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A First Look at the Worst

If way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst.

--Thomas Hardy

In recent years a few universities—Yale, North Carolina, Dartmouth, Alabama, and Brown—have documented fully the ignoble role slavery played in their noble pasts. William and Mary has not, though there is plenty of the worst—and a bit of the better—to be found in our own closet. From its earliest days, as called for in the Royal Charter of 1693, funding for the College came from taxes on tobacco produced by slaves. And the College itself owned slaves well into the 19th century. As this compendium shows, the shadow of slavery is long, affecting race relations into our own time.

An architectural historian at Colonial Williamsburg, Carl Lounsbury, has recently suggested¹ that the older buildings on campus were probably built with slave labor—that would include the Wren Building (1695), The Brafferton (1723), and the President's House (1732) and (possibly) the Alumni House (arguably built before the Civil War,² well before the College acquired it from the Bright family).

The early master builders were brought from England, but local contractors for the Wren Building supplied the laborers, who included, noted

¹ Angela Cota, "College's Oldest Buildings likely Built by Slaves, Lecturer Says," *The Flat Hat*, February 23, 2007, p. 1. Let me here thank Linda Rowe, at Colonial Williamsburg, for reviewing my work on slavery at the College during the 18th century.

² I argue this dating in a essay on the building (forthcoming, *William and Mary Alumni Magazine*, Winter, 2007-2008) where I depend in large part on sketches by Robert Knox Sneden, as in *Eye of the Storm, A Civil War Odyssey*, ed. Charles F. Bryan Jr. and Nelson D. Lankford (New York: The Free Press, 2000), p. 114. One of the Brights continued after the Civil War to work against black rights and suffrage. See <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/findaids/bright.htm>.

Lounsbury, two of President James Blair's slaves.³ The glazier for the Brafferton, James Wray, apparently used slaves.⁴ In 1704, Blair complained about the employment "of a great number of unskillful Workmen,"⁵ possibly some of them slaves and possibly including a gift to the College that year from Governor Francis Nicholson, a male slave valued at £30.⁶

³ One of Blair's slaves figures in accounts of the 1702 incident when students attempted to bar the masters out; Blair ordered "the Negro Man" (not his other servant, a white) to break the door down (see Edgar W. Knight, *A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860*, 5 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), I, 477. In a later incident of a possible break-in, his wife's "maid who lay in a Closet just by" is mentioned; she may also have been a slave (I, 473). The documents Knight collects mention slavery at the College a number of times, including in the *Statutes* of the College where are listed positions perhaps occupied by slaves--"the Janitor, the Cook, the Butler, and the Gardener"--as well as "the Workmen for building or repairing" and "Bailiffs and Overseers" (I, 519). Knight provides too regulations printed by the Board of Visitors "That the Masters and Scholars keeping waiting Boys pay Five Pounds per Annum for their Board" (I, 528). A law in 1734 exempted "all the domestic servants belonging to the college ... from being listed as tithables" (I, 534). And in the 1779 reorganization of the College, "the use of the college kitchen and garden" was given over to a "sober and discreet male person" who was to have hired to him the College "negroes accustomed to labor in the same"; "a sufficient number of slaves shall be reserved for cleaning the college" with any in excess "hired out at publick auction" (I, 547-548).

⁴ See Morgan Figa, "In Williamsburg, Slaves Played Key Role," *The Flat Hat*, April 27, 2007, p 1. In the article, a History Department member, Julie Richter, is quoted on slavery and William and Mary. Jennifer Oast, a Ph.D. student in History here, will include William and Mary in a chapter on colleges and slavery in a dissertation she is finishing: "'The Worst Kind of Slavery': Institutional Slavery in Virginia, 1680-1860."

⁵ Quoted in James D. Kornwulf, *"So Good A Design": The Colonial Campus of William and Mary, Its History, Background, and Legacy* (Williamsburg: The College of William and Mary, 1989), p. 38. The "Building Account of First Building" at the College records payments for bricks "made on the spot," "labourers," "bricklayrs," "sawyers," "Carpenters," and "Contracts with workmen," but whether the workers were hired slaves remains an open question (see E. G. Swem, "Some Notes on the Four Forms of the Oldest Building of William and Mary College," *William and Mary College Quarterly*, 2nd Series, 8:4 [October 1928], 220, 221, 223; I am grateful to Jean Meyers for bringing this article to my attention).

⁶ Cited in "'So Well Endowed': Economic Support of the College of William and Mary during the Colonial Period," a 2001 History Department Honors essay by Kristin A. Zech. Her chapter three, "The 'Nottoway Quarter': Slavery and the College of William and Mary," is a rich source of information on the subject. Zech includes (p. 66) a chart showing the names and some family relationships of 18 College slaves (and one free black apparently associated with the College) baptized at Bruton Parish Church between 1749 and 1783; she documents another College slave, Ben, born March 1734, who was baptized at Bristol Parish in Prince George County (p. 59). Zech also includes (p. 67) a list of the slaves the College owned in 1780 and details of the College's hiring its slaves out in 1779-1780. She notes that one of the masters, Carlo Bellini, himself owned three slaves (p. 68). And she cites several allusions to other College slaves, including one who died in the smallpox outbreak of 1768 (p. 67). I am indebted to Jim Whittenburg for bringing Zech's work to my attention.

In an address of May 1, 1699, a student mentioned in passing the President's and Masters' "servants and attendants" and the responsibilities of the College's slaves in "the kitchin, Buttery, Gardens, [and] wooding."⁷ Another student evoked slavery in fearful terms, but only as a possible fate for the young white man crossing the Atlantic; to undertake that voyage was "to bee exposed to all Sorts of Enemies & to their Barbarous Usage of their prisoners, not to Speak of Some of them Soe inexorable, that it is well if all a mans estate can redeem him from a perpetuall Slavery" (p. 326).

In 1718 the General Assembly allocated to the College £1,000. With £150, the College bought a plantation, 2,119 acres "lying and being on both sides of the Nottoway river, in the counties of Prince George, Surry and Brunswick" to grow tobacco. The College also bought human beings: "one other sum of four hundred and seventy-six pounds four shillings, of the like money hath been laid out in the purchase of seventeen negro slaves, to be employed in tilling and manuring the said lands."⁸ A 1773 ledger page, "Cloathing for the Ingen Boys," includes an

And I am indebted to Louise Kale for lending me a copy of a work Zech mentions briefly in her list of sources, Thomas F. Higgins III and John R. Underwood, "Secrets of the Historic Campus: Archeological Investigations in the Wren Yard at the College of William and Mary, 1999-2000," (William and Mary Center for Archeological Research, March 12, 2001, WMCAR Project No. 99-26). Higgins and Underwood document and discuss slavery at the College in a number of places. They note that the President's House "separate kitchen" had a "second-story servants' quarters" (p. 16); that "servants' quarters" may have been located west of the Wren Building "near the sunken garden" (p. 32); and that a stone marble "incised with an 'X'" (illustrated, p. 72) may reflect "traditional African cosmology and conjuring" (p. 71) (found nearby were cowrie shells, used by slaves possibly "in medicine or as gaming pieces, decoration, or charms" [p. 71]). In a discussion of slave life at William and Mary the authors comment that "these objects, and perhaps others yet to be found in the Wren Yard, may reveal aspects of African-American life at the College hidden for centuries" (p. 93).

⁷ "Speeches of Students of the College of William and Mary Delivered May 1, 1699," *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, 2nd Ser., 10: 4 (October 1930), 332. The students were oblivious enough to local slavery to praise King William for having saved "all Europe from slavery" (p. 335) and to deprecate for reasons of health the idea of young Virginians having to travel to England to study at a university: "It has pleased the wise God to fitt all animals for the severall Elements wherein hee designed they should Live soe he has soe fitted all mens bodies & Constitutions for the severall Aires & Clymats wherein they were Borne & bred, That to carry them out of these into Remote & Forreigne parts is Like the Turning of Creatures out of their owne Element" (p. 326).

