

bell for classes. As one news item described it, "the clanging awakened the students in the morning and it awakened them again at the end of each class throughout the day."⁵ Henry also rang the bell on various occasions of celebration.⁶ But Henry did other things in addition to ringing the bell. From 1888 to 1890, before he officially became janitor and bell ringer in the Wren Building, there are reports of Henry being responsible for the fires in the Wren Building and in students' rooms in the Brafferton and for carrying in wood and water. He is also reported to have worked in the dining hall. Bessie Billups Henderson, Henry's adopted daughter, recalled that "Poppa" used to give an extra piece of pie to a young man who would cry all the time because he was homesick. Although she could not remember his name, Mrs. Henderson chuckingly recalled that this homesick fellow later turned out to be a judge.⁷

Several other informants report that Henry was also the person who picked up mail from the local post office and brought it back to campus.⁸ A local dentist remembered walking with Henry to the post office when he was a student at William and Mary. He recalled Henry as a very friendly person, one who never failed to greet any student with a smiling hello. Mrs. Mabel Bowman, a 69 year-old lifelong resident of Williamsburg, also recalled Henry's mail carrying days. She recollected Henry walking down the street with the black mail bag, incessantly puffing on his cigar.⁹

In spite of how moderns may judge the status of his jobs, for Henry they were badges of honor which deserved an impeccable code of dress. He always wore shirts and ties no matter what he was doing. He was considered very "stylish in his clothes." Reputedly, his habit was to change from one set of clothing to another each day when he returned from work and before he joined other men in the neighborhood at the local gathering place.¹⁰ Not quite six feet

tall and looking painfully emaciated in his later years, Henry nevertheless maintained a reputation as a man to call on when a dapper dresser was needed. Mrs. Henderson recalled that because of his stylishness, he was asked to serve as best man in many weddings.¹¹ The community Henry Billups, however, is a slightly different story, and it is primarily his relationship to the College that we are concerned with here. Thus we shall return to the family and community personality later in this paper.

It is Henry Billups' relationship with the students at William and Mary which gives him his legendary status. Henry was affectionately known to the students as "Doc" Billups. He was also referred to as "Professor of Boozology" and "student advisor." Mrs. Clara Baker, an 88 year-old retired school teacher from the Williamsburg/James City County system, remembered that Henry had a "good relationship" with students. She said they always went to Henry for advice.¹² In the Alumni Gazette for 1952, Henry is listed as "student advisor."¹³ In other publications, he is referred to as "caretaker," "Fabled Bell Ringer," and "unofficial advisor."¹⁴

Students who graduated continued their connection with Henry by writing letters and sending greetings on special occasions. This was especially true on May 6 of each year, which was Henry's birthday. Mrs. Henderson said the cards and letters came from all over the United States. Although Mrs. Henderson had misplaced most of the material, this writer saw a letter from an alumnus at Greenville, South Carolina postmarked May 4, 1942. It congratulated Henry on his 70th birthday (He was born May 6, 1872) and remembered his "fidelity and patience during the years 1906 to 1910" when the writer was enrolled at William and Mary. The Alumni Gazette published other letters, some of which were simply addressed to "Dr. Henry Billups, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia."¹⁵ Henry was praised for the "splendid example" he had set for

students who attended William and Mary.

As Henry's relationship with the students grew, it became traditional for him to ride in a "chauffered convertible" "in every Homecoming parade" when most alumni would be returning to the College. The 1952 Gazette referred to above pictures Henry in his convertible. After Henry's death on July 11, 1955, Hugh DeSamper, an alumnus, wrote of Henry's lifetime of service to William and Mary.¹⁶ DeSamper lamented the absence in the following Homecoming parade of "one open, chauffered convertible" from which Henry had for years waved "his derby hat to friends and students." DeSamper also lamented the passing of another custom or tradition concerning Henry. Every ten years, starting in 1938, the Gazette had sponsored an article featuring Henry Billups. The next one due would have been in 1958 and, in accord with the series, would have been entitled "Seventy Years With Henry Billups."¹⁷ In December of 1955, the Society of the Alumni formulated a resolution expressing sorrow at the death of Henry Billups and published it in the Alumni Gazette and the local press.¹⁸

Many proverbial flowers were given before Henry's death, however. In 1948, the Society of the Alumni presented a testimonial certificate to Henry Billups, which reads in part as follows:

For sixty years his gracious and kindly friendship to those who have passed through the portals of this great College has endeared him to countless men and women. Through his unprecedented tenure he has become a tradition in his own right---certain to survive in the memory of all who knew him.

