed “a party of contrabands [who] started for Ohio” and remarked that they will likely “be entitled to freedom, as I understand the rule adopted by our Government” since their master served in the Confederate army.¹⁶ By early 1862, Hayes reported that local secessionists warned slaves that Union soldiers would “cut off arms of some negroes” and “sell the rest in Cuba.” Such rumors reflected the instability wrought by the war and the continued fleeing of slaves from their masters.¹⁷

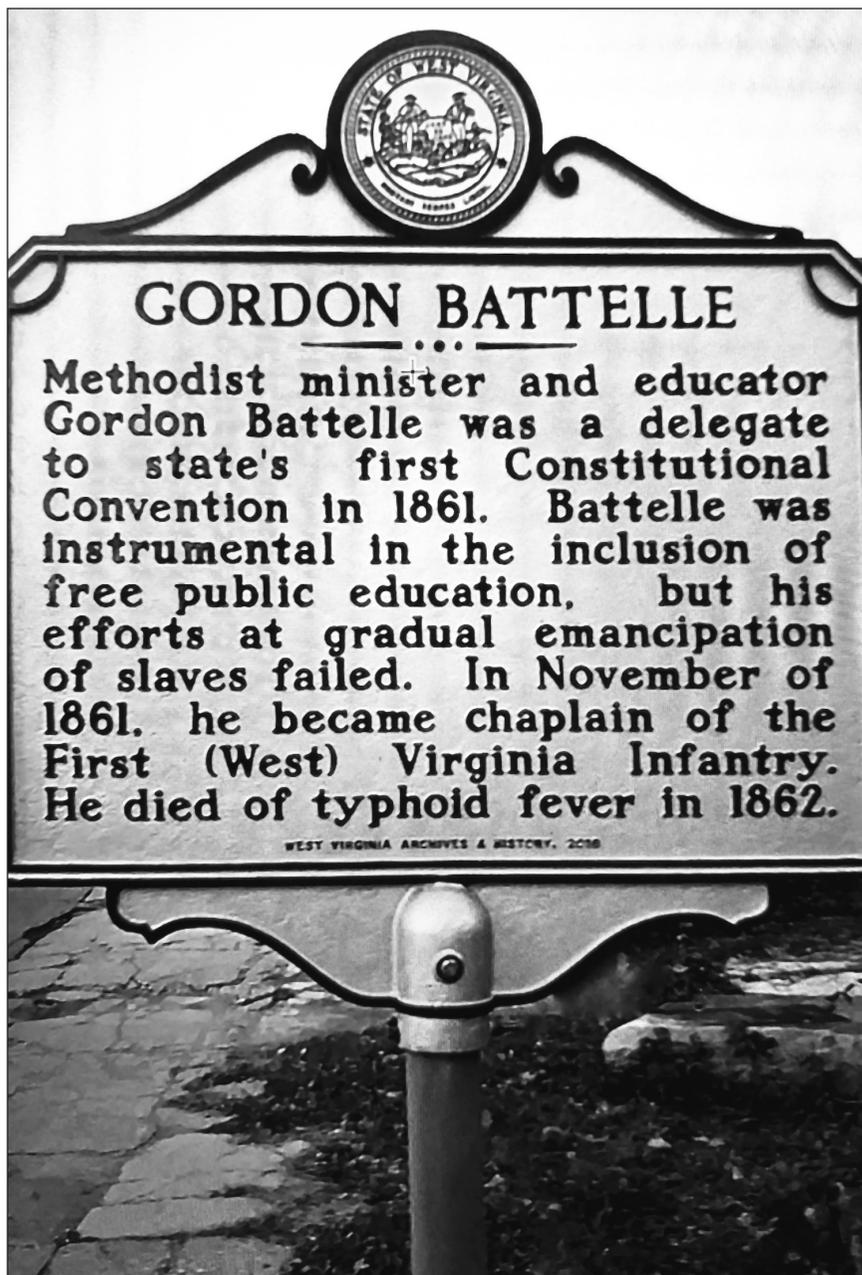
Delegates reconvened in early January 1862 as slaves continued to self-emancipate and the war entered into another year. Gordon Battelle introduced resolutions on slavery similar to those he had presented in the previous meeting, including a colonization plan and delaying gradual emancipation until July 4, 1865. Delegates tabled those resolutions.¹⁸ Henry Dering chastised Battelle for once again “press[ing] this subject upon us” and feared that further agitation on slavery “will prove the opening of Pandoras Box.”¹⁹ Dering predicted that such resolutions would “prove . . . fatal before the people” and would only “produce disturbance[s]” in West Virginia and other Union slave states.²⁰ The *Wellsburg Herald* agreed with Dering’s conclusion. “The people will not vote for gradual emancipation or any other interference with the rights of slave owners.” Many delegates would “snap and snarl” if Battelle continued to persist in his antislavery mission, jeopardizing the entire statehood movement.²¹



Rutherford B. Hayes (source: Wikimedia Commons restored.jpg)

Battelle persisted despite these fatalistic predictions. On February 12, he introduced a set of similar resolutions that prohibited African Americans from entering the state after the constitution's ratification and paired this with a more lenient gradual emancipation clause. These resolutions reflected residents' desire to demographically "whiten" the state and thus remove African Americans from it. West Virginia voters, not constitutional delegates, would either ratify or reject these resolutions.²² Delegates tabled these resolutions, too, but only by a narrow margin, twenty-four to twenty-three.²³ The following day, Hancock County minister Joseph Pomeroy proposed a compromise. West Virginians "do not want free negroes here," Pomeroy declared, leading him to recommend the adoption of Battelle's prohibition on African Americans entering the state following the constitution's ratification. By a forty-eight to one margin, delegates adopted Battelle's motion. Following the vote, Marion County delegate Hiram Raymond instructed Battelle to "never mention slavery here again."²⁴ The convention adjourned a few days later after formally adopting a new state constitution.

Residents' mixed reactions to the proposed constitution reflected the divided perspectives on the issue of slavery in the proposed state. Battelle's resolution prohibiting the importation of any African Americans, free or enslaved, amounted to a disappointing defeat for "free soil" advocates. A Tyler County resident derisively referred to it as "our pro-slavery Constitution" and doubted that Congress would approve this constitution.²⁵ The *Wellsburg Herald*, though, acknowledged the difficulty in introducing Battelle's prohibition measure. A "direct emancipation clause . . . would have shocked long-existing prejudices of a majority of the people," the newspaper reasoned. Aggressive advocates of emancipation "make a great noise, [but] in numbers they don't amount to much outside of the Panhandle." The "people," it concluded, "are not yet ripe for that question."²⁶ Though some Republicans and free-state supporters hoped that West Virginia's climate and lack of southern staples would compel African Americans to move to warmer climates, procreation would likely ensure slavery's presence in the new state.²⁷ Many West Virginians "seem to rely with implicit confidence upon the silent innovations of future years for [slavery's] elimination from our midst," an unnamed resident remarked. "The voice of history is a disappointment to their cherished hopes." While many white residents had insisted for decades that the decreasing slave population would eventually liberate their region, slavery remained a central political, social, and economic feature. Why would this time be any different, residents wondered.²⁸



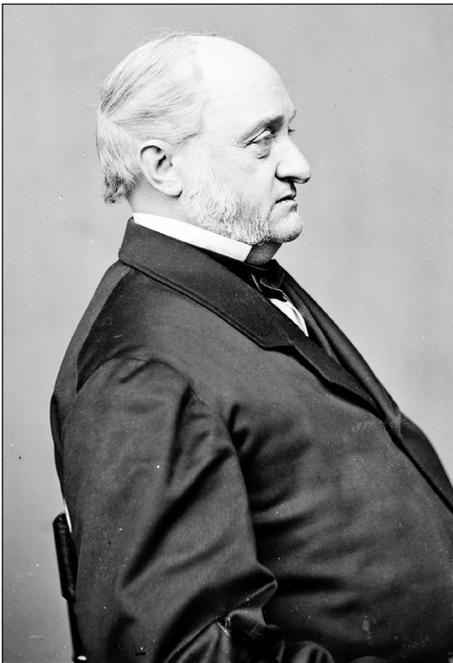
In West Virginia’s First Constitutional Convention, Gordon Battelle twice introduced resolutions to gradually emancipate slaves. The second time, he was chastised for his efforts both by other delegates and the media. The West Virginia Sesquicentennial Highway Historical Marker above recognizes his contributions to the state (source: West Virginia Archives & History).

Other Western Virginia politicians and residents considered Battelle's resolution as a compromise that saved the statehood movement. Henry Dering predicted that had the convention adopted all three of Battelle's resolutions, "the whole . . . Sou[th] Western Delegation would have left . . . and have got their whole people to oppose it." The new constitution "would have been voted down by the Counties from Harrison [County] to the Kentucky line."²⁹ Taylor County farmer William W. Warder maintained that delegates constructed "a firstrate constitution" and had "settled the niger question without any excitement." He predicted that the compromise "will be received by all parties with sadisfaction."³⁰ A Preston County resident believed that the new constitution would receive the "suffrage of *every friend of a New State*, whatever may be his proclivities in regard to the colored race [emphasis in original]."³¹ In Wheeling, Chester Hubbard applauded the "compromise" enacted by the convention, as African Americans would either "flourish or perish as the case may be."³² The *Wellsburg Herald* agreed with Hubbard's conclusion. The new constitution would "not interfere with the master's rights" but simply allowed slavery to either "stand" or "fall."³³ In short, the approval of Battelle's resolutions reflected the uncertainty still surrounding slavery. By not taking a firm position on emancipation, delegates appeared to implicitly rely upon the war—and contrabands—to resolve this issue for the proposed state and the nation.