⁸ "Transfer to the Faculty in Virginia, February 27, 1729," at <http://swem.wm.edu/departments/special-collections/exhibits/exhibits/charter/transfer/>. This is very likely what Hugh Jones called in 1724 one of "many Contributions of the

expenditure of £30.18.2 for the “Notoway Quarter.”⁹ Until the College sold the plantation in 1780, it used the profits to support its Nottoway Foundations (scholarships).¹⁰

In 1784 a visitor published an account of a slave quarter near the Nottoway River, “a shell of a house” that could conceivably be one the College had owned:

That miserable shell ... consisted but of one small room, which served for the accommodation of the overseer and six negroes: it was not lathed nor plaistered, neither ceiled nor lofted above, and only very thin boards for its covering; it had a door in each side and one window, but no glass in it; it had not even a brick chimney, and, as it stood on blocks about a foot above the ground, the hogs lay constantly under the floor, which made it swarm with fleas; water was near half a mile distant, and that very bad. There was not a neighbour within five miles on one side, and eight miles on the other; no book, no convenience, no furniture, no comfort in the house, unless you call by that name a miserable thin chaff bed, somewhat raised from the floor, in a corner of the room, which alternately served him for his chair, his table, and his couch.

In this wretched habitation I had little sleep, and no refreshment, although the poor young man permitted me to lie on his bed alone, and did not come there himself, but lay on the floor with the negroes; for they were shelling Indian-corn with their hands all the former part of the night, when their songs kept me awake; and the disagreeable idea of such a parcel of nasty black devils all snoring in the

Country, especially a late one of 1000 l. to buy Negroes for the College Use and Service” (Knight, I, 488).

⁹ Special Collections Research Center, Archives, Swem Library, on display at the Muscarelle Museum, February 2007.

¹⁰ For the 1777 moves to sell the plantation, see Thad Tate, *The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1972), p. 38; the slaves were sold at the same time, except for “two men and a boy [brought] from there to replace hired Negroes” at the College. For the scholarships, see “Journal of the Meetings of the President and Masters of William and Mary College,” *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, 14:1 (July 1905), 27, 31. For the sale of tobacco, see *ibid.*, p. 28. Zech puts the date of the actual sale as September 11, 1780 (p. 72).

The Nottoway acquisitions are invisible in the major College histories. Jack Morpurgo says only that “with the setting up in 1718 of a scholarship fund of £1,000 education became available not only to the rich but also to middle-class Virginians” (J. E. Morpurgo, *Their Majesties’ Royall Colledge: William and Mary in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* [Williamsburg: The Endowment Association of The College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1976], p. 74). The appropriation of £1000 for scholarships is mentioned in Susan H. Godson, et al., *The College of William & Mary: A History*, 2 vols. [Williamsburg: King and Queen Press, 1993], I, 62), but no mention is made of how the money was invested. Ditto in Wilford Kale, *Hark Upon the Gale: An Illustrated History of the College of William and Mary* (Norfolk: Donning, 1985), p. 39.

same room with me, with the assistance of the musketoos, prevented me from sleep until day-break.¹¹

At the College, slaves lived in the Wren Building (the kitchen), in the President's kitchen, and in "outbuildings in the North Yard, service buildings in the South Yard near the Brafferton, and in buildings near the College garden in the West Yard" (Zech, p. 65).¹² Zech notes a complaint by Hugh Jones about "the Negroes and inferior servants belonging to the College ... [who] take up a great deal of room and are noisy and nasty" (p. 63). Jones suggested that a quarter be built for them and Zech notes a sum spent in 1766 "to mend the Negro quarters" (p. 64).

Faculty minutes show that the College sent some of its young slaves to a local school funded by an English philanthropy, the Associates of Dr. Bray. The school was established in Williamsburg (on the advice of Benjamin Franklin) to educate slave children. It was overseen by a William and Mary graduate, Robert Carter Nicholas, assisted by two (possibly three) of the College's presidents (Dawson and Yates, and possibly Horrocks). (The College now owns the 18th century structure, much altered, that likely housed the school in 1763-1765).¹³ In 1768, the College placed two of its slave children, Adam and Fanny, at this

¹¹ John Ferdinand Smyth Stuart, *A Tour in the United States of America, Containing an Account of the Present Situation of that Country* (Dublin: G. Perrin, 1784), pp. 45, 46-47.

¹² As Benjamin Ewell became President in 1854, he described "'2 or 3 small houses in which Negroes lived ... [and] [sic] at least a half dozen small buildings scattered in the College Yard'" (Anne W. Chapman, "The College of William and Mary, 1849-59: The Memoirs of Silas Totten," M.A. Thesis, William and Mary, 1978, p. 61, n11; but these were apparently "frame cabins that housed some of Williamsburg's relatively numerous free blacks" (Anne W. Chapman, "Benjamin Stoddert Ewell: A Biography," Ph.D. Thesis, William and Mary, 1984, p. 88).

¹³ See <http://www.geocities.com/quantpsy/williamsburg/other/other178.htm> (from the *Virginia Gazette*, Jun2 19, 2004, p. 1a); it too may have been built with slave labor. For details on the Bray School, see John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717-1777* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), passim. James Blair would likely not have been pleased with the Bray School; in 1730, he wrote skeptically of slaves' willingness to convert to Christianity thinking that in most cases they did so hoping that "Christianity will help them to their freedom" since Christians then were supposed not to enslave other Christians (see Edward L. Bond, "Colonial Origins and Growth," in "The Episcopal Church in Virginia, 1607-2007," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 115:2; 187). The daughter of one College president, Mary Stith, in 1813 left much of her estate to her freed slaves (see <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/RRDisplay.cfm?FileName=RR1216.htm#f5>; I am grateful to John Cross, who sees Stith as an early abolitionist, for this information).

“Negroe School” (Van Horne, pp. 275, 278) to be educated by Mrs. Anne Wager. In 1773 the Faculty resolved “that four Loads of Wood be sent to Mrs Wager, who has the care of some young Negroes belonging to the College” (“Journal of the Meetings,” p. 27).

Thad Tate documents still other slaves the College owned. During the 18th century, twenty-two were baptized at Bruton Parish Church. Most worked at housekeeping duties; the President and Masters noted in 1763 that they should not be allowed to have keys or to travel too often away from the College. Supervision was necessary, the Faculty minutes record, “as we all know that Negroes will not perform their Duties without the Mistress’s constant Eye especially in so large a Family as the College.”¹⁴

In the 18th century slaves sometimes accompanied their young masters to the College, eight in 1754 alone. Sometimes the College hired slaves or rented out its own at public auction. In 1782, needing money to repair buildings, the College sold eight slaves.¹⁵ In 1821, it bought or sold others.¹⁶

At least two faculty members at the College harbored misgivings about slavery.¹⁷ One was George Wythe, who, late in life, freed several of his slaves.

¹⁴ Tate, p. 38. Tate has further details on several other College slaves.

¹⁵ Tate, pp. 38, 39. About this time too, according to Zech (p. 71), the President of the College, James Madison, was seeking to give the College’s 20 to 30 slaves to the Commonwealth in exchange for land and a house the state owned. She notes a faculty resolution in 1780 to sell some of the College’s slaves to raise money to buy land. She quotes as well a 1781 comment by Madison about the need “to remove the few negroes we have” as the British Army promised to free slaves who joined it: “I know nothing but a lucky accident prevented most of them from joining the enemy” (p. 71).

In the William and Mary College Papers (Archives), folders 250-253 are “papers relating to lands and slaves owned by the College of William and Mary”; see the index in “Archives Inventory, William and Mary College Papers,” vol. 2.

¹⁶ See Ruby Orders Osbourne, *The Crisis Years: The College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1800-1827* (Richmond: Dietz Press, [1989]), p. 245. The College also appears in 1821 to have acquired slaves as part of a payment on a bond (Osbourne, p. 253).

¹⁷ David Brion Davis suggests that William Small was a third skeptic and seems to imply at least one other beyond those I name here, Wythe and Tucker. Davis notes that Thomas Jefferson “acquired a deep and lifelong hatred” of slavery as he moved in a small intellectual circle at Williamsburg that included Governor Francis Fauquier, George Wythe, William Small and other teachers at the College of William and Mary. The scholarly Wythe and Small were closely attuned to the writings of contemporary Scottish jurists and moral philosophers, who condemned slavery both as a violation of natural rights and as a wasteful and uneconomic form of labor.