This certificate hangs on the wall of Mrs. Henderson's dining room in the house that Henry built on Cromwell Street (now Armistead Avenue) in 1927 and which the family still occupies.

In 1935, on Homecoming Day, "one hundred and thirty-two alumni, representing forty-one classes" presented Henry with a "watch, chain and ball." The gift was to complement Henry's bell ringing job. "The bell has a tiny clapper to

it and you can hear it tinkling as Henry approaches."¹⁹ An alumnus reported years later that Henry "lost the bell that same night while down on his knees rolling African dominoes at the Alumni Party. He recovered it later, only to lose it again some years later."²⁰

In the 1909 College Yearbook, The Colonial Echo, the students sponsored " in their "Jokes and Grinds" section a "Will of the Late Henry Billups" (pp. 129-30). Henry bequeathed various items to students at William and Mary. Although the matter can easily be classified as nonsense, the fact that a janitor rated such recognition is in itself exemplary of the particular acclaim given to Henry Billups. In another volume of The Colonial Echo, there is a line about Henry: "Men may go and men may come but I go on forever." In later years, Henry pointed to himself as one of the immutables of the College (once he cited the Wren Building, the Brafferton and himself as things unchanging at William and Mary).

There are also tales of someone in an official capacity, either alumni or other, who presented Henry with a broom in appreciation of his janitorial service to the College. The story first came from Mrs. Clara Baker, who recalled that Henry brought the broom to First Baptist Church in Williamsburg where they were both members. The minister "asked him to get up and explain what it was for." None of the informants connected with the College could remember the broom. However, when asked about it, Mrs. Henderson was able to describe it. She said the sweeping part was about two feet wide. The broom was gold and green, the colors of the College, and had a gold and green ribbon tied around it. Mrs. Henderson stated that the cumbersome thing was in the attic for years until she finally threw it out a few years ago.

In addition to the official actions of the Society of the Alumni, many are the tales that are told of its members when they were students and came

into contact with "Doc" Billups. One of the frequently recurring stories centers around students bringing cows into the Wren building as near to the belfry as possible and tying ropes around their tails or extending ropes from the cupola and tying them to the tails of cows grazing on the lawn. The effect was to have the bell ring all night and disturb anyone in the vicinity, which, usually happened to be anyone in the president's house, a matter of feet away. Henry came into the picture by being assigned responsibility for getting the cows out of the building or cutting ropes tied to tails of those outside. The shortest version of the story is summarized from Mrs. Henderson.

About the cows on campus. Students would take the cows to the Wren Building--up to the third floor and the bell tower. They would then tie the cow's rope to the bell and leave it there all night. The bell would ring every time the cow moved during the night. One time this kept President Tyler awake and he asked Poppa bright and early the next morning what was the matter. Then the cow had to be pushed and pulled down the stairs and out of the building.²¹

A fuller version comes from an alumnus of the College.

At the college back when I went there, every professor kept a cow for milking. The cows just ran around the campus, near the Wren Building. Well, there was this one time when W&M won an away football game. The administration had then promised the students a holiday, but at the last minute they called off the holiday. Now some of the boys were really mad because of this so they went into the Wren Building and took a long rope and put it out the back window of the belfry. Some of the cows were tied up with stakes outside the Wren Building so they tied the belfry rope to the tail of one of the cows. That bell rang every time a fly got on the cow's rear. The bell just kept ringing and ringing all night. Finally, when the janitors, Henry and Ernest, made their rounds, they undid the rope and the bell stopped ringing. Everybody thought the whole town was ready to burn down because the bell rang all night.²²

A story about Henry in the Alumni Gazette for December, 1934 mentioned that he liked "to tell of the time when the students use to tie the bell rope to Dr. Tyler's cow grazing at night on the campus."²³