On April 3, West Virginia voters approved the new constitution by a wide margin, 18,862 in favor to 514 opposed. In some precincts, residents could also vote on a nonbinding gradual emancipation clause. As with the proposed constitution, West Virginians overwhelmingly supported gradual emancipation, 6,052 to 616.³⁴ Residents offered different interpretations regarding the results of the latter. Free-state supporters believed that this vote provided "an unmistakable indication that our people want to make their State a free State."³⁵ The *Wellsburg Herald* declared the informal poll on gradual emancipation "a blow at slavery, and . . . [it] cripples the rebellion more than the defeat of an army."³⁶ For some West Virginians, the vote on the gradual emancipation represented their opportunity to destroy the institution that had instigated the war and torn the Union asunder. These residents blamed slaveholders who prized their chattel over white political equality and for the preceding decades of constitutional battles in the commonwealth. "The wicked rebellion, as well as all the past and present injustices suffered by Western Virginia," Upshur County resident William M. Shinn declared, "are due to *Slavery* and the evil principles engendered by it [emphasis in original]."³⁷ Other residents were more pragmatic. As a Ritchie County resident argued, the "road by which slave States have

traveled into the Union, has become so slippery with the blood of the brave men of our nation that it cannot be traveled any more.” The war had made slavery unpalatable and West Virginia’s admission as a slave state impractical. Placing slavery on a path toward gradual extinction would ensure the state’s admission to the Union.³⁸

Still, others read the results differently, providing insight into how residents interpreted the intersection of slavery and federalism. John G. Jacob inferred that residents’ overwhelming approval of gradual emancipation signaled their desire to control emancipation without congressional interference and should not be interpreted as abolitionism.³⁹ This opportunity to control the proposed state’s internal affairs encouraged more men to head to the polls. As Arthur I. Boreman reported, “[M]any good men in Wheeling, who generally took no part in politics, were opposed to congress prescribing the provisions of our constitution on any subject embraced in it.” In short, fear of “congressional interference” led many residents to support statehood and gradual emancipation lest northern abolitionists in Congress attempt to control the process. By voting in favor of the proposed state and gradual emancipation residents sought to narrow the consequences arising from a war over slavery.⁴⁰



Peter Godwin Van Winkle (source: Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)

The growth of the Republican Party in the region further complicated the politics of the statehood movement and slavery. Some residents supported gradual emancipation in an attempt to limit the power wielded by Republicans, a group that often appeared allied with northern abolitionists. Chester Hubbard reported that “Republicanism has full sway in the Panhandle” and that Republicans “are making every thing bend to the behest of party.”⁴¹ The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*’s stance on gradual emancipation in connection with statehood “has been jesuitical,” Van Winkle grumbled. Newspaper editor Archibald Campbell and his ilk opposed the “New State unless the Abolitionists can rule,” what Van

Winkle considered a “humiliating condition.”⁴² He later prayed that this Republican “clique will be able to lay the devil [of emancipation] they have raised.”⁴³ John J. Davis, disgusted with the “Anti-Slavery parasites” in the state legislature who attempted to foist emancipation on West Virginians, voted against an antislavery measure.⁴⁴ He later predicted that the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* would provide “Comments” on this negative vote and that the newspaper along with other Republicans would encourage his constituents to convene “another indignation meeting” against him. With Republicans seemingly guiding the statehood movement, many residents feared that these Republicans and their abolitionist allies would mandate racial and political equality within the state’s borders. By determining how West Virginians would control and resolve the issue of slavery, Davis and others believed that they could remove such “parasites” from the body politic before they infected it with radical ideas.⁴⁵

For some residents the fear of sickness was tangible and had already occurred. John Carlile, a one-time supporter of statehood, now emerged as a vocal opponent and leader of a conservative faction wary of the war and its expanding effects. And as senator, Carlile possessed a platform for his views. The senator feared that the war and demands for unquestioned patriotism provided a “pretext for transcending Constitutional limits,” notably private property rights. By allegedly assisting runaway slaves, the Union army acted as an abolitionist agent and was complicit in undermining the Constitution.⁴⁶ “The people of the State themselves must be left free to regulate their own domestic affairs,” the *National Telegraph* stressed. The prospect of “Congressional dictation” took on added urgency as the “negro loving fanatics in Congress” appeared bent on making West Virginia a free state without “the *people* determin[ing] the question for *themselves* in in *their* own way [emphasis in original].” That West Virginians were considering a gradual emancipation clause provided enough evidence that the entire movement had been tainted by northern abolitionists and must be immediately halted. As the war continued into its second year with little prospect of conclusion, some residents feared that the Lincoln administration and northern abolitionists would become more aggressive in attacking slavery and trampling upon civil liberties. By controlling the process of emancipation, West Virginians would avoid such a fate.⁴⁷

Residents’ aspiration for a new state deepened in mid-1862 as Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign appeared poised to capture Richmond and end the war before an independent West Virginia had been secured. Gov. Francis Pierpont, confident that the “rebellion” would be “shortly put down,” contacted President Lincoln, inquiring about treatment



John Snyder Carlile (source: West Virginia Archives & History)

of former Confederates and their political status in the Reorganized Government of Virginia.⁴⁸ Other West Virginians shared this same expectation in early 1862. “We are watching and waiting with anxious hearts for the fall of Richmond,” Morgantown attorney J. Marshall Hagans reported.⁴⁹ Residents’ anxiousness mingled with their fears of reuniting with neighbors who had sided with the Confederacy. If Richmond fell before West Virginia became a state, Harrison Hagans of Preston County explained, the “rebel constituency in the East will . . . send men to represent them, who will tax the West to pay this rebel war debt, and rule it with an iron rod.” The “pitiless

storm of wrath” that westerners had endured over the preceding decades would be “made hotter by disappointed ambition in this wicked rebellion.”⁵⁰ With Confederates unable to create a national “cotton oligarchy,” one Clarksburg newspaper predicted that these embittered Confederates would establish a similar “aristocratic structure” in Virginia where the “wealthy” controlled the government and diminished “the influence of the poor man.”⁵¹ McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign likely encouraged many West Virginians to support the statehood movement, even if it meant slavery’s gradual abolition. Under this scenario, residents would at least shape the state with little, if any, northern and abolitionist influence and deliver themselves from the wrath of their eastern brethren.

The Final Battle for Statehood

By late June 1862, the Senate Committee on Territories released an amended version of the West Virginia statehood bill.⁵² This version, authored by Virginia Senator John Carlile, increased West Virginia by adding fifteen counties and included a gradual emancipation clause that a new constitutional convention would have to ratify.⁵³ Carlile’s political chicanery appeared to doom the statehood movement. “The bill carries death to our new state,” Henry Dering lamented, as the slave population included in the additional fifteen counties would rankle northern Republicans. “Our people are in



Waitman Thomas Wiley (source: Brady-Handy Photograph Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, photo by Mathew Brady)

despair,” Dering reported, “and many have now given up all hopes of a new state.”⁵⁴ Methodist Episcopal minister Moses Tichenell of Marion County likewise bemoaned the proposed enlargement of the state. Shenandoah Valley residents possessed “sympathies, habits, and . . . interests” identical to those of the “strong niggerdum of the east” and antagonistic to West Virginians. Though his neighbors “are not Abolitionists in the present acceptance of the offensive term,” they despised the “rule of [S]outhern slave[ry]” and sought freedom from the “tyrannical lash of the proud nabobs of eastern Virginia” at any cost, even that of emancipation.⁵⁵

Wiley, fearful that Carlile’s changes would derail the entire statehood movement, sought compromise.⁵⁶ His “Wiley Amendment” would free slaves born after July 4, 1863, while those younger than ten would be liberated upon turning twenty-one; slaves older than ten but younger than twenty-one would remain enslaved until they reached twenty-five. The Wiley Amendment also banned importing slaves into the state. Senators approved the compromise and West Virginia’s admission by a twenty-three to seventeen vote.⁵⁷ When the House of Representatives reconvened in December, former opponents of West Virginia’s admission emerged as supporters because slavery’s demise in the state appeared certain.⁵⁸ On December 10, representatives passed West Virginia’s statehood application, ninety-six to fifty-five. West Virginia’s statehood bill next required Lincoln’s signature.⁵⁹

Lincoln felt conflicted on the statehood bill. Issues of slavery, constitutionality, and timing vexed the president, leading him to solicit arguments from cabinet members concerning the state’s admission.⁶⁰ On December 31, 1862, President Lincoln concurred with those cabinet members who agreed that West Virginia’s admission was “expedient” and constitutionally sound. West Virginians’ loyalty to the Union and their “aid” in fighting the rebellion manifested those residents’ devotion to the federal

government, Lincoln declared. The addition of the Willey Amendment ensured that “slave soil” would become “free,” what Lincoln considered an “irrevocable encroachment upon the cause of the rebellion.” The president applauded West Virginians’ “secession in favor of the constitution” and granted their request for statehood.⁶¹

West Virginia’s admission into the Union would become official pending ratification of the Willey Amendment by a constitutional convention and public referendum. For residents sympathetic to the Confederacy, opposed to “congressional dictation,” or resistant to separation in general, the referendum provided another opportunity to derail the statehood movement.⁶² African Americans, opponents declared, would flood West Virginia and demand full and equal access to employment opportunities and the ballot box. To perpetuate and protect racial hierarchy, West Virginians must reject the Willey Amendment.