After leaving the College, Wythe ruled as a judge that “Virginia’s Declaration of Rights ... included African Americans among the ‘all men’ born free and equally independent. ‘They should,’ Wythe said, ‘be considered free until proven otherwise.’”¹⁸

The second faculty member troubled at times by slavery was later the judge who overturned Wythe’s ruling, St. George Tucker, who had been Wythe’s student and then successor as Professor of Law at the College. In his 1806 reversal of Wythe, according to Paul Finkelman, Tucker went so far as to provide “the legal basis for presuming that all blacks in Virginia were slaves, even though the free black population was the fastest growing segment of the commonwealth’s population.”¹⁹

Tucker had, however, sought in publishing his law lectures in 1796 “to demonstrate the incompatibility of a state of slavery with the principles of our government, and of that revolution upon which it is founded, and to elucidate the practicability of its total, though gradual, abolition.”²⁰ Tucker’s proposal (so

(Slavery in the Colonial Chesapeake [Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1986], pp. 33, 34).

¹⁸ See <http://www.history.org/Almanack/people/bios/biowythe.cfm>.

¹⁹ “The Dragon St. George Tucker Could Not Slay: Tucker’s Plan to End Slavery,” *William and Mary Law Review*, 47:4 (February 2006), 1217.

²⁰ See St. George Tucker, “A Dissertation upon Slavery” (1796), at <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch15s56.html>. Michael Kent Curtis notes that Tucker’s “expressed empathy [for slaves] did not often appear in Tucker’s personal relations with his own slaves” (“St. George Tucker and the Legacy of Slavery,” *William and Mary Law Review*, 47:4 [February 2006], 1169) and quotes another commentator: “Tucker’s treatment of his slaves often revealed ‘an entrepreneur adept at squeezing maximum profit’ from slavery” (p. 1170).

Lyon G. Tyler, President of the College when he spoke in 1904, emphasizes a strain of abolitionist thinking at William and Mary seeing that both George Wythe and St. George Tucker “were advocates of the emancipation of the slaves, and their teachings no doubt had much to do with producing that spirit of philanthropy so prevalent in Virginia till the sudden onslaught of the abolitionists” (*Early Courses and Professors at William and Mary College, from an Address delivered ... Dec. 5, 1904* (Williamsburg: William and Mary College, [1905?], p. 12). To that “crusade of abuse and incendiarism” (pp. 12-13), Tyler ascribes a seemingly natural reaction: “the benefits of slavery ‘socially, politically, and economically,’ were preached at William and Mary from 1826 to 1857 by Thomas R. Dew and Nathaniel Beverley Tucker” (p. 13). Tyler seeks to reassure his audience, however, that “Virginia did not take to any great extent to the new doctrines, but adhered to the opinions of the older professors that slavery was an evil, which was to be eliminated as soon as practicable” (p. 13).

Ed Crapol has examined the attitudes of Tyler’s own father (also a W&M graduate) toward slavery in “John Tyler and the Pursuit of National Destiny,” *Journal of the Early*

“gradual” as to take a century) included making the standing and lives of free blacks so intolerable that they would, he hoped, flee Virginia altogether. His *Dissertation*, says Finkelman, was “simultaneously visionary, philanthropic, racist, vicious, utterly impractical, internally inconsistent, and hopelessly complex”; after writing it, “Tucker turned his back on such reformist projects” and in later years “seemed to come to terms with slavery, embracing it, and encouraging his children to do so.”²¹

Thomas Roderick Dew, an economist nationally eminent in the 1830’s and 40’s, became the College’s president in 1836. Dew is today largely forgotten at William and Mary, but he was a vigorous apologist for slavery. Eugene Genovese comments that Dew moved arguments supporting slavery “from the defense of a necessary evil to the assertion of a positive good.”²² Dew thought such “maxims that ‘all men are born equal,’ that ‘slavery in the abstract is wrong,’ that ‘the slave has a natural right to regain his liberty’” to be “inapplicable and mischievous.”²³ He wrote to William H. Harrison (October 18, 1838) that he was “glad to find that you agree with me on the subject of slavery. Every day convinces me of its blessings in southern latitudes. I think you are right in regard to Liberia--Man cannot be uplifted from barbarism to civilization without the aid of slavery--All history demonstrates this proposition.”²⁴

American Republic, 17:3 (October 1997); available at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/crapol.htm>.

²¹ Finkelman, pp. 1213, 1217; 1216. Finkelman provides other details on Tucker’s involvement with and attitudes towards slavery as well as an analysis of the *Dissertation*. For family correspondence, see Mary Haldane Coleman, *Virginia Silhouettes: Contemporary Letters Concerning Negro Slavery in the State of Virginia* (Richmond: Dietz, 1934).

²² *Western Civilization Through Slaveholding Eyes: The Social and Historical Thought of Thomas Roderick Dew* (New Orleans: The Graduate School of Tulane University, 1986), p. 1. See too Clyde A Haulman and William J. Hausman, “Political Economy at the College of William and Mary,” *Essays in Economic and Business History: volume VII, Selected Papers*, ed. Edwin J. Perkins [Los Angeles]: History Department, University of Southern California, 1988, pp. 110-123; the article is available at <http://www.wm.edu/economics/history.php>. Christopher M. Curtis offers a contextualizing of Dew’s arguments in a 1997 M.A. Thesis at Virginia Tech, “Can These be the Sons of Their Fathers?: The Defense of Slavery in Virginia, 1831-1832”; the abstract and preface are available at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-4744152149731401/unrestricted/ETD.PDF>. Dew at one time seemed to have a more liberal view (see Godson et al, I, 250).

²³ “Thomas R. Dew, ‘Abolition of Negro Slavery,’ September and December 1832,” in Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed., *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1996), p. 118.

²⁴ The letter is in the Swem Archives and is quoted at

Although Dew died in 1846 in Paris and was buried there, in 1939 the College had his remains exhumed and re-interred in the Wren Crypt. At an elaborate service, Dew was eulogized in glowing terms: “The work of his head and heart was not in vain.... Servant of God, well done!”²⁵



Wren Chapel, late March 1939: lowering the coffin of Thomas Roderick Dew (1802-1846)

William and Mary faculty in these decades before the Civil War were among the leaders in defending slavery--the College was “a stronghold of Southern principles.”²⁶ The Professor of Law here (and later a secessionist novelist) from 1834 was Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, who held as an ideal “a society of communities guided by gentry of talent and breeding, acting on the principle of noblesse oblige”; in this world, “masters and slaves [would be] bound

<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaead/published/wm/viw00066.xml.frame>.

²⁵ *The Flat Hat*, April 4, 1939, p. 1. Details of the exhumation and re-interment are in Dew’s file in the Swem Archives; for photographs see the series beginning from “old photograph” at <http://www.pastportal.com/Archive/Research%20Reports/Html/RR0197.htm>. Dew was still being honored in the 1930’s by the Economics Club, which bore his name. The William and Mary Alumni Society speaks glowingly of him:

<https://alumni.wm.edu/history/index.shtml>.