Other stories of Henry and the bell report students stealing the clapper

or using some means other than cows to ring the bell in protest. "Henry was the butt," wrote Fred L. Frechette in "Sixty Years With Henry Billups" in March of 1948, "purposely or inadvertently, of pranks. No one could enumerate the number of times that the chapel has been filled with hay, the clapper stolen from the bell, cows or horses pastured on the second floor of Wren, or any number of other things done which have left Henry as scapegoat or to clean up the mess." The following is referred to in an earlier article as Henry's "big story about the bell."²⁴

. . . J. P. Gayle, '00, and others climbed into the belfry at night and started ringing the bell every few minutes. Finally Dr. Tyler, Mr. Bob Lee Spencer and others of the faculty and administration went to the second floor of the Wren Building and demanded that the students come down. When they refused and the watchers had waited for sometime Dr. Tyler ordered Henry to go up through the trap door and persuade them to come down. Henry obeyed but when he started to crawl through the trap door some student yelled that if he put his head through that door he would get it cut off. Henry beat a hasty retreat. The faculty watchers sat up all night and with their retreat cut off the students sought other means of escape. Some cut a hole through the ceiling of Dr. Wharton's room and lowered themselves by the bell rope. Others escaped via the lightning rod.²⁵

Henry reputedly told the story that "when the students were denied a holiday they had requested, they would steal the bell clapper so that he could not ring the call to classes but Dr. Tyler would make him ring it with a hammer."²⁶

Several stories put Henry in the position of drinking or of obtaining liquor for students. This is supposedly how he won the appellation, "Professor of Boozology." Henry reportedly hid his bottle under the steps of the Wren Building or in a closet and took little nips every now and then. There is also a story from one source (which no one else seems to be able to confirm) that Henry kept his bottle in the hollow of a tree in front of the Wren Building. Dr. Hall, one of the Seven Wise Men, was remembered as one of the first to say

Henry conducted classes in Boozology. He would post his grades on the door of the Wren Building just as other professors did. If anyone made a double F, that person could repeat Henry's course.²⁷ Henry ended his classes during Prohibition because of the "low quality of supplies."

An Alumni Gazette version of the same story about the class in Boozology differs in the grading process and the reason the class was ended.

. . . a sheet marked 'Boozology' was found on the board containing a list of the students accompanied by the grades they had attained in this subject. At the bottom of the sheet was appended the name, 'Doctor Billups.' On one such list, Henry gave only a 'D' to the late great Rear Admiral Cary Travers Grayson, '99x. But, says Henry: 'I gib him 'nother chance and de next term he done brought it up to a "A".' This posting of the grades in 'Boozology' continued until the advent of Prohibition when, Henry stated, the cost of 'laboratory equipment' became too high.²⁸

The fact that Henry liked to take "nips every now and then" was well known in the community and at William and Mary and, interestingly enough, time has not erased the delicacy with which people approach the subject. Mrs. Henderson was careful to point out that "Poppa was not a drunk" although he did keep liquor. He always told students that he was not a bootlegger, but he knew where to get whiskey. Thus they would give him their money and wait on campus while he disappeared a couple of blocks away. He always returned with whatever they wanted.

Informants revealed more detailed stories about Henry's drinking when they were sure such material would not be used to defile his memory or to reflect negatively upon the College. Dean Lambert reported that Henry got drunk every Saturday night and President Tyler would proceed to fire him. When Henry didn't show up on Monday and the bell wasn't ringing, President Tyler would send for him and re-instate him.²⁹ One of the bell ringers who succeeded him reported that Henry would get drunk, get into his car and drive around lightly bumping people. This story perhaps gains credence from a statement

Mrs. Henderson made to the effect that "Poppa never could drive."

Henry's classes in Boozology, his bell ringing, his "student advising" and his general duties as handyman and janitor certainly endeared him to the alumni and faculty of William and Mary and made him into the "character" and "legendary personality" that he became.³⁰ But such was not all of Henry Billups the man. A college atmosphere is in many ways limited to the various roles its members play. Outside the College, Henry Billups was viewed somewhat differently. Dean Lambert pointed out that Henry "seemed to have a warmer relationship with students and alumni than with black people in town." One black informant, when asked about Henry, simply responded that he was "an old Uncle Tom." Others were careful to say only polite and complimentary things they thought the writer wanted to hear. There is no denying, however, that many of the compliments were accurate and sincere. Mrs. Mattie Braxton, an 84 year-old former cook in President Tyler's house, described Henry as "a great man, well loved by everybody in the College."³¹ Another informant saw Henry as a kind of spokesman for the black community in relation to the College. "Whatever Mr. Billups said," she recalled, "the people at the College believed."