Pro-statehood West Virginians launched a counter-offensive, insisting that ratifying the Willey Amendment would strengthen, not threaten, racial hierarchy. Gradual emancipation would hasten slavery’s decline in the region, accelerating a demographic “whitening” already unfolding across the region. This erosion of slave labor would facilitate the expansion of “free labor,” transforming West Virginia into an industrial state like Ohio or Pennsylvania. Removing slaves from the state would also remove West Virginia outside “Jeff. Davis’ kingdom,” an aristocratic nation allegedly bent on disenfranchising non-slaveholders.⁶³ Access to the ballot box in West Virginia, though, would continue for white men regardless of wealth, while the state’s few African Americans would be disenfranchised. West Virginians’ abolition of slavery would also hasten the war’s conclusion, a stinging rebuke to eastern Virginians whose zeal to protect their slave property now threatened its existence. West Virginians, supporters proclaimed, would continue to enjoy the benefits of slavery as “whiteness” would reign as the principal political ethos.

West Virginians in favor of statehood stressed the benefits of “free soil,” crafting arguments that touched on Virginia’s political and sectional history. Upon hearing the news that the House of Representatives approved West Virginia’s admission, an anonymous writer in the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* celebrated West Virginia’s policy of “equal taxation, [and] equal representation.” These democratic principles “have animated . . . all true Western Virginians for many long years.”⁶⁴ In a meeting in Marshall County, Brooke County merchant Campbell Tarr, a Wheeling convention delegate, blamed the “slaveholding oligarchy of Eastern Virginia” for the “whirlpool of destruction” that now engulfed the country. Tarr expressed

little remorse for the “poor Eastern Virginia rebel wretches . . . suffering all the horrors of a desolating and destructive war.” This cabal had governed the state by the maxim “rule or ruin” over the preceding decades, and without western allies, eastern Virginians faced certain destruction.⁶⁵ A Marion County resident reported that his neighbors “are highly gratified with the cheering prospect of being separated from Eastern Virginia.” For decades, western Virginians had lived in “Niggerdom,” where all political matters centered on slavery. But West Virginia’s establishment and slavery’s inevitable demise had overthrown the “king” and “master” of this tyrannical domain.⁶⁶ Though secessionists “might prate forever about rights, and might appeal to all our Virginia-ism, and all our nominal connection with the institutions of the South,” West Virginia was not a southern state, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* asserted. Richmond legislators’ attempts to make the Northwest “[S]outhern” failed because residents shared more in common with their “free soil” neighbors than eastern Virginians.⁶⁷

Proponents also maintained that West Virginia’s transformation into a free state reflected geographical realities. As the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* explained, “natural causes, silently and uncontrollably at work, were . . . ridding Western Virginia of slavery,” as the region’s “climate” and “soil” were hostile to this “foreign institution.” Further, West Virginia’s proximity to Ohio and Pennsylvania shaped residents’ interpretation of African-American bondage. The “influence,” “politics,” “industries,” and “sentiments” of West Virginia’s neighbors “were steadily destroying the hold of slavery” in the region.⁶⁸ Abolishing slavery promised to expand industrial development and place the state on a similar economic trajectory as that of its neighbors. The “black spots that has given us so much trouble and retarded our growth and prosperity so greatly” would be removed, Henry Dering predicted.⁶⁹ Slavery had “paralyzed” West Virginia’s economic development over the preceding decades, Willey declared, while Ohio’s “rapid progress” demonstrated the benefits of “free soil” and “free labor.” With slavery removed, West Virginians would finally unleash the state’s “inexhaustible mineral resources” that had remained undisturbed for decades.⁷⁰ “Vote in the New State,” he instructed Wheeling laborers, and “[y]ou will have . . . free labor.”⁷¹

The economic prosperity wrought by “free labor” would also protect white men’s political rights. Confederate leaders sought to establish an aristocratic government and place white laborers in the same economic stratum that African-American slaves occupied, statehood supporters alleged. In a meeting in Triadelphia, Gov. Francis Pierpont declared that Confederates believe “that the working classes are the mudsills of society”

and that “capital should own labor.” These beliefs revealed Confederates’ true character. “Aristocracy never could tolerate the idea that the country should belong to those who rightfully cultivate it,” he proclaimed.⁷² George Porter, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates in Wheeling, agreed. In a gathering in Wheeling, Porter confirmed that Confederates “are not a democratic people.” They opposed “a government of all the people” and sought to restrict the “right of suffrage” until only property owners could vote.⁷³ In a mass meeting in Philippi, residents maintained that Confederates sought to create a government “in which negro slavery shall be made a fundamental principle of government.” Slaveholding would constitute the “basis of civil preferment, [and] of elevated social positions and distinctions.” West Virginia’s creation, however, would protect residents from these antidemocratic Confederates.⁷⁴

Statehood supporters’ arguments resonated with many residents who had witnessed political and economic developments unfold over the preceding decades. The issue of race in a post-slavery state, though, remained divisive. Abolitionists, opponents maintained, sought to transform West Virginia into a colony for freed blacks, initiating a demographic “blackening” of the region and a dismantling of the region’s racial hierarchy. Defying congressional emancipation by rejecting the Willey Amendment would convince northern Republicans and their Northwest allies that residents would not submit to the “Wheeling Abolition clique.”⁷⁵ This clique, West Virginia conservatives charged, attempted to foist a constitution crafted by northern abolitionists and their allies upon residents to maintain “themselves in power and carry out their promise to the Abolitionists of New England to give the New State *to them* [emphasis in original].” The new constitution offered little benefit for white West Virginians.⁷⁶ Indeed, a state constitution tinged by abolitionism threatened all residents. “No matter where abolition touches,” the *National Telegraph* maintained, “it palsies, pollutes and destroys.”⁷⁷

Opponents hoped to seize upon residents’ widespread hatred for abolitionism by blurring distinctions between Republicans, abolitionists, and statehood sympathizers and advocates, a tactic that centered on the “inevitable *nigger* question [emphasis in original].”⁷⁸ Gradual emancipation would not “whiten” the state but “blacken” the mountains, opponents insisted, as African Americans would flood the state seeking employment and political and civic equality. Aided by northern abolitionists and their West Virginia allies, freed blacks would control the state. Skeptical residents needed to only look at Lincoln’s draconian policies on confiscating slaveholders’ property for evidence of abolitionists’ increasing power over the president and the administration’s prosecution of the war. Abolitionists

had transformed a war for the Union into a crusade for racial equality, a transformation that now targeted West Virginia.

John Carlile emerged as a prominent exponent of such views. In a speech in Clarksburg, Carlile “classed all friends of the New State Bill in the same category with Wendell Phillips and J. R. Giddings.” These northern abolitionists wished only to foist racial equality upon West Virginians, even recruiting residents to carry out this nefarious plan. The “Secessionists of this vicinity were greatly pleased with the remarks,” reported Union soldier E. C. Moderwell, while “many undoubted Union men felt outraged by the same.” Carlile “advised his hearers to resist Congressional interference or dictation, if needs be with the sword.” In short, white men in West Virginia had to resist abolitionism.⁷⁹

President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation deepened opponents’ convictions that abolitionists demanded slavery’s destruction. Lincoln “obey[ed] the behests of the insane fanatics he has encouraged around him,” the *National Telegraph* alleged, notably those “most ultra men of the northern faction.” Unionists in Kentucky, Missouri, and Western Virginia, confronted by the president’s “contemptuous disregard” for their loyalty, now “*must* surrender to the fanatics of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and the Western Reserve [emphasis in original].”⁸⁰ The enlistment of African Americans incensed residents. West Virginia politicians who supported such a measure “must think [their] constituents [to be] among the most narrow, hidebound and contracted of men, if they would support an act, so objectionable” that the bill’s “grossness” was manifest to everyone.⁸¹ Arthur Boreman reported that numerous Union soldiers “are opposed to the arming and making soldiers of negroes” and predicted that the policy would “produce disquietude, desertions, and . . . serious demoralization.”⁸² Still, Republicans persisted in arming African Americans, a policy that would lead to the “extermination of both races in the slaveholding States.” These same men, claimed the *National Telegraph*, also endorsed the Willey Amendment.⁸³