²⁶ Godson, et al., I, 265. Such views as Dew’s were not always well received, even in Virginia (see Chapman, “Totten.” p. 27; see too pp. 84-85, n2). Chapman, in “Ewell,” suggests that “the extreme views of Dew and [Beverley] Tucker” led to a decline in enrollment at the College and that most of the students, as sons of Virginia’s Whigs, “presumably looked with disfavor on these views” (p. 82). Certainly the students protested the appointment of Archibald Peachy, one of Dew’s followers: “a group of students with

together by mutual affection, by benevolent care and protection on one side and devoted obedience on the other.”²⁷ A visitor to the Tucker home (today’s St. George Tucker House) penned a memoir of a charmed evening and the skills of one of Tucker’s slaves, “an elegant old negro servant,” “a grey-headed Ganymede.”²⁸ The visitor felt he had stepped back to a nobler time, “steeped in dreamy traditions” (see Godson, et al., I, 257, 258). A faculty colleague commented of Tucker’s 20 slaves that they “were made as happy as dependents could possibly be”:

Every want was attended to. He [Tucker] was as courteous and polite to his servants as to his equals and took great care never to wound their feelings, thinking it especially mean to insult or abuse those who could not resent it. It was a beautiful sight to contemplate when he came from his room usually about ten o’clock in the morning and walked around his premises to see his servants at their several occupations. His long flowing gray hair, his handsome and venerable countenance beaming with benevolence, his cordial good morning to all reminded one of the patriarchs of Old. Slavery under such a master seemed no bondage and was not felt to be such. They never spoke of him but with veneration nor seemed for a moment to distrust either his wisdom or his goodness.
(Godson, et al., I, 258)

Living across the Palace Green in the Wythe House, Professor John Millington, of Millington Hall fame, seems somewhat less patriarchal. A distinguished English scientist, Millington taught here until 1848 and sometimes amused himself in cruel ways. George F. Holmes, who in 1847-1848 taught history and political economy at William and Mary, reports that local blacks thought Millington “in habitual collusion” with the devil.²⁹ He relates that when “little magnetic batteries” were developed for “electro-magnetic cures,” Millington

blackened faces [emphasis added], beating on tin pans and ringing cow bells, staged a midnight protest at the Peachy residence” (p. 84).

²⁷ Godson, et al., I, 256. For an elaboration of this idyllic relationship, see Tucker’s “An Essay on the Moral and Political Effect of the Relation between the Caucasian Master and the African Slave,” *Southern Literary Messenger* (June 1844), [329]-339; (August 1844), 470-480. Tucker was “one of the stars in the proslavery firmament” (Godson, et al, I, 255).

²⁸ This is perhaps John Sparks, “Old John,” Judge Tucker’s “dining room servant” (Robert S. Bright, *Memories of Williamsburg and Stories of My Father* [Richmond: n.p., 1941], pp. 19, 20).

²⁹ For more on John Millington, see the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (on-line). The details here come from George F. Holmes, “Professor John Millington, M.D. 1779-1868,” *William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine*, 2nd Series, 3:1 (January 1923), 23-35; see p. 30. I am grateful to Louise Kale for bringing this article to my attention.

threw a gold piece and the handle of one of the cords into a basin of water, offering the money to any little darkey who could extract it, while holding the handle of the other cord. Many, between the ages of 12 and 18 made the trial with confidence; none succeeded in seizing the half-eagle. As the free hand touched the water, it was thrown out by the electrical discharge, while by strengthening the current, the other hand was tightened on the handle which it grasped and which it was unable to drop. The personal experience reported by the amassed and disappointed crew, and, magnified with every fresh transmission, satisfied the negro mind of the reality of the demoniac arts ascribed to the operator.

The cross in the Wren Chapel memorializes Millington.

Beverly Tucker seemed amused at Millington's slide from early principles: "experience has convinced him (an English radical and friend of [the abolitionist] Lord Brougham) of the superior advantage of living in a country whose institutions are based on domestic slavery."³⁰ When Millington left the College, he went to help establish the University of Mississippi, where Holmes was the first president.³¹

Some measure of what Holmes, who had come to William and Mary through the "personal influence" of John Tyler,³² taught at the College is the affirmation by the pro-slavery writer George Fitzhugh that Holmes had anticipated Fitzhugh's "fundamental theories during certain lectures given at William and Mary in 1847" (Wish, p. 352).³³ Holmes had written in the 1840's articles for the *Southern Literary Messenger* "excoriating abolitionist literature"

Lavonne Tarleton notes of Millington that he "was a real Southerner. He kept slaves, hoped for a war between England and the United States in order to take the pressure off the South, [and] hoped for a Southern victory when the Civil War did come" ("John Millington, Civil Engineer and Teacher, 1779-1868," M.A. Thesis, The College of William and Mary, 1966, p. 68). Millington returned to the Wythe House from time to time, keeping his furniture and some 4000 books there in the care of a slave, described as a "servant" in a letter of October 10, 1850 (Tarleton, p. 64).

³⁰ The letter is dated November 3, 1836 (Stephen S. Mansfield, "Thomas Roderick Dew: Defender of the Southern Faith," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1968, p. 123n).

³¹ Millington had earlier turned down a job offer in the North; life in a slave owning society was just easier (see Mansfield, p. 123).

³² See Harvey Wish, "George Frederick Holmes and Southern Periodical Literature of the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Southern History*, 7:3 (August 1941), 347. Holmes resigned from William and Mary "following a quarrel with the Board of Visitors over a professorial duel" (Wish, p. 344). After a short stay at Mississippi, Holmes joined the University of Virginia, where he remains an honored figure.

and in his 1852 review of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* he could not “for Harriet Beecher Stowe... find sufficient terms of vituperation” (Wish, p. 349).

In 1849, a new Professor of Moral Philosophy, Silas Totten, joined the Faculty--from the North. There was some concern that he might be “tainted with abolitionism,” but after an investigation he was hired; his views “were not inconsistent with those held by many Virginians: slavery was wrong, but virtually impossible to get rid of, and as long as it persisted the relationship between the races was probably the best possible under the circumstances” (Godson, et al., I, 281; 326, n89; see too p. 258).³⁴

Another faculty member new in 1849 was Henry A. Washington, whose writings “reflect strong pro-slavery and anti-unionist sentiments” (Chapman, “Totten, p. 28).³⁵ He was “a disciple” of Dew and Tucker, “heavily influenced by the[ir] social and biblical defenses of slavery” (p. 91, n16).

A succeeding president (between 1854 and 1888), Benjamin Ewell, was a complicated man. He was a Unionist, but like most of the faculty was an officer in the Confederate Army, in which many students also served.³⁶ Ewell was

³³ For Fitzhugh's doctrines (and presumably Holmes') see

<http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/faculty/hodgson/Courses/city/fitzhugh/george.html>.

³⁴ Chapman, in “Totten,” includes Totten's recollection of his interrogation (pp. 44-45). Totten, who left William and Mary to become the first president of the University of Iowa, was convinced that “the blacks must always be the servile class” and that “their greatest security against oppression and abuse is to make them property and thus put them under the protection of a master” (p. 44). A possible chance at the Presidency of the College was complicated when he was accused of being sympathetic to abolition; the students rallied in support: “Dr. Totten is as free from the taints of abolitionism as we feel and know ourselves to be” (p. 161, n2).

³⁵ Washington's diaries and a manuscript essay, “The Abolition of Slavery,” are in Swem's Archives (Chapman, “Totten,” p. 41, n58).

³⁶ See Sean Michael Heuvel, “The Old College Goes to War: The Civil War Experiences of William and Mary Students, Faculty, and Alumni,” M.A. Thesis, University of Richmond (2006); his article on the students is forthcoming in the *Virginia Social Science Journal*, 42(2007), 32-48. Heuvel draws attention to Ewell's being “bitterly opposed [to] secession” and his difficulties in dealing with the students (p. 14; see too Chapman, “Ewell,” p. 125).

One professor, Edwin Taliaferro, “organized secessionist activity among his students”; and students were allowed to form a militia in January 1861. They raised a “secession flag” before Fort Sumter was fired on (see Peter S. Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005], pp. 127, 130, 139). Ewell emphasized that “no secession flag had ever flown from the college buildings” (Chapman, “Ewell,” p. 216; see too p. 125 for his support of a anti-secession speech by a student).

In 1863 a conference was called to consider new textbooks for the Confederacy and to explore “the best means for supplying the necessary text-books for schools and colleges,

instrumental in building the series of redoubts just east of town; the main source of labor was slaves,³⁷ including the College's. But after the war, Ewell was quoted in *The True Southerner* as "in favor of Negro suffrage" (24 November 1865);³⁸ Chapman notes Ewell's "strong support for Negro suffrage and the establishment of schools for former slaves" ("Ewell," p. 175), though Williamsburg was largely hostile to the idea.³⁹

and for uniting their efforts for the advancement of education in the Confederacy": "A communication was read from E. T. [sic] Joynes, Prof. Greek Literature, William and Mary's College, Virginia, containing some valuable suggestions in relation to the object and aims of the Association, and the best method of accomplishing them" (see

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/teachers/teachers.html>). Joynes alone among the Faculty did not join the Confederate Army, but he was the "chief clerk for the Confederate Bureau of War" and developed "a cordial friendship" with Robert E. Lee (Heuvel, p. 38).