As a neighbor, Henry is remembered as politely interfering. The Reeds, who lived next door to Henry for about four years, remembered him loosening boards on his picket fence and allowing their daughter to come over and stuff herself, even when she had just finished eating at home. Sunday mornings were especially disruptive when the child would crawl through the fence and go to Henry's for the grapefruit she loved and which he invariably had waiting for her.³²

The role Henry played in the church suggests that he was not overly dedicated. Mrs. Baker recalled that he "would come sometimes." It seems as if he were more

interested in meeting and seeing young people than in worshipping. There is the story of Henry attending Second Baptist Church (now Mt. Ararat) instead of First Baptist with his parents because he wanted to be with the young folks. However, after listening to the preacher "lay out" the young people about their devilish ways one Sunday, Henry was greatly annoyed. He proceeded to catch up with the preacher after service and to beat him up, threatening to do the same thing again if the preacher ever again referred to anybody by name from the pulpit. It is reported that the preacher complied, but he still turned Henry out of the church. Henry then rejoined his parents at First Baptist where he remained until his death.

Mrs. Henderson recalled that "Poppa" took candy to church in his pockets to give to the children after services. He gave candy to children and hugged and kissed the ladies. The church people usually called him "Uncle Henry" (women and children) or "Doc" Billups (men) and were all "crazy about him."

Although he went to church, even Mrs. Henderson admitted that Henry "never was too much of a church man." In fact, he used to get a kick out of calling the deacons into his house and getting them to take a drink. He would say, "Go'n boy, it ain't gon hurt you. That'll help you along with your religion." In spite of the pranks and the lack of commitment, however, Henry's generosity shines through. He would visit older people who were confined to their homes on every Sunday afternoon. He always opened his door to visitors and usually offered drinks and cigars, especially on holidays such as Christmas.

Henry was one of the few blacks in the community who owned a car and his antics with it are legion. What he did while intoxicated has already been mentioned. Another story, from Mrs. Henderson, is the following:

Poppa went to the game in Richmond on Thanksgiving every year. Never missed a one. Always carried three or four other men with him. One of the buddies drove on one occasion. Back at College Corner, Poppa told the buddy he'd better take over

because the friend didn't have a license. Poppa turned the car over right in front of College gate. He was first out of the car with his cigar in his mouth.³³

The Alumni Gazette also reports the incident of the car turning over and other episodes of Henry and his cars (he owned three; the first was purchased in 1916).

Henry can drive a car but occasionally he has been brought to considerable embarrassment by driving them. Several years ago he successfully navigated his car to Richmond to a football game and back, only to turn it over in the road back of the president's house. Once, through his evolutions around Williamsburg in his gas buggy, he ran afoul of the minions of the law who desired to detain him at the 'hoose-gow' for the night. Although the next day was a holiday at the College he proved through a friend that he had to ring the bell the next morning and he was accordingly freed.³⁴

Henry reportedly destroyed a porch near the restored capitol building while trying to make a turn. He stepped out of the car and announced that he would have made it alright "if the house hadn't been in the way." Perhaps Henry's inability to maneuver properly was the cause of some of his discourtesies as a driver. He would follow the worn paths of the dirt roads and refuse to pull to the side of the track to let other motorists pass. He would stop his car, get out, and tell the other driver to move over and let him pass.

As a family man, however, Henry was extremely delicate and devoted. When his brother and two sisters left home for Germantown and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Henry vowed that he would never leave his parents. After his father's death, his promise to remain with his mother was intensified. He also vowed that he would not get married until his mother died. He would always take his mother riding in a horse drawn buggy on Sunday afternoons before he went to see any of the girls. He was true to his promise and did not get married until 1910, well after his mother's death and when he was almost forty years old. He and his wife, the former Rebecca Marshall, had no children of their own and in 1917 adopted Bessie, who was almost as old as

their marriage. Henry's marriage to Rebecca was surprising because she was a country girl (from James City County, adjacent to Williamsburg) and he was such an eligible, sporting bachelor. The marriage lasted for 45 years, however--until Henry's death. Rebecca Marshall Billups died in 1972 at the age of 92 and almost seventeen years after Henry succumbed.