The 1862 mid-term election results’ buoyed opponents’ hopes that “Abolition rule is drawing to a close” and that the statehood movement would be foiled.⁸⁴ Lincoln’s unconstitutional policies, including his suspension of *habeas corpus* and authorization of military trials for “all rebels and insurgents, their aiders and abettors . . . and all persons discouraging volunteer enlistments, resisting militia drafts, or guilty of any disloyal practice” revealed the president’s true intentions.⁸⁵ This blanket condemnation smacked of executive tyranny and abolitionist meddling. Lincoln’s “band of demons may be able to construe anything they like into

disloyalty,” the Charleston *Guerilla* charged.⁸⁶ These “arbitrary arrests . . . were not made for the benefit of the country, but in behalf of the Abolition party,” the Wheeling *Daily Press* exclaimed, as the arrests “reduce[d] the opponents of that party to such an extremity of fear and trepidation that they would offer no political resistance to its universal domination.” Governor Pierpont allegedly “hankered” after similar power, “copying upon the Washington tyrants” to remove “obstacle[s] to his political projects,” including the creation of West Virginia.⁸⁷

Pierpont’s quest for unconstitutional executive powers akin to Lincoln’s demonstrated to statehood opponents that the movement to create a new state was truly a plot to impose racial equality. Republicans, allied with abolitionists, promised much with West Virginia’s creation but their promises rang hollow. “Coming in as the Free Speech, Free Vote, Free Soil and Free man’s party,” Republicans offered “flimsy fictions about what great things are com[ing] to the New State,” the Wheeling *Daily Press* claimed.⁸⁸ Republicans’ “sole aim,” “every act,” and “highest ambition . . . irrespective of their own race or their government,” the *Morgantown Monitor* protested, “is for the negro.” Republicans’ “speeches are for the negro; their votes are for the negro; [and] *their* taxes are for the negro[emphasis in original].” Despite the “wild and reckless theories” expounded by “Abolitionists, fanatics, and many leaders of the Republican party,” the *Monitor’s* editor reminded his audience that African Americans constituted an “inferior race, deficient in judgment, and incapable of self-government.” This “inferior race” would clamor for political and social equality with West Virginia’s founding; would residents sanction such actions?⁸⁹

Triadelphia residents pledged resistance to such efforts. “We look upon the effort to place the African upon an equality with the white man in Western Virginia as vain and foolish,” residents declared during a mass meeting. Previous attempts of imposing racial equality had failed, “bring[ing] demoralization and ruin to both” races and had threatened to “destroy the best interests of our country.” Welcoming “free negroes into Western Virginia,” residents further averred, was “unwise and ruinous to the order and good morals of our society.” These West Virginians promised resistance to abolitionists’ efforts.⁹⁰

West Virginians’ opposition to the “black toadies” that advocated statehood reflected their concern that a new state would overturn the region’s established racial hierarchy.⁹¹ A “majority” of residents opposed the “negro-equalizing amendment” known as the Willey Amendment, one conservative newspaper declared, but military and political authorities at the behest of abolitionists prevented a full and open discussion of the issue.⁹² West

Virginians are to be “enslaved, and . . . Africanized” if voters ratified the Willey Amendment, the *Clarksburg Patriot* warned.⁹³ Wheeling abolitionists “would not pass the New State bill without imposing the *condition* that it should be an Abolition State, and a roosting and lurking place for the negroes [emphasis in original].”⁹⁴ Statehood supporters hoped to transform West Virginia into “a colony for runaway negroes,” welcoming African Americans with the promise of liberation by the Willey Amendment.⁹⁵ The *National Telegraph* suggested renaming the amendment “An act to Africanize North Western Virginia, and to enslave the white inhabitants thereof” to more accurately represent the amendment’s purpose.⁹⁶ “Give us a new State, un-Abolitionized,” the *Wheeling Daily Press* demanded, “a new State without the secret machinery which is to guide its control and direction into Abolition.”⁹⁷ Protecting West Virginians’ racial hierarchy demanded that residents oppose this abolitionist attempt to impose gradual emancipation upon unwilling residents, even if this opposition undermined the statehood movement. As the *Clarksburg Patriot* proclaimed, “[E]very man who is opposed to making Western Virginia a free negro colony” must reject the new state.⁹⁸

Statehood proponents, though, maintained that West Virginia’s creation guaranteed and protected “whiteness,” even without slavery. West Virginia’s admission into the Union ensured that, regardless of the war’s outcome, Deep South planters would not politically enslave white residents or consider them “like slaves on the block.”⁹⁹ The Willey Amendment would compel slaveholders to sell or emancipate their chattel, while the prohibition on importing slaves would further “whiten” the Mountain State. And with a climate inhospitable for freed blacks or plantation agriculture, African Americans had little incentive to remain in the state. The demographic “whitening” that would unfold across West Virginia promised a thorough “whitening” of the political process, too.

West Virginia’s demographic “whitening” had been unfolding for years, statehood proponents declared, as census data revealed a decline in the slave population. “The end of slavery is a foregone conclusion,” the *Wellsburg Herald* insisted.¹⁰⁰ In the northern panhandle, both slavery and “free negroes” have been “dead letters,” and John G. Jacob believed that the “entire free black population can be counted on the fingers.”¹⁰¹ Waitman Willey agreed with Jacob’s reasoning. Willey, a slaveholder, considered the number of African-American slaves in West Virginia “too small to stand in the way of the public good.” Further, the state’s “geographical situation” meant “that slavery could never exist here to any great extent, even if it were desirable to have it.” Willey and other statehood proponents ignored the

region’s long history with slavery and the slave trade, insisting instead that few residents desired slaves and fewer free blacks. By supporting statehood, residents would rid themselves of both groups.¹⁰²

Emancipating African-American slaves raised the question of freed blacks’ status in the new state. West Virginians held a “deep and universal prejudice against this class of persons,” confessed one statehood proponent.¹⁰³ Waitman Willey acknowledged that adversaries “clamor[ed] about the danger of free-negro-ism,” but he and other advocates believed that African Americans would not constitute a problem in West Virginia.¹⁰⁴ A “very large proportion of the slaves will be converted into money and started Southward,” the *Wellsburg Herald* declared.¹⁰⁵ “[O]ur Northern negrophobists” further reasoned that “free negroes will remain where they were born and continue to work for their masters,” especially those on Southern plantations. The *Herald* predicted that the Emancipation Proclamation would accelerate the “current of negro travel . . . southward,” draining the African-American population and whitening the Upper South.¹⁰⁶

But would the few African Americans who remained increase competition in the job market and depress wages? Statehood opponents maintained that West Virginia’s founding would trigger a flood of freed blacks, where “every nigger” would push “a white man out of employment,” and local German immigrants “would all be turned out of employment and free negroes substitute[d] in their stead.”¹⁰⁷ Statehood promoters dismissed this baseless rumor. African Americans “will seek menial employment as they always and everywhere do,” one supporter declared.¹⁰⁸ “The hotel, the barber shop, [and] the steamboat, are the paradise of the free negroes,” answered another proponent, as blacks would labor as “waiters, porters, barbers or hostlers” while avoiding any “mechanical employment.” These service occupations reinforced racial hierarchy, as African Americans would labor in subordinate service industries while white residents occupied more prestigious positions. This unnamed author assured West Virginians that African Americans “naturally adapt themselves” to those “peculiar services,” calming fears that freed blacks would seek to challenge that labor hierarchy.¹⁰⁹

African Americans’ subordinate position reflected the will of Providence, a universal truth that statehood supporters endorsed. “How can the negro, whom God has made so inferior to the white, morally, intellectually and physically, ever be made his equal[?]”¹¹⁰ West Virginians received confirmation of such beliefs from minstrel shows, a popular cultural performance that allowed audience members to express their racial anxieties and collective fears of African Americans.¹¹¹ Minstrels’ mockery of African Americans reinforced statehood advocates’ assertions that the

“ignorant African slave” and his “offspring” were unsuited to the labor required in West Virginia’s economy. White laborers in West Virginia, not African Americans, would provide the labor needed to unleash the new state’s mineral resources.¹¹²

The menial employment African Americans occupied reflected their political status in the new state, too. “The hackneyed song of negro equality, negro jurors, and the like, is the old argument of secessionists,” a resident grumbled.¹¹³ This “old argument” was impossible in West Virginia, supporters explained, because the new state “will have the strongest anti-free negro laws of any loyal State in the Union.” West Virginia would enforce the “old laws of Virginia,” laws characterized as “severe and restrictive enough to meet the fears of the most timorous.”¹¹⁴ Article 11, Section 8 of West Virginia’s proposed constitution stated that the “common law and the laws of the State of Virginia” concerning free African Americans would remain untouched. These laws included forced removal of freed blacks older than twenty-one, imprisoning individuals who transported blacks into the state, and imposing fines on African Americans who refused to leave the state. Corporal punishment against this last group would also be enforced. Slavery’s shadow would still linger over the mountains even though the institution would soon no longer officially exist.¹¹⁵