³⁷ See Earl C. Hastings, Jr. and David Hastings, *A Pitiless Rain: The Battle of Williamsburg, 1862* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane, 1997), pp. 43, 45. At one time, Ewell impressed "all able-bodied slaves, and free Negroes, in the vicinity of Williamsburg" (Chapman, "Ewell," p. 132).

³⁸ I am grateful to Stephanie Heinatz who mentioned Ewell's support for black suffrage in a *Daily Press* article, July 29, 2006, p. A5, and who subsequently sent me the date.

Not surprisingly, Ewell possibly and faculty members certainly owned slaves; see for example entries in the Bucktrout Daybook and Ledger (Swem Library): "Jan 27 1862 Mr Joines [probably Professor Edward S. Joynes] Paid by Vest Paid to makeing a small coffin a child at Mr Euwells and dug grave for same 5.00" (perhaps the child was owned by William Vest, a local merchant, or by Joynes, and hired out to Ewell); "August 5 1862 Mr Blane for Mrs Morrisson professors wife to makeing a coffin for black child dug grave and carried it to the ground 8.00 Insolvent"; "Decr 30 1862 Mrs Morrisson to a coffin for old black woman (Bethia) 10.00 to grave for same 2.00 to conveyance to ground 1.00 Insolvent."

Though faculty-owned slaves would likely have been buried close to where they died, the question of where College slaves were buried for some 170 years is open; presumably the campus has somewhere on it whatever might remain of a slave burial ground. Zech notes that in 1766 the College expended 5 /- for a coffin for a black child (p. 66).

³⁹ Laura Smith Haviland, in *A Woman's Life-Work* (Chicago: Publishing Association of Friends, 1889; rpt. Arno Press, 1969), pp. 407-418, describes local black schools immediately after the war, including large ones in Williamsburg's "old slave-pens" (p. 412) and at Fort Magruder; "to the horror of many Williamsburg residents, [Ewell] welcomed teachers sent by the Friends' Association of Philadelphia and pledged his full support for their efforts" (Chapman, "Ewell," p. 175). In 1866, Williamsburg residents suspected that "teachers in the Quaker schools for freedmen were setting blacks against white citizens" (Chapman, "Ewell," p. 182).

The teachers Ewell supported (who are also mentioned in Haviland) can now be identified: Margaret Thorpe details her and Martha Haines' efforts in an impoverished Williamsburg deeply hostile to Yankees--and to educating blacks. Already the Ku Klux Klan was locally active (see Richard L. Morton, "Life in Virginia, by a 'Yankee Teacher,' Margaret Newbold Thorpe," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 64:2[April 1956], 180-207). At this time too, Ewell "insisted that Pauline, his only remaining Negro servant whom he had taught to read and write, conduct a school for Negroes" (Chapman, "Ewell," pp. 175-176).

Indeed, the evidence in Anne W. Chapman's biography is of a man sympathetic to blacks. His nurse had been a free mulatto woman whom he remembered "as one of the greatest influences in his life" (p. 23). Ewell "deplored the effects of slavery on both whites and blacks" and thought it "responsible, at least in part, for Virginia's economic decline and detrimental to her future industrial growth" (p. 66). At the President's House, he employed not his own slaves, but "three hired servants,"⁴⁰ to the apparent irritation of his mother (who lived with him), "who favored the reopening of the slave trade" (p. 107).⁴¹ Similarly he ran his farm with "a white manager and a score of hired slaves" (p. 110).⁴²

After the war, Ewell found himself attacked as an Abolitionist when he urged "acceptance of defeat, a policy of moderation, and quick reunion as the best paths to Virginia's future" (pp. 174, 173); he urged Virginians to get used to "waiting on themselves rather than being waited on a by a reverential and obsequious darky" (p. 175).

In 1867, seeking federal reparations for the burning of the Wren Building, Ewell included among the affidavits one from a freed slave (p. 181). He argued at one point that federal support would allow the College to "help supply the teachers so desperately needed by both blacks and whites" (p. 211).⁴³ The

⁴⁰ After the war, in reduced circumstances, Ewell had as an attendant at the President's House, "a teen-aged Negro servant, Robert Rush" (p. 245). When the College was closed, Ewell was driven in each day by "Malachi Gardiner, a black tenant farmer who shared his acreage and whom he called 'The Professor'" (p. 277) and to whom Ewell was devoted (Bright, p. 18). Elizabeth Woolsey Gilman and her husband, the President of Johns Hopkins, visited Williamsburg in 1887; she describes Gardiner in more detail and also speaks of "an old colored woman who seemed to be the sole guardian" of the College (see Parke Rouse, Jr., *Remembering Williamsburg: A Sentimental Journey Through Three Centuries* [Richmond: Dietz Press, 1989], p. 103).

⁴¹ Ewell's marriage was a disaster and his wife had left him, in part, one faculty foe alleged, because he took a mulatto as a mistress (p. 97): "rumor would have it that he kept a mulatto woman for his mistress. This woman was his slave and his housekeeper and dressed much above her condition. I do not think he had religious principle enough to restrain him from such conduct and what was worse the students generally believe the rumor true" (Chapman, "Totten," p. 80).

⁴² Later, when the farm was run by his son-in-law, Beverley Scott, he was concerned that Scott "persisted in treating the Negroes he hired as though they were still slaves" (p. 246).

⁴³ Ewell's seeking funds from the Commonwealth was complicated once by a rumor (which he denied) that students from the College, organized as "Wise's infantry," "had disrupted a racially mixed Republican meeting in Williamsburg" (p. 214; see too *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, February 24, 1872, p. 96). In Congress federal reparations failed

President of Hampton Institute praised Ewell as “liberal, polite, and kind” and singled out his support of black schools, even at “much sacrifice of his comfort” (p. 213). One newspaper attacked Ewell’s support for U. S. Grant and said Ewell “had suggested Negro students be received at William and Mary,” which he denounced as “a malicious falsehood” (pp. 219, 220).

And in fighting off frequent attempts to move the College, Ewell reassured those who feared racial conflict locally, telling “the public that Williamsburg’s black population had been and would remain docile and orderly” (p. 183); in 1872, he again suggested that “relations in Williamsburg between the races ... were ... good” (Chapman, “Ewell,” p.216). The College welcomed blacks and whites alike to its Commencement festivities. At the 1855 Commencement, held July 4 and with Ewell presiding, there was included at 1 p.m. “a picnic dinner in the College Yard attended by all the townspeople, black and white” (Chapman, “Totten,” p. 164, n4). William Robert Garrett describes this part of his own graduation day, July 4, 1858, in detail,⁴⁴ explaining that “the entire population of the city and vicinity, and the entire student body gathered around the tables—and such tables!” (p. 254). Each student was expected, with his belle, “to take many courses at different tables, and pay in full at each” (p. 255): “a great revenue flowed into her [each family’s black cook’s] treasury from the dinner fees, and from generous donations” (p. 254). Moreover,

there was an unwritten law that none of the viands should be left. This accorded with the injunction at the sacred feast, ‘Eat ye all of it.’ This injunction was fully provided for. The entire colored population was in attendance as well as the white. Those accustomed to house service were employed to wait upon the table. The ‘corn-field niggers’ stood in groups upon the outskirts, their faces amiable with the pleasures of anticipation. They knew that ‘there’s a good time a-comin’,’ as soon as the white folks were through. When the signal was given, they hastened to the tables, free of charge. Here they performed their duty nobly, and when they were through, nothing remained.

(p. 255)

once when an amendment was attached “calling on ... [William and Mary] to open its doors to colored students” (*The New York Times*, February 18, 1873, p. 1), perhaps a sardonic commentary on Ewell’s apparent sympathies; see too the issue of December 14, 1872, p. 6).

⁴⁴ “William and Mary College in 1858,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 10 (April 1902), 251-257.