Henry Billups' life had touched many people--those in the community and especially those at William and Mary. Yet one gets the feeling of notoriety more so than fame and such a feeling leads to an exploration and evaluation of Henry's life. What did he really mean to the students and faculty at William and Mary? Did he, as one informant suggests, sacrifice his "personal integrity" for the tips and other small favors he received from students?³⁵ Was he an Uncle Tom or a clown or mascot without understanding the loss of dignity involved in the hat tippings and easy grins he extended to students? Did he enjoy the position he found himself in and exploit it for gain, or more specifically, did he, like others at the College in their various capacities, play a role? Did he exhibit some of the features of a John or a Brer Rabbit? Certain aspects of Henry's adventures suggest a positive answer to the latter two questions.

The witty aspect of a John or a Brer Rabbit is exemplified in such stories as the one where Henry talked his way out of jail. On other occasions, when students would find a way to trick Henry, he always came out on top. There is the story shortly after Prohibition was repealed of students coming up to Henry and flashing their bottles, telling him they no longer needed him to get their whiskey. Also, they could not offer him a drink, they said, because whites and blacks simply could not drink out of the same container (early 1930's). Then they would smilingly walk away. After he had been teased in this manner a few times, Henry was prepared. When the next student came up and said he

could not offer the tantalizing drink, Henry replied: "Well, I just so happen to have a cheese glass in my pocket," Thus he proceeded to get a drink.

Henry seems to have done what he felt was necessary to obtain his objectives, perhaps, as one person put it, because he thought this was how one acted with whites. He is remembered as playing a role that other black people connected with the College did not obviously play. But Henry's role was one with depth, exhibiting the kind of shrewdness of many trickster folk characters. As one informant put it, "He was smart enough to play a role and to know he was playing a role." This evaluation eliminates such simple labels as "Uncle Tom" and "clown." These titles imply a lack of respect on the part of the dominant group which does not seem to apply in Henry Billups' case. His "customary" place in the Homecoming parades suggests respect, not derision. Perhaps the greatest instance of this respect occurred in 1951. When a controversial president was inaugurated at William and Mary, Henry was one of several distinguished persons invited to the ceremony.³⁶ In fact, his presence, according to George Passage, was a way of calming the storm. If someone as traditional as Henry Billups could sanction the new man, then obviously things were not falling apart at William and Mary.³⁷

Then again, Henry's role cannot be shallowly or derogatorily labeled because of his attitude towards students. He put himself in the position of authority and was paternalistic towards them. At one point, he was assigned responsibility for bringing students in need of discipline to their hearings.³⁸ He referred to alumni as his "boys" and "girls." Often, on occasions of celebration or recognition, Henry was escorted by some of his "old boys."³⁹ Even when he said "Sir" or "Mr." to a student or an alumnus, he knew that particular greeting would not only be financially profitable, but emotionally as well. By no means an unintelligent person, Henry Billups simply used an

expected concept of place for a black person to his advantage in becoming
a legend to the graduates of the College of William and Mary.

NOTES

¹The President and six faculty members were called the SEVEN WISE MEN. For more information, see The Seven Wise Men of the College of William and Mary (1958) by James Southall Wilson. The seven were Professors John Lesslie Hall, Thomas Jefferson Stubbs, Lyman B. Wharton, Van F. Garrett, Charles Edward Bishop, Hugh Stockdell Bird and President Lyon G. Tyler. In 1948 Howard Willard Wiseman, an alumnus, published The Seven Wise Men (New York: Jacques and Company, Inc.), and dedicated it to Henry Billups on his sixtieth anniversary at the College.

²In his book Cows on the Campus: Williamsburg in Bygone Days (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, 1973), Parke Rouse, Jr. cites Henry Billups as one of the blacks who appeared in "local lore" during the early 1900's--p. 9. One of the stories appears on p. 163. In The College of William and Mary: Highlights of Progress 1960-1970, published by the Society of the Alumni, Henry is listed on p. 67 as one of the "Traditions" of the College.