Slavery’s demise not only benefited West Virginia but the entire nation, as the institution’s death in the Mountain State would hasten the war’s conclusion. “This is a Pro-Slavery Rebellion,” the *Fairmont National* declared, “fomented by slaveholders, and for Slavery’s sake.” West Virginia’s admission would assist in slavery’s “overthrow and extinction.”¹¹⁶ Many statehood advocates endorsed Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation as a similar means of destroying the Confederacy and ending the war. The *Wellsburg Herald* believed that the proclamation would “speedily bring the war to an issue.”¹¹⁷ In a new state mass meeting in Ohio County, residents “hail[ed] the President’s emancipation proclamation as an efficient means of destroying the prime cause and backbone of the present malignant and unholy rebellion.”¹¹⁸ Ending the war would hopefully end the guerilla conflict that had terrorized residents, too. Arthur Boreman reported that counties below the northern panhandle were “*not safe* for a loyal man” and recommended that loyalists remain within “sight of the Ohio River [emphasis in original].”¹¹⁹ Virginia Rep. Jacob B. Blair of Parkersburg instructed Willey to hold “the election [on the new constitution] as early as possible before warm weather when the guerrillas can infest the mountains and prevent the people from voting.” With the state’s future assured, such attacks would hopefully cease.¹²⁰



Jacob Beeson Blair (source: Wikipedia)

The constitutional convention that reconvened in February 1863 enacted few substantive changes to the constitution ratified by voters the previous year. Compensating loyal slaveholders emerged as the most divisive issue, with James Brown of Kanawha demanding federal compensation for loyal slaveholders who immediately emancipated their slaves and James S. Wheat of Morgan County suggesting that funds derived from the sale of Confederate property, including slaves, be directed to loyal slaveholders.¹²¹ Both proposals failed.¹²² Rather, in a unanimous

vote, delegates approved the Willey Amendment fifty-four to zero, while agreeing to petition the federal government for two million dollars for loyal slaveholders.¹²³ West Virginia voters would ratify or reject the new constitution on March 26, the final obstacle to statehood.

On that date, West Virginia residents and soldiers voted overwhelmingly to ratify the new state constitution with the Willey Amendment, 28,318 in favor to 572 opposed.¹²⁴ Upon receiving the returns, on April 20, President Lincoln issued a proclamation that West Virginians had satisfied all constitutional obligations and West Virginia would be admitted into the Union on June 20, 1863.¹²⁵ The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* celebrated the “wonderful” results, regarding the wide margin as a “grand and overwhelming . . . triumph.”¹²⁶ West Virginians’ demonstrated that they “didn’t need a new nigger State” but a “free State,” even though “such men as Carlile . . . were for the niggers” and attempted to sway voters to that perspective, too.¹²⁷ The creation of West Virginia—and the destruction of slavery—via the ballot box appeared inevitable as residents celebrated the election results.

“Whitening” the New State at the Expense of Blacks

Slavery’s death via democracy, however, may have been somewhat premature and myopic. West Virginians’ initial policy on slavery only prohibited the importation of African American slaves, a resolution that signaled residents’ reluctance to dismantle the institution. Congressional

pressure compelled West Virginians to pursue compromise, but the accord reached by politicians and ratified by voters reflected residents' continued endorsement of proslavery beliefs and democratic principles. From a practical standpoint, slavery would continue to operate in the new state for decades. The Willey Amendment delayed emancipation for thousands of young slaves while older slaves would remain in bondage until death. African Americans could acquire freedom through self-emancipation or through manumission, but some slaveholders, wary of losing their investment, could look for prospective buyers in nearby Kentucky or Missouri. African-American bondage in West Virginia would likely continue into the twentieth century, when a majority of statehood leaders would have passed on and entrusted their descendants to tackle the final stages of emancipation. Could shifting political and racial norms reignite this emancipation debate? How would an independent and permanent Confederate nation shape this debate? With no prospective conclusion to the Civil War by 1863, slavery's future remained uncertain but few predicted the institution's demise in only a few years. Still, regardless of the Civil War's outcome, the "politics of slavery" would figure prominently over the coming decades, cementing slavery's centrality to politics.

Slavery's influence was manifest in the new constitution. While emancipation unfolded over the proceeding decades, laws imposed on African Americans promoted and perpetuated racial hierarchy. Corporal punishment remained on the books, authorizing white authorities to mete out punishment on unrepentant blacks. Freed blacks would perform menial labor, occupying low-level service positions while white laborers occupied more prestigious and lucrative positions. African Americans would not "blacken" West Virginia's growing industrial sector. This economic segregation carried over into politics. Statehood leaders' refusal to endorse African-American political and civil rights or countenance any status for blacks other than slavery reflected their desire to "whiten" the Mountain State. Disenfranchised and marginalized freed blacks provided similar visual evidence as enslaved African Americans before the war: politics remained the purview of white men. West Virginians' embrace of democratic reform with a new state exhibited neither a clean break from slavery nor their Virginia heritage that historians suggest.

Rather, the political "whitening" residents sought with statehood reflected a continuation of antebellum norms concerning race and politics, norms constructed and refined through residents' defense of African-American bondage and political equality for white men.

Notes

1. Arthur I. Boreman, “Inaugural Address of Governor Arthur I. Boreman,” West Virginia Archives & History: West Virginia Division of Culture and History, www.wvculture.org/history/boremania.html, accessed June 21, 2013.
2. Boreman, “Inaugural Address.”
3. Many current historians echo this argument. William Freehling, Daniel Crofts, and William Link insist that intrastate antebellum sectional conflict increased antislavery sentiment in northwestern Virginia, thereby providing a catalyst for emancipation during the Civil War. William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists Triumphant, 1854–1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Freehling, *The South vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); William A. Link, *Roots of Secession: Slavery and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Link, “‘This Bastard New Virginia’: Slavery, West Virginia Exceptionalism, and the Secession Crisis,” *West Virginia History: A Journal of Regional Studies* 3, no. 1 (2009): 37–56.
4. *Clarksburg (VA) Patriot*, April 3, 1863, 2.
5. Non-Republican voices within the Unionist cause have until recently received scant scholarly attention. Charles Ambler’s thesis concerning the sectionalism in Virginia shaped historiography for over half a century, as numerous historians interpreted the statehood movement as the climax of the sectional crisis that had characterized Virginia politics from the colonial era to the Civil War. Modern historians have generally agreed that Virginia’s decades-long sectional struggle culminated in the statehood movement, a movement driven by the same tensions and forces that tore the nation apart in 1861. Crofts, Freehling, and Link view conflicts in Virginia through a similar east-west prism, with secession and statehood as the only logical conclusion to this intrastate conflict. James Oakes’s argument in *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), regarding national Republicans’ attempts to undermine slavery, overestimates the initial appeal of antislavery in West(ern) Virginia, though many residents would adopt a similar platform to hasten the statehood movement. Still, the majority of residents remained cautious of Republicans’ aims in abolishing slavery. Charles H. Ambler, “The Cleavage between Eastern and Western Virginia,” *American Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1910): 762–780; Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910); Theodore F. Lang, *Loyal West Virginia 1861–1865* (Baltimore: Deutsch Publishing Co., 1895); Henry Thomas Shanks, *Secession Movement in Virginia, 1847–1861* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1934), 211–212. Other earlier historians have echoed this interpretation. Granville Davisson Hall, Virgil A. Lewis, and George E. Moore contend that sectional grievances dating back to the American Revolution set in motion the creation of West Virginia, an inevitable result considering eastern Virginians’ refusal to embrace democratic reforms and abandon slavery.
6. As John Stealey III has noted, delegates approached resolving these issues through two approaches. Some delegates suggested that the 1851 Constitution required only slight modifications, while others maintained that eastern Virginians’ rebellion required westerners to overhaul that constitution and write a new one. John E. Stealey III, *West Virginia’s Civil War-era Constitution: Loyal Revolution, Confederate Counter-Revolution, and the Convention of 1872* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2013), 74–75.
7. The boundary issue focused on expanding the state boundaries to include an additional thirty-two counties, with most of these counties located in the Shenandoah Valley and southwest Virginia. While these counties had larger slave populations and generally remained under Confederate control, supporters of adding these counties insisted that they remained “western” counties and thus deserved to be included. Many supporters of the statehood movement believed this move to be a gimmick designed to stall and/or prevent the state’s founding. Delegates added