One document rich in suggesting the racial attitudes among at least some William and Mary students in the middle of the 19th century is *The Owl*, a satirical newspaper (apparently one issue only) that appeared in January 1854.⁴⁵ Its four pages take up racial matters time and again, with several jabs at Horace Greeley, the abolitionist, and a mocking “Ethiopian Dialogue” between a student and a college slave, Greenough (possibly, and, if so, cruelly, named after George Greenough the English geologist and “liberal politician of the school of Bentham, Romilly and Horner, who supported such radical policies as universal suffrage, abolition of the monarchy and a ban on slavery”).⁴⁶

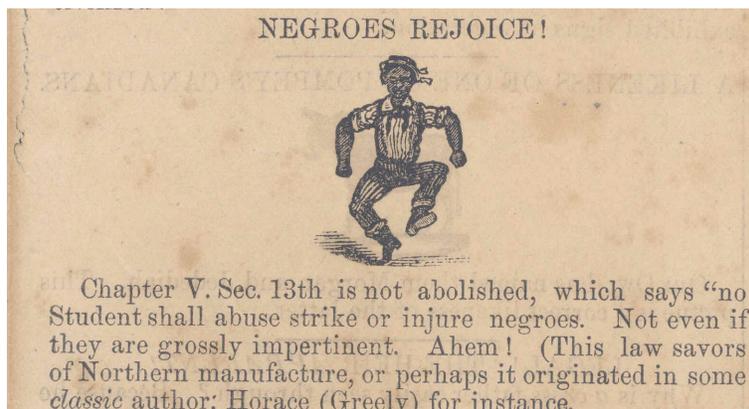
Two other items in *The Owl* are striking. “The Horrors of Slavery in Black and White” pictures the difference in servitude South and North. One engraving, “Black,” shows (purportedly “in the neighborhood of William and Mary and other Southern Colleges”) a group of slaves dancing amidst joy and plenty; the other, “White,” shows (purportedly “in the neighborhood of Yale and other Northern Colleges”) a white woman painfully making a shirt in penury and cold.



⁴⁵ The only known copy is in the Swem Archives; I am grateful to Bob Maccubbin for drawing it to my attention. That Benjamin Ewell became president in this year may explain why no further issues appear to have been published.

⁴⁶ On Greenough, see <http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/learning/htmls/bucktrip.htm>.

“Negroes Rejoice!” depicts a black dancing a jig because a College rule⁴⁷ that “no Student shall abuse strike or injure negroes[’]” is still in force. To which the writer responds, “Not even if they are grossly impertinent. Ahem!,” and suggests a Northern influence.



According to a former student, Professor John Lesslie Hall, one of the Seven Wise Men hired at the reopening of the College in 1888, “frequently repeated ... [sic] advice to ‘never look too far up your family tree—you might find a coon sitting on one of the limbs.’”⁴⁸ A story by Charles Higdon Lambert in the 1899 *Colonial Echo*, “In Time of War,” features a stereotypical “Uncle Moses” (pp. 106-112).

Race relations since the 19th century have continued complex and sometimes ugly into more recent times. In the 1920’s, after Virginia’s notorious 1924 racial purity laws, an Anglo-Saxon Club appears to have been founded at the College.⁴⁹ At its meeting of June 9, 1924, the Board of Visitors was informed of “some difficulty in quartering and controlling the negro help” and concurred in “the need of some kind of quarters for the housing of his [the Steward’s] negro

⁴⁷ See Godson, et al., I, 326 for notes to several editions of the College’s “Laws and Regulations” (1849, “1853 or 1854,” 1855).

⁴⁸ Rouse, p. 122. Hall’s devotion to the South is clear in his *Half-Hours in Southern History* (Richmond: B. F. Johnson, [1907]).

⁴⁹ Joanne Braxton brought to my attention a sermon by Rev. Jennifer Youngsun Ryu, Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists, April 1, 2007, which mentions “a network of Anglo-Saxon clubs, including one at William and Mary.” Amy Schindler tells me that the Club’s being organized is mentioned in *The Flat Hat* and that Archives has a photograph of a

servants”; it appears too that the Board thought such improved control and “bringing in outside employees” could reduce costs. In developing College Terrace, the minutes of July 1, 1927 record, the Board restricted sales to “every professor and white employee at the College.” Fred Frechette recalls in his recent memoir that when he arrived at William and Mary in 1942, Jim Crow ruled. He also remembers at the corner of Jamestown Road and Boundary Street the “ornate flag pole and brickwork”⁵⁰ presented to the College by the Ku Klux Klan in 1926. During the era of massive resistance, when all state agencies were required to fly not just the American flag but also the Virginia flag, the KKK’s pole did service at James Blair Hall.⁵¹

In Swem’s Archives an essay by Trudier Harris (William and Mary’s first African-American faculty member, in 1973⁵²) recalls “Doc” Billups, Wren custodian and bell ringer, who held the job from 1888 to 1955, the record for employment at William and Mary. Named a Doctor of Boozology, Doc Billups supplied liquor to all, including students. In Homecoming parades (in which students in blackface sometimes marched), Doc Billups rode in a special car. But the affection showered on him was often patronizing and mixed with mockery.⁵³

group “described as possibly the Anglo-Saxon Club.” The index term for *The Flat Hat* would be “minority affairs” or “minority issues.”

⁵⁰ *Williamsburg: My Town* (Richmond: Dietz Press, 2006), p. 57.

⁵¹ Imparted to me by Thad Tate, Fall 2006. A *Flat Hat* article on the move (March 10, 1959) in the Archive’s “Flags” folder edges towards mentioning Massive Resistance, but doesn’t quite. No flag had been flown on the KKK pole since 1941, when, President Chandler, explained “the halyards on the mast were broken” (one might read this inability to make a repair as a rebuke to the KKK).

⁵² Trudier tells me that the Faculty included one other person of color then, Louis Noisin, a Haitian teaching in French, Anthropology, and Government.

⁵³ The Harris typescript is in Billups’ extensive file, Swem Archives. The quotation assigned to Billups in the 1899 *Colonial Echo* hints at the mixed tone he elicited: “I am not in the roll of common men.’ –Shakespeare.” Billups (May 6, 1872-July 11, 1955) is buried at Cedar Grove Cemetery. A picture of him being “honored in the homecoming parade of 1952” appears in Chris Dickon, *College of William and Mary* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2007), p. 67 (the cover of Dickon’s book reproduces a well-known photograph of Billups in the College library [located then at the southeast corner of the Wren Building]; Dickon dates the photo to 1888, but Louise Kale tells me that “Ann Madonia has identified the lady in the photo as Emily Christian, who was hired as college librarian in 1902”). A picture of Billups in his last parade, 1954, is in Kale, p. 174. On his 72nd birthday, Billups was fondly saluted by *The Flat Hat* (May 6, 1942, p. 1, col. 4; see too May 10, 1944, p. 4, col. 3-5 for another birthday salute. Billups is saluted too in the issue of May 9, 1945, p. 10, col. 2). Jerome Hyman (Class of ’44) writes me (after reading a draft of part of this piece),

Rouse quotes from a student's recollections of "President Lyon Gardiner Tyler one night asking Doc Billups ... to go out to the sundial in front of the President's House to see what time it was. When Doc protested that it was dark, Dr. Tyler told him to get a lantern and go see anyway" (p. 123).

I also remember Doc Billups very well. I thought of him as a very distinguished and respected gentleman, and don't recall any views to the contrary. If I recall correctly, there used to be some ceremony every year (I believe at the grave of a former president or at least a memorial to him [probably the grave of Benjamin Ewell]) in which Doc. Billups played an important part.

(e-mail to the author, August 31, 2007; Swem Archives)

Morpurgo, who is sympathetic to the plight of blacks in the South, says straightforwardly that Billups was, after President Bryan, "the most revered character on the William and Mary campus" but could not see any of his children educated here (p. 7).