³Professor Wilfred J. Lambert, graduate of the College and Dean of Students at William and Mary from 1946-66, recalled how happy Henry was to celebrate his 51st year of service for at that time he could boast of having been at the College longer than James Blair, who was first president of William and Mary and served from 1693-1743, a total of 50 years.

⁴The Wren Building is one of the three original buildings of the College and today has the distinction of being the oldest academic building in use in the United States. The other original buildings are the Brafferton and the President's House.

⁵I am indebted to Bessie Billups Henderson, Henry's adopted daughter, for the loan of an album cut from a broadcast of the story of Henry's life by radio station WRVA in Richmond, Virginia on October 11, 1951--a program entitled George Passage News.

⁶One of these occasions was recalled by Dean Dudley Warner Woodbridge of the Law School in a speech on May 4, 1966. It was Henry's tolling of the bell that let the community know the Law School would not be closed as the Board of Visitors had proposed; the incident occurred during the Depression. One of the bell ringing occasions in 1945 was a solemn one. Henry sounded the bell fifty-five times for the 55 alumni killed in World War II.

⁷Interview with Bessie Billups Henderson, July 3, 1975. An Alumni Gazette article on Henry for October, 1938 lists this person as Judge Weymouth of Hampton.

⁸It is necessary to get job descriptions by word of mouth because Henry's official state employee classification was simply "janitor."

⁹Interview with Mabel Bowman, July 9, 1975.

¹⁰This was reportedly a store owned by John Armistead and located on the Duke of Gloucester Street which is directly across from the Old Campus of the College of William and Mary. The gathering place was later changed to S.K. Harris' Blacksmith Shop after Armistead sold his property to the Colonial Williamsburg Restoration.

¹¹Interview with Bessie Billups Henderson, July 29, 1975.

¹²Interview with Clara Baker at her home in Virginia Beach, March 2, 1975.

¹³Alumni Gazette (December, 1952), p. 15. Henry is also featured in the cover photograph of this issue (at the unveiling of a painting of himself, which presently hangs in the Alumni House. The painting was done by Thomas Thorne, head of the Fine Arts department.).

¹⁴See The Virginia Gazette (January 4, 1935), p. 6 and The Flat Hat (November 11, 1952), p. 9.

¹⁵"The Billups Legend Continues," Alumni Gazette (May, 1948), p. 1.

¹⁶Hugh DeSamper, "Henry Billups 1872-1955," Alumni Gazette (October, 1955), pp. 7-8.

¹⁷For the published ten-year articles, see Alumni Gazette (October, 1938 and March, 1948).

¹⁸"A Resolution," Alumni Gazette (December, 1955), p. 15.

¹⁹Alumni Gazette (November 30, 1935), p. 2.

²⁰"The Billups Legend Continues," Alumni Gazette (May, 1948), p. 1.

²¹Mrs. Henderson was somewhat leary of tape recorders and this version is paraphrased from notes taken during an interview with her.

²²I am indebted to Diane Dodson, a student in my Introduction to American Folklore class, for the collection of this story from Miss Margaret Bridges, a 77 year-old lifelong resident of Williamsburg and one of the first women to graduate from William and Mary (in 1922). The story was collected in an interview on October 3, 1974.

²³"Henry Billups Tells Story as Janitor Here for Forty-four Years," Alumni Gazette (December 31, 1934), p. 4. Several informants recalled such incidents, including Arthur Hill, the man who officially assumed bell ringing duties after Henry's tenure.

²⁴Ibid. The article was reprinted with slight alterations in The Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg's weekly newspaper, for January 4, 1935.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid. Stealing the bell clapper seems to be a continuing prank or protest at William and Mary. The clapper was removed twice during the 1974-75 school term to this writer's knowledge.

President Lyon G. Tyler and Henry both came to the College in 1888. Although Tyler died in 1919, there are many stories that link him with Henry. Henry served under four other presidents.

²⁷Interview with Dean Wilfred J. Lambert, July 11, 1975.

²⁸Fred L. Frechette, "Sixty Years With Henry Billups," Alumni Gazette (March, 1948), p. 5. In other sources, the story ends with