- nine southern counties while permitting seven Shenandoah Valley counties to vote on admission. See *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 3, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc120361.html>, accessed July 14, 2015; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 7, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc120761.html>, accessed July 14, 2015; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 9, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc120961.html>, accessed July 14, 2015; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 10, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc121061.html>, accessed July 14, 2015; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 11, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc121161.html>, accessed July 14, 2015; Richard Orr Curry, *House Divided* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 87; Scott MacKenzie, “Fifth Border State,” Ph.D. dissertation (2014), Auburn University, 191. The nine counties included were Boone, Logan, Mercer, Wyoming, Raleigh, McDowell, Greenbrier, Monroe, and Pocahontas. The Shenandoah Valley counties of Pendleton, Hardy, Hampshire, Morgan, Berkeley, Jefferson, and Frederick voted in favor of joining the new state except the last county. Delegates also disagreed on the state’s new name. Many northwestern delegates supported “Kanawha” as a means of unifying westerners and distancing themselves from eastern Virginians. Other delegates suggested that the state’s sectional history and usage of “western Virginia” for the previous decades made “West Virginia” a fitting rebuttal to eastern Virginians. See *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 3, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc120361.html>, accessed July 14, 2015. The final vote was thirty in favor of “West Virginia,” nine for “Kanawha,” two each for “Allegheny” and “Western Virginia,” and one for “Augusta.” Delegates also approved the removal of *viva voce* voting. Republican Granville Davisson Hall later proclaimed that this “open” voting system perpetuated the “domination of the slave aristocracy.” Others, like Hancock delegate Joseph S. Pomeroy, believed that the *viva voce* facilitated the adoption of the secession ordinance, while Gordon Battelle asserted that oral voting permitted local elites to manipulate voters. Still, supporters of *viva voce* stressed the many virtues displayed during election season, with James Brown of Kanawha and Chapman Stuart defending that method. Despite these claims that *viva voce* inculcated independent behavior, convention delegates voted to implement the secret ballot. Granville Davisson Hall, *Rending of Virginia* (Chicago: Mayor & Miller, 1902), 70; *Wheeling (VA) Daily Intelligencer*, December 6, 1862, 2; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 5, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc120561.html>, accessed July 14, 2015.
8. John J. Davis to Anna Kennedy, December 7, 1861, John J. Davis Family Papers, A&M 1946, Box 1, folder 2, West Virginia and Regional History Center. Davis also lamented the method of voting that delegates instituted, specifically the removal of *viva voce* voting. Republican Granville Davisson Hall later proclaimed that this “open” voting system perpetuated the “domination of the slave aristocracy.” Others, like Hancock delegate Joseph S. Pomeroy believed that the *viva voce* facilitated the adoption of the secession ordinance, while Gordon Battelle asserted that oral voting permitted local elites to manipulate voters. Still, supporters of *viva voce* stressed the many virtues displayed during election season, with James Brown of Kanawha and Chapman Stuart defending that method. Despite these claims that *viva voce* inculcated independent behavior, convention delegates voted to implement the secret ballot. Hall, *Rending of Virginia*, 70; *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, December 6, 1862, 2; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 5, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc120561.html>, accessed July 14, 2015.
 9. Chester Hubbard to William Hubbard, December 20, 1861, Hubbard Family Papers, A&M 805, West Virginia and Regional History Center.
 10. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, December 9, 1861, 2.
 11. Henry Dering to Waitman T. Willey, December 16, 1861, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 10, Folder 7, item 361.
 12. Chester Hubbard to William Hubbard, 20 December 1861, Hubbard Family Papers. Prior to the December adjournment, some delegates had forced the convention to open a discussion regarding slavery. Boone County minister and delegate Robert Hagar introduced two resolutions concerning

the institution, including a provision for gradual emancipation. James Brown of Kanawha County convinced the convention to table both resolutions. Two weeks later, Gordon Battelle introduced a similar gradual emancipation clause but also included a prohibition on importing slaves into the state. The convention tabled Battelle’s motions, too. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, November 30, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc113061.html>, accessed July 15, 2015; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, December 14, 1861, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc121461.html>, accessed July 15, 2015.

13. *National Telegraph*, February 7, 1862, 2.
14. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 30, 1861, 3.
15. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, November 2, 1861, 1.
16. Rutherford Hayes to Sardis Bichard, December 19, 1861, *Diary and Letters of Rutherford Richard Hayes: Nineteenth President of the United States* 1, ed. Charles Richard Williams (Columbus, Ohio: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1922), 163.
17. Hayes, diary entry, January 3, 1862, *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, 175
18. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, January 27, 1862, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc012762.html>, accessed July 15, 2015.
19. Henry Dering to Waitman T. Willey, January 28, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 10, Folder 7, item 374.
20. Dering to Willey, February 5, 1862, quoted in Curry, *House Divided*, 91.
21. *Wellsburg (VA) Herald*, January 31, 1862, 2.
22. Battelle proposed to emancipate slaves born after 1870 after males reached twenty-eight years and females eighteen years of age. These changes meant that slavery would continue to exist well into the twentieth century.
23. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 12, 1862, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc021262.html>, accessed July 16, 2015.
24. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 13, 1862, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc021362.html>, accessed July 16, 2015.
25. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 8, 1862, 1.
26. *Wellsburg Herald*, March 14, 1862, 2.
27. Defenders of slavery often argued that African-American biological makeup permitted them to work in the South’s warm climate, while white men and women lacked this biological composition. Proslavery writers and theorists used this interpretation to justify slave labor and defend slavery from antislavery commentators and abolitionists in the North. Conevery Bolton Valencius, *The Health of the Country: How Americans Understood Themselves and Their Land* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 238–240. Some West Virginians articulated similar arguments. One anonymous Preston County author stated that slavery “may well exist in the Tobacco, Hemp, Cotton, Rice and Sugar growing portions of our country, where the labour of the black race can be profitably employed and the slave better clothed, fed, and cared for. . . . My desire for a free State arise[s] out of the conviction that our climate and soil . . . are vastly better adapted to free than slave labour.” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, February 26, 1862, 1.
28. *Wellsburg Herald*, March 28, 1862, 1.
29. Dering to Willey, March 3, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 1, item 381.
30. William W. Warder to Evy Warder, February 13, 1862, William Wesley Warder Papers, A&M 1633, West Virginia and Regional History Center; 1860 U.S. Federal Census: Taylor, Virginia, Roll: M653_1381, Page: 656, Image: 164, Family History Library Film: 805381, *Ancestry.com*, accessed August 7, 2015.
31. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 15, 1862, 2.
32. Chester Hubbard to William Hubbard, February 13, 1862, Hubbard Family Papers.
33. *Wellsburg Herald*, February 28, 1862, 2.
34. Curry, *House Divided*, 97. As Scott MacKenzie argues, though, wartime voting often produced skewed results, while lopsided margins in many northwestern counties suggest that free-state

- advocates employed coercive techniques to intimidate opponents or convince them to change their vote. MacKenzie, "Fifth Border State," 196. Despite the overwhelming margin in favor of gradual emancipation, some northwestern counties posted significant votes against the measure. In Monongalia, one hundred eighty-five voted against the clause, while forty-three opposed it in Brooke County. In Hancock, forty-four residents voted against it while seventy-one in Marshall also voted in the negative. In Ohio County, fifty-four opposed the measure. Though the vote in favor of gradual emancipation dwarfed those of their opponents, the continued presence of an electorate opposed to gradual emancipation reveals a contested political battleground and a measure of dissent that would continually contest measures against slavery. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, April 23, 1862, 2.
35. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, April 22, 1862, 2.
 36. *Wellsburg Herald*, April 25, 1862, 2.
 37. William M. Shinn to Waitman T. Willey, July 14, 1861, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 10, Folder 7, item 335.
 38. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 5, 1862, 1.
 39. *Wellsburg Herald*, April 25, 1862, 2. This interpretation runs counter to other interpretations offered by other historians. Granville Davisson Hall proclaimed that the vote demonstrated that West Virginians "were ready to accept emancipation—eager to do so—as giving their new State its fitting status at home." Hall, *Rending of Virginia*, 507. Richard Curry declared the vote a "turning point in the history of statehood politics," igniting residents' latent and long-held antislavery sentiment. Curry, *House Divided*, 97. For a similar interpretation, see Matthew Tyler Foulds, "Enemies of the State: Methodists, Secession, and the Civil War in Western Virginia," (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 2012), 297–298.
 40. Arthur I. Boreman to Francis H. Pierpont, July 30, 1862, Francis Harrison Pierpont Papers, A&M 9, Box 3, Folder 3, West Virginia and Regional History Center.
 41. Chester Hubbard to William Hubbard, September 26, 1861, Hubbard Family Papers.
 42. Peter G. Van Winkle to Waitman T. Willey, June 10, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 1, item 411.
 43. Van Winkle to Willey, June 27, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 2, item 422.
 44. John J. Davis to Anna Kennedy, May 11, 1862, reprinted in Gerald P. Ham, ed., "The Mind of a Copperhead: Letters of John J. Davis on the Secession Crisis and Statehood Politics in Western Virginia, 1860–1862," *West Virginia History* 24 (January 1963): 105.
 45. John J. Davis to Anna Kennedy, May 19, 1862, reprinted in Ham, "The Mind of a Copperhead," 105-106.
 46. *National Telegraph*, May 9, 1862, 2. For example, see *Wellsburg Herald*, June 27, 1862, 2.
 47. *National Telegraph*, June 13, 1862, 2.
 48. Francis Pierpont to Abraham Lincoln, March 14, 1862, Francis Harrison Pierpont Letters to Abraham Lincoln, A&M 1034, West Virginia and Regional History Center.
 49. J. Marshall Hagans to Waitman T. Willey, June 21, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 2, item 419; 1860 U.S. Federal Census: District 2, Monongalia, Virginia, Roll: M653 1364, Page: 74, Image: 84, Family History Library Film: 805364, *Ancestry.com*, accessed July 23, 2015.
 50. Harrison Hagans to Waitman T. Willey, May 2, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 1, item 400.
 51. *National Telegraph*, May 9, 1862, 2, and June 13, 1862, 2.
 52. See "Governor Pierpont's Address to the Reorganized Government of Virginia, May 6, 1862," A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia, West Virginia Archives & History, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/pierpont050662.html>, accessed July 23, 2015; "Act of the Reorganized Government of Virginia Granting Permission for Creation of New State," A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia, West Virginia Archives & History, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/rgov051362.html>, accessed July 23, 2015; Waitman T. Willey,

Speech of Hon. W. T. Willey, Delivered in the United States Senate, May 29, 1862, On Presenting the Memorial of the Legislature of Virginia, requesting the consent of Congress to the erection of a new state within the jurisdiction of that State, to be called “West Virginia” (Washington, D.C.: Scammell & Co., 1862).