Morpurgo also cites as debate topics among fraternity members "the comparative sensual abilities of negress and white girl" and "recurring like the insistent chorus of a nursery rhyme, the justice of the Civil War and Reconstruction" (p. 167). Morpurgo's chapter "To Live and Die in Dixie" captures something of the attitudes of a roommate, Duke, from Maryland (pp. 168-180); he later examines "the negro problem" in America (pp. 182-196). One student's extraordinary dedication to Southern and racist values is detailed in *The Flat Hat*, March 7, 1950, p. 11, col. 1; pride of place in his library goes to *Negroes and Negro Slavery: The First An Inferior Race: The Latter Its Normal Condition*.

Blackface at the 1947 Homecoming parade is illustrated at <http://www.geocities.com/quantpsy/williamsburg/other/other200.htm>. For other examples of blackface at the College, see the 1932 *Colonial Echo* (p. 203) and "Sorority Shin-digs" in the 1943 *Colonial Echo*. The 1925 *Colonial Echo* records the formation of a "Girls' Minstrel Troupe" and the success of its production, which featured a "rag doll dance" and a "colored quartette" (p. 206).

Black entertainers did play at College dances at least once, as when Jimmie Lunceford and his band were featured at the 1945-46 "midwinters, profusion of orchids, tails and white ties, everyone having fun" (1946 *Colonial Echo*, pp. 243-244; Lunceford is pictured at p. [59], in Blow Gym; see *The Flat Hat*, November 28, 1945, p. 1, cols. 4-5, and December 5, 1945, p. 1, cols. 1-2, two of several mentions).



Henry Billups (1899 *Colonial Echo*)



Henry Billups (1942 *Colonial Echo*)

Mockery is apparent too in the title, recalling the Indian School, to a sketch of one of the workers in the Brafferton, “A Brafferton Warrior” (*Colonial Echo*, 1899):



In the 1912 *Colonial Echo*, “E. B. J.” mocked a food-server in “At the Commons”:

‘What will you have, Sir?’ said the waiter
 --Ah, how he smiled, black alligator!--
 As he posed a sweet pertater
 On a spoon.

.....

So off that grinning waiter hurried
 Rather shuffled, crawled, and tarried
 Till I thought he must be buried
 In the dregs.

Racial indignities continued into living memory. In 1945, the editor of *The Flat Hat*, Marilyn Kammerle, was removed when she supported integration and inter-racial marriage (“Lincoln’s Job Half-Done,” *The Flat Hat*, February 7, 1945, p. 8, col. 1).⁵⁴ A student protested a dozen male students reducing a black girl to

⁵⁴ See Godson et al., II, 766. Morpurgo notes that the incident was covered in the English press (p. 54). See too *The New York Times*, February 12, 1945, p. 21. The *Times* noted that most students appeared not to support the editorial and that President Pomfret reported the view of the Board of Visitors—that the College was “supported by and a part of the State and that when it [the editorial] aroused the community, great harm was done” (February 13, 1945, p. 25). Racial matters came up several times in *The Flat Hat* over the rest of the semester, e.g., discussions of minority problems (February 28, 1945, p. 4, cols. 4-5; April 18, 1945, p. 3, col. 1) and a speaker against the poll tax (April 11, 1945, p. 1, col. 1).

The mention in the College history of canceling a match with Dartmouth because its team included a black player (see *The New York Times*, March 27, 1947, p. 37) reminds me that Wayne Kernodle, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, feared some turmoil when he

tears with their harassing remarks (*The Flat Hat*, October 11, 1944, p. 8, col. 3). The College's first black undergraduate, in 1963, Oscar Blayton, recently recalled his chilly reception here, especially from the College's president.⁵⁵ And in 1975, the Board of Visitors refused the Law School permission to hire Jeroyd X. Greene, a black attorney.⁵⁶ Up until sometime in the 1970's (or later) the Kappa Alpha Order would parade around campus in Confederate uniforms and under a Confederate flag.⁵⁷ For some years a member of the Sociology department, Vernon Edmonds, roiled the campus with reported claims of blacks' inferiority. More recent was a bake sale, November 8, 2003, sponsored by the "Sons of Liberty" to provoke discussion about affirmative action; blacks could buy cookies for less than whites and other races; one of the participants played "Ghettopoly" at the time.⁵⁸ Max Fisher recently reported in a *Flat Hat* column a "hostility towards minorities" here that includes blacks: "if you are not white, Christian and straight then you do not always feel welcome at the College" (September 11, 2007).

Among "the worst," of course, "the better" also stands out. That brave stance by the fired *Flat Hat* editor appears to have been but one in a series of examples in the newspaper of both tolerance and impatience with American and

wanted to play tennis on college courts with two local blacks, "the number 1 black doubles team in the U.S." (*The Tatler* [newsletter of Williamsburg Landing], 22:1 [January 2007], 19). On the cancelled Dartmouth match, a W&M student berated the College for the racist act (*The Flat Hat*, April 1, 1947, p. 2, cols. 1-2).

The allusion on p. 767 to John Hope Franklin's attendance at the American Historical Society meeting here needs a comment. Thad Tate told me that Franklin was allowed to attend sessions and eat with his peers, but was refused a room at the Williamsburg Inn; he was invited by the editor of the *William and Mary Quarterly*, Douglass Adair, to stay at his home.

⁵⁵ *Virginia Gazette*, January 17, 2007, p. 20A. The first black students at the College, Hulon L. Willis and Edward A. Travis, enrolled in 1951, as post-graduate students (Godson, et al., II, 767; see *The New York Times*, May 2, 1951, p. 34.).

⁵⁶ Godson, et al., II, 860-861. I recall that faculty members collected money to give to Greene the equivalent of the first year's salary he had to forgo.

⁵⁷ Sam Sadler tells me that "the practice ended sometime I would say in the late 70's with strong pressure from several of us and, I might add, good support from the national organization which by then had taken its own stance on the matter." I think the parades may have gone on longer (as Sam subsequently agreed) since I can recall one I saw from my Tucker office, where I've been since 1982. The Southern heritage of Kappa Alpha Order is germane: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kappa_Alpha_Order. Kale mentions the local chapter's "'Old South' celebrations" (p. 153).

Southern shortcomings. For example, in 1940, a student evoked the Klan gift in a sardonic review of *Gone with the Wind* (March 12, 1940 p. 4, col. 2). And in a satire section for the issue of May 20, 1941, students in KKK hoods sit at the pole and are quoted as approving lynchings, a clumsy but clear protest against racism (p. [1], col. 7):



In a similar vein, an “Open letter to America” in the same issue satirizes white jingoists in an ironic attack on Indians: “America [is] for white skins” (p. 4, cols. 5-6).⁵⁹ A *Flat Hat* editorial denounced the poll tax that barred ten million Southern blacks from voting, comparing it to Germany’s “terrible persecution of minorities” (November 5, 1940, p. 4, col. 1).⁶⁰ Two editorial decisions suggest sympathy to the plight of blacks. One was to run a wire story on lynchings (April 29, 1942, p. 4, col. 3) and the other was to note the circulation on campus of a ministers’ petition protesting the treatment of “white farmers and poor, uneducated negroes” as the government rushed to create Camp Peary (December 1, 1942, p. 2, col. 5). A columnist, Jerry Hyman, denounced “race prejudice” and the “denial of equal rights to all citizens, regardless of race, or color,” suggesting that

⁵⁸ See Sarah Ingle, “Senate Hears from Sons of Liberty, Approves Bill,” *The Flat Hat*, November 21, 2003.

⁵⁹ Southern values are mocked in another satiric issue (May 20, 1947) and in 1950, an editorial chastised an administrator for a racist joke and commended students for their “utterly cold reception of it” (January 10, 1950, p. 2, col. 1).

⁶⁰ See too the brief mention in an editorial of May 6, 1941, p. 4, col. 2; the sustained attention May 13, 1941, p. 4, col. 1; the editorial on America’s imperfect democracy [“what does Armistice day mean... to the Negro”] in the issue of November 11, 1941, p. 4, col. 1; and the sparring of 2 students, March 9, 1948, p. 3, col. 3 and March 16, 1948, p. 2, col. 5. Race relations were good enough that in the May 6, 1941 *Flat Hat* is a picture and an account of Walter Kelley, a janitor in what is now Blair Hall, participating with faculty and students in a moot court trial (p. 6; see too p. 4, col. 5). For some information on the College’s maids, janitors (including Kelley), and bus drivers, see *The Flat Hat*, March 6,

America's "theory of race superiority" was not much different from Hitler's (May 3, 1944, p. 8, col. 5). When a local black merchant's store burned in 1896 William and Mary students rushed to help put the fire out.⁶¹ In November 1914, Booker T. Washington presented a "well-received" talk to "a large audience" in the College Chapel; classes had been cancelled and President Tyler introduced Washington "in glowing terms."⁶²

A 1902 graduate of the College, Jackson Davis, was instrumental in advancing education for blacks and better race relations, and was given an honorary degree by the College in 1931 (*The New York Times*, April 16, 1947, p. 25). The KKK gift itself was controversial and President Chandler rebuffed the KKK in his acceptance remarks even as he felt the College could not reject the gift.⁶³ A faculty member who left to become Governor, John Garland Pollard,

1946, p. 8, cols. 1-2; March 20, 1946, p. 9, cols. 1-2; March 4, 1947, p. 2, cols. 3-5; October 28, 1947, p. 2, col. 1; and February 21, 1950, p. 3, col. 1.

⁶¹ See Julia Woodbridge Oxrieder, *Rich, Black, and Southern: The Harris Family of Williamsburg (and Boston)*, 2nd printing (New Church, VA: Miona Publications, 1999), p. 8. The merchant, Samuel Jacob Harris, was the wealthiest man in town and loaned money to President Ewell in 1889 (p. 9).

⁶² *The Flat Hat*, November 17, 1914, p. 1, col. 2. An administrator at Hampton Institute, Robert Russa Moton, who had married a Williamsburg woman, wrote Washington the next week: "I spoke at Williamsburg to a packed house and afterwards talked with Prof. [Henry Eastman] Bennett [Professor of Philosophy and Education at the College, 1907-1925] and a number of the leading white people and they were very enthusiastic over your address." Moton emphasized that Washington's "being at William & Mary was one of the most significant incidents that has happened in the State for many years. The Virginians are very conservative as you know and William & Mary has been especially so" (*The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Louis R. Harlan, et. al., 14 vols. [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972-], 13:181). An earlier visit to Williamsburg had seen Washington speak briefly at the Courthouse to the Faculty and "a large number of students" (*The Flat Hat*, May 13, 1913, p. 4, col. 5).

The Cole papers in the Swem Archives contain an open letter (November 20, 1901) from the Rector of Bruton Parish Church attacking President Tyler for his daughter's attending Wellesley College where Washington's daughter was also a student: it is a "crime against society [akin to President Roosevelt's having dined with Washington at the White House] for the daughter of the President of William and Mary to sit down in the class room and at the dinner table with the daughter of Booker Washington. The daughter does this of course, with the knowledge and consent of her father." Tyler's defense to the Vestry (undated, also in the Cole papers): "the daughter of the President of William & Mary does not associate with the daughter of Booker Washington."

⁶³ The KKK gift and the healthy controversy it caused is discussed in Godson, et al., II, 612: John Stewart Bryan almost resigned from the Board of Visitors in protest and "in the early 1940's the [KKK] tablet was surreptitiously removed." The "Flags" folder in the Archives

refused to take credit for success in raising funds for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, because of what his family's black cook had taught him about the hard work of earlier generations (Rouse, p. 160). President John Stewart Bryan once announced staff raises differentiated by race. "Colored help" had "for a long time" been "greatly underpaid," to the point that their staying was "difficult to understand"; "fairness" led to a greater raise than that for the "white help" in the dining room.⁶⁴ Dean J. Wilfred Lambert recalled the number of black families who for generation after generation have had members working at William and Mary.⁶⁵ When Rector Dillard in 1940 died, he was praised in the *Flat Hat* for his "contributions to Negro education" and his "liberal heritage" (*Flat Hat*, September 24, 1940, p. 6, col. 6). An Easter service held in the Sunken Garden in 1943 was attended by students, servicemen, and "members of the community, both white and Negro" (*Flat Hat*, April 27, 1943, p. 7, col. 3). In 1948, a dozen students and one faculty member walked out of a local talk by Strom Thurmond, the segregationist and presidential candidate; others merely giggled.⁶⁶ In 1965, one student, Donna Truesdell, tutored black students blocked from public schools in Farmville, VA.⁶⁷

has rich material on the ceremony when the pole was accepted, including a newspaper printing of Chandler's powerful rebuke to the KKK and anonymous notes by someone attending: "all the Faculty were opposed to the acceptance [but] it couldn't be avoided." See too R. C. Rasmus, "The Ku Klux Klan's Mark on William and Mary," *The Virginia Informer*, September 19, 2007, p. 10.

In his memoir of studying at William and Mary in the 1930's J. E. Morpurgo, a student from England, comes back several times to the status of local blacks. He recalls that they could, at College Corner, "sun themselves on seats presented by the Ku Klux Klan and whistle 'Dixieland' while the flag of freedom mocks them, the unmockable, from the staff above their heads" (*American Excursion* [London: Cresset Press, 1949], p. 14). Kris Preacher directed me to Ed Belvin's account of President Chandler's handling of the KKK; Belvin reproduces a page from the program showing the flag and notes that the plaque suffered at the hands of William and Mary students many times (see *Growing Up in Williamsburg; from the Depression to Pearl Harbor* [n.p.: privately printed, rev. ed. 2003], pp. 69-70).

⁶⁴ See the May 27, 1939 minutes of the Board of Visitors, p. 462.

⁶⁵ Dean Lambert's recollections are in an oral history interview in Swem's Archives; Lambert recalled too a somewhat tense gathering of black workers at William and Mary when President Bryan invited them to socialize with the workers on his plantation.

⁶⁶ See the issue of October 12, 1948, p. 8, col. 1, where the protesters are chastised by a recent grad. The news account of the speech is extensive but does not mention the walkout. In a mock election, Thurmond received 18% of the student vote (November 2, 1948, p. 1, col. 1).

⁶⁷ *The New York Times*, August 1, 1965, p. 61.

And in recent decades the College has made serious efforts, dramatically increasing the diversity of students, faculty, and professional staff. It has strong equal employment policies, a dedication to multiculturalism, and a Presidential committee on diversity. From the late 1970's there have been appointed several effective Directors of Affirmative Action and professionals such as Carol Hardy who have moved the College forward.⁶⁸

Still, William and Mary has been called on to investigate its past connections with slavery.⁶⁹ Is it not time for that "full look at the worst"?

⁶⁸ Carol Hardy was recognized at an Arts and Sciences Faculty Meeting (December 6, 1988) for a "minority retention rate ... better than twice the national average." Other signs of progress include Medgar Evers speaking at the College "c. 1960" (see a photo, Dickon, p. 75) to an audience of blacks and whites (perhaps partly integrated, though mostly seated by race, it appears; Dickon also includes a picture of Anthony McNeal, the black president of the Student Association in 1985, who "worked toward policy positions on Affirmative Action" [p. 107]). Godson, et al. discuss the starts and stops of racial matters at the College; see II, 829-830, 855 (the appointment of the first black to the Board of Visitors, Henry T. Tucker, Jr., in 1978), 859-861,

⁶⁹ See the comment by Alfred L. Brophy, Professor of Law at the University of Alabama, in David Glenn, "Brown U. Announces Projects in Response to Report on Its Role in the Slave Trade," the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 26, 2007, available at <http://chronicle.com/daily/2007/02/2007022604n.htm>. See too Brophy's talk at William and Mary, "Considering a University Apology for Slavery: The Case of W&M President Thomas R. Dew," September 20, 2007, a draft of his essay in this issue of the *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal*. Brophy's sharp eye picked up part of the tribute to a professor of law here, Lucian Minor (1802-1858); the obelisk marking the grave where his remains were reburied in the College cemetery cites his "love for his race."

When, after Brophy's talk and after reading a draft of the present essay, a student introduced in the William and Mary Student Assembly a resolution calling on the College's Board of Visitors to apologize for the institution's involvement with slavery, two mocking resolutions were immediately introduced (see Sarah Nadler, "Bevy of Bills Considered in SA Senate," *The Virginia Informer*, October 24, 2007).