53. The emancipation clause mandated that all slaves born on or after July 4, 1863, would be free. The fifteen counties included in Carlile’s amended bill were Berkeley, Jefferson, Clark, Frederick, Warren, Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Augusta, Highland, Bath, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Craig, and Alleghany.
54. Dering to Willey, June 27, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 2, item 425. John Carlile’s actions drew the ire of many residents, who labeled him a traitor and unresponsive to his constituents’ demands. See *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*; July 29, 1862, 2, and August 12, 1862, 1.
55. Moses Tichenell to Waitman T. Willey, June 28, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 2, item 429; 1860 U.S. Federal Census: Triadelphia, Ohio, Virginia, Roll: M653_1368, Page: 493, Image: 505, Family History Library Film: 805368, *Ancestry.com*, accessed July 24, 2015.
56. Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner emerged as a vocal opponent of the statehood bill. He opposed any type of gradual emancipation in regards to West Virginia’s slave population and instead advocated that all slaves within the state’s original proposed limits be immediately freed on July 4, 1863. “U.S. Senate Debate on West Virginia Statehood, June 26, 1862,” A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/ussenatedebate062662.html>, accessed July 24, 2015. Willey doubted the efficacy of such a proposal, fearful that the strong secession sentiment still within the proposed state would increase should slaves be immediately freed. See “U.S. Senate Debate on West Virginia Statehood, July 1, 1862,” A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/ussenatedebate070162.html>, accessed July 24, 2015; “U.S. Senate Debate on West Virginia Statehood, July 14, 1862,” A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/ussenatedebate071462a.html>, accessed July 26, 2015.
57. Stealey, *West Virginia’s Civil War-Era Constitution*, 105. Willey also successfully removed the additional counties included in the committee’s bill. As Richard Curry notes, twenty of the twenty-three votes cast for West Virginia’s admission came from Republicans. Four radical Republicans and thirteen conservative senators joined in opposition to statehood. Curry, *House Divided*, 104.
58. “U.S. House of Representatives Debate on West Virginia statehood, December 9, 1862,” A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/ushousedebate120962.html>, accessed July 26, 2015.
59. “U.S. House of Representatives Debate on West Virginia statehood, December 10, 1862,” A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/ushousedebate121062.html>, accessed July 26, 2015. Opposition for West Virginia’s admission from Virginia representatives existed. Joseph E. Segar, a Virginia Unionist representing the Eastern Shore, maintained that West Virginians had adopted a “pro-slavery constitution,” but Congress imposed an “anti-slavery one” for voters to accept or reject. Segar implored Congress to allow West Virginians to decide the institution’s future in its borders. Segar also feared that Unionists in eastern Virginia would be vulnerable to Confederate reprisals once the Restored Government of Virginia in Wheeling turned into the West Virginia state government. Finally, Segar appealed to Virginia’s “rich cluster of glorious memories and associations,” denouncing the attempt to create two Virginias and sully the state’s history.
60. “Opinions of Lincoln’s Cabinet on the Constitutionality of West Virginia,” West Virginia Archives & History, West Virginia Division of Culture and History, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cabinetopinions.html>, accessed July 26, 2015.
61. “Opinion of Abraham Lincoln on the Admission of West Virginia,” A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/lincolnopinion.html>, accessed July 26, 2015. Virginia Gov. Francis Pierpont reminded Lincoln that denying West

- Virginia's admission would imperil the Union cause in the region. West Virginians' "failure" to secure a new state "will ruin the Union," he warned, a foreboding prospect considering that residents' "sentiment" for the Union and for a new state "have become identical." "If one is struck down I don't know what is become of the other." Henry Dering agreed with Pierpont, declaring that a Lincoln veto "would turn all Western Va. into rebels" and "he would not have a friend in all Western Va." Francis Pierpont to Abraham Lincoln, December 20, 1862, and December 30, 1862, Francis Harrison Pierpont Letters to Abraham Lincoln, A&M 1034; Dering to Willey, December 16, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 2, item 452.
62. John J. Davis lamented the "degrading terms" for statehood that West Virginia proposed to the president. John J. Davis to Anna Kennedy, December 20, 1862, John J. Davis Family Papers, A&M 1946, Box 1, Folder 4.
63. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 23, 1863, 2.
64. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, December 11, 1862, 3.
65. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, August 20, 1862, 2.
66. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, December 15, 1862, 2.
67. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, August 23, 1862, 2.
68. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, January 17, 1863, 2.
69. Dering to Willey, February 25, 1863, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 3, item 492.
70. Willey, *Address of Hon. Waitman T. Willey, Delivered before the Constitutional Convention of West Virginia, in the City of Wheeling, on the 12th day of February, 1863, in compliance with a Resolution of that body, inviting him to do so* (Wheeling: n.p., 1863), 8.
71. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 23, 1863, 2.
72. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, August 14, 1862, 3.
73. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, February 2, 1863, 2.
74. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, September 3, 1862, 1.
75. *National Telegraph*, August 29, 1862, 2.
76. *Daily Press* (Wheeling, Virginia), January 24, 1863, 2.
77. *National Telegraph*, September 12, 1862, 2.
78. Arthur I. Boreman to Francis Pierpont, February 27, 1863, Francis Harrison Pierpont Papers, A&M 9, Box 3, Folder 6.
79. E. C. Moderwell to Waitman T. Willey, July 24, 1862, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 2, item 439. See also John Carlile, *Remarks of John S. Carlile, of Virginia, at the Mass Convention, at Indianapolis, on the 30th day of July, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: Henry Polkinhorn, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1862). In Indianapolis, Carlile derided Republicans for turning the war for the Union into a war to abolish slavery and institute racial equality. He further suggested that emancipation would trigger a demographic and social crisis that would overwhelm state and local governments.
80. *National Telegraph*, September 26, 1862, 2.
81. *Daily Press*, February 19, 1863, 2.
82. Arthur I. Boreman to Francis Pierpont, February 27, 1863, Francis Harrison Pierpont Papers, A&M 9, Box 3, Folder 6.
83. *National Telegraph*, December 5, 1862, 2.
84. *National Telegraph*, October 24, 1862, 2. As James McPherson and James Hogue argue, though, conservatives poorly misread the election results. Democrats gained seats in traditionally Democratic districts across the lower North, while Republicans gained five seats in the Senate and suffered a small net loss of seats in the House of Representatives. Republicans swept New England, the upper North, the two Pacific states, and the border states. James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 4th ed., 2010), 320.
85. "A Proclamation on the Suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, 1862," Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, http://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/content-images/06099p1_0.

.jpg, accessed July 29, 2015.

86. *Guerilla*, October 3, 1862, 2. The *Guerilla* was a Confederate military camp newspaper published when Southern troops occupied Charleston.
87. *Daily Press*, January 5, 1863, 4.
88. *Daily Press*, February 27, 1863, 2.
89. *Morgantown (VA) Monitor*, February 21, 1863, 2.
90. *Daily Press*, March 9, 1863, 2.
91. John J. Davis to Anna Kennedy, December 7, 1862, John J. Davis Family Papers, A&M 1946, Box 1, Folder 4.
92. *Daily Press*, March 16, 1863, 2.
93. *Clarksburg Patriot*, March 20, 1863, 2.
94. *Daily Press*, March 11, 1863, 2.
95. *National Telegraph*, November 21, 1862, 2.
96. *National Telegraph*, November 7, 1862, 2.
97. *Daily Press*, February 19, 1863, 2.
98. *Daily Press*, February 19, 1863, 2.
99. Willey, *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia, February 12, 1863*, 1.
100. *Wellsburg Herald*, June 20, 1862, 2.
101. *Wellsburg Herald*, February 13, 1863, 2.
102. Willey, *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia, February 12, 1863*, 6.
103. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 19, 1863, 1.
104. Willey, *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia, February 12, 1863*, 10. See, for example, William P. Willey to Waitman T. Willey, January 31, 1863, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 3, item 482.
105. *Wellsburg Herald*, February 13, 1863, 2.
106. *Wellsburg Herald*, October 24, 1862, 2.
107. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, December 18, 1862, 1, and February 10, 1863, 1.
108. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 19, 1863, 1.
109. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, January 14, 1863, 1.
110. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 12, 1863, 1.
111. Lott, “Blackface and Blackness,” 13. For example, see *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 13, 1863, 3, and March 14, 1863, 2.
112. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, January 28, 1863, 1.
113. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, July 31, 1862, 1.
114. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, February 10, 1863, 2. Such restrictions may have included barring African Americans from carrying a gun, testifying against whites in court, and serving on juries or voting.
115. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 12, 1863, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc021263.htm>, accessed July 31, 2015.
116. *Fairmont (VA) National*, April 4, 1863, 2.
117. *Wellsburg Herald*, September 26, 1862, 2.
118. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 14, 1863, 2. Not all statehood supporters supported the Emancipation Proclamation, however. Chester Hubbard considered the proclamation “as the worst error he [Lincoln] has made, wholly ineffective for any good purpose, and productive of all evil and only evil.” Still, Hubbard stated, “I stand by the administration.” Chester Hubbard to William Hubbard, November 11, 1862, Hubbard Family Papers.
119. Arthur I. Boreman to Francis Pierpont, February 27, 1863, Francis Harrison Pierpont Papers, A&M 9, Box 3, Folder 6.
120. Jacob B. Blair to Waitman T. Willey, February 14, 1863, Charles H. Ambler Collection, A&M 122, Box 11, Folder 3, item 486; 1860 U.S. Federal Census: Parkersburg, Wood, Virginia, Roll: M653_1384, Page: 507, Image: 515, Family History Library Film: 805384, *Ancestry.com*, accessed July 31, 2015.

121. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 16, 1863, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc021663.html>, accessed July 31, 2015; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 14, 1863, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc021463.html>, accessed July 31, 2015.
122. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 17, 1863, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc021763.html>, accessed July 31, 2015. Delegates defeated Wheat's proposal, twenty-eight to twenty-six, while Brown's proposal failed to garner much support.
123. *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 17, 1863, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc021763.html>, accessed July 31, 2015; *Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*, February 20, 1863, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc022063.html>, accessed July 31, 2015.
124. Curry, *House Divided*, 150–151. Opponents of the statehood movement instructed others opposed to West Virginia's creation to abstain from voting to protest what they considered the antidemocratic means used by supporters to force residents to accept statehood, including intimidation and ostracism at the polls.
125. Curry, *House Divided*, 129.
126. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, April 8, 1863, 2.
127. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, April 9, 1863, 2. Early West Virginian historians likewise viewed the results favorably. Granville Davisson Hall believed that the vote placed the state on the "irresistible march" toward slavery's abolition. Charles Ambler and Festus P. Summers considered West Virginia's "admission . . . a triumph for Abolitionists," as residents finally inaugurated a gradual emancipation process to remove slaves from the state. More recent historians, notably Sean Wilentz, William W. Freehling, William Link, and Stephanie McCurry, echo similar claims. These historians emphasize the fatal struggle between African-American bondage and democracy, characterizing Southerners' attempts to promote equilibrium between the two institutions as ill-fated and myopic. West Virginia's history strengthens that interpretation. Mountaineers, cognizant of slavery's incongruity with "modern" democratic principles, demanded liberation from eastern oligarchs and their peculiar institution. The Civil War offered West Virginians the opportunity to emancipate themselves from such tyranny, a microcosm of the national struggle. Hall, *Rending of Virginia*, 507; Ambler and Summers, *West Virginia: The Mountain State* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1940), 248; Wilentz, *Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005); Freehling, *Road to Disunion, vol. 1: Secessionists at Bay, 1776–1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Freehling, *Road to Disunion, vol. 2: Secessionists Triumphant, 1854–1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Link, *Roots of Secession*; Link, "'This Bastard New Virginia'"; McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

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Document:

Thomas Jefferson Letter and Transcription

Ryan J. Spencer

About the Letter

The letter that follows is a rare legal opinion authored at Monticello, written and signed by Thomas Jefferson, regarding the bounty for wolf heads in Augusta and Botetourt counties. In 1771, when the letter was written, Jefferson was a delegate in the House of Burgesses, representing Albemarle County. He had been admitted to the Virginia bar in 1767 after studying at the College of William and Mary. The recipient of the letter was James McDowell, a relative of the Preston who later founded Smithfield in present-day Blacksburg, Virginia. The letter was donated to Historic Smithfield® by Preston descendant Charles D. Fox IV and family.

Transcription of the Letter (front)

By the act of assembly 1748.c.40. a reward of 100 lb of tobo [tobacco] was given for the head of every old wolf, and 50 lb for every young one, to be paid by the county and repaid by the public.

By another act 1764.c.2. the court of Augusta was directed to levy it in money at the rate of 12/6 [12 shillings, six pence] per hundred.

By another act 1769.c.40. Augusta was divided into two counties, to one of which the name of Botetourt was given; yet this did not alter the law as to this matter, but the court of Botetourt may still levy in money for the old reward.

But by an act 1769.c. 23. an additional reward is given of 100 lb tobo for every old wolf and 50 lb for a young one to be paid by the county and not repaid by the public; and no provision is made for levying this in money. The court must therefore levy this in tobo, since the claimant has a right to receive this additional reward in tobo.

Th. Jefferson

Nov. 4. 1771.

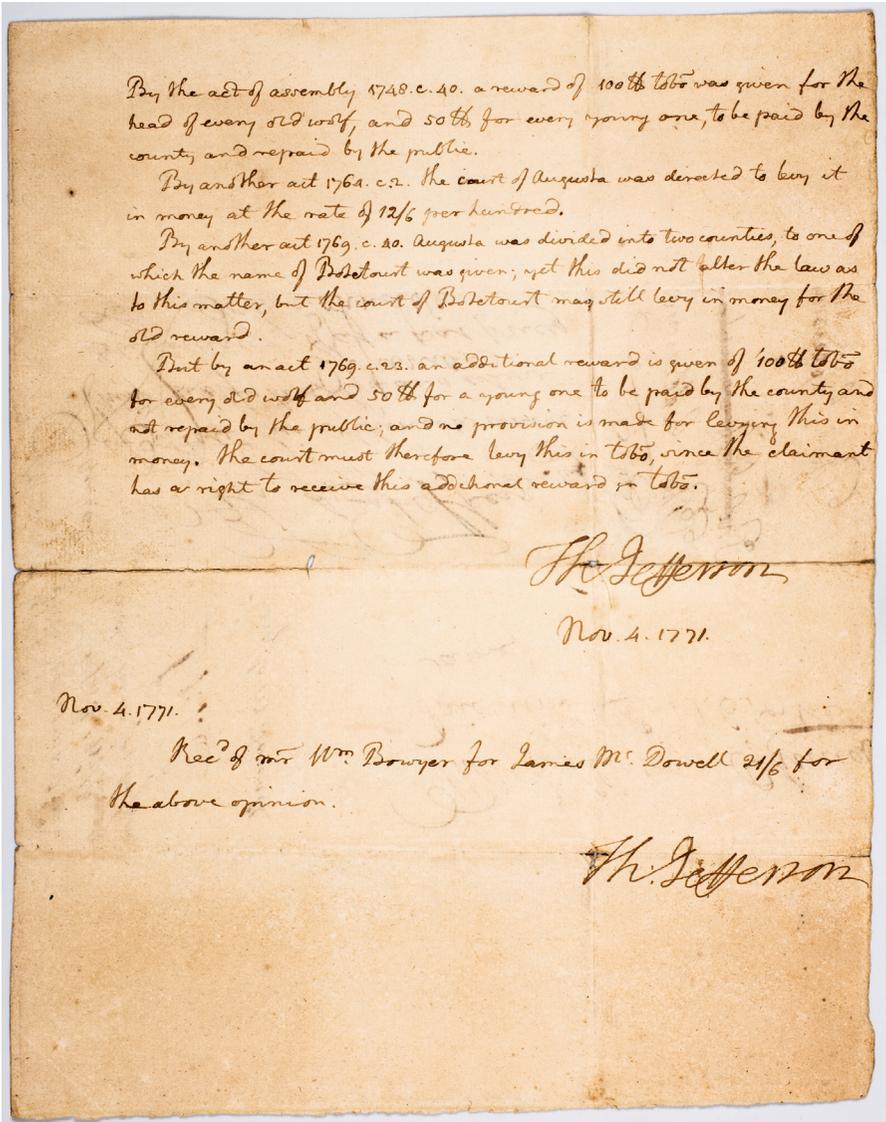
Nov. 4. 1771.

Rec^d of Mr Wm. Bowyer for James McDowell 21/6 for the above opinion.

Th. Jefferson

About the Reverse Side

Two sections of the back of the letter from Jefferson to McDowell indicate that Thomas Jefferson received £1.1.6, or 1 pound, 1 shilling, 6 pence, for the opinion. Although presented somewhat differently, this figure corresponds to the one written by Jefferson on the front page since 21 shillings equal 1 pound, 1 shilling. The back of the letter appears to bear the handwriting of several people, none of whom could be identified.



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Sharon Watkins and Clara B. Cox

(Editors' note: *The Index does not include information in endnotes.*)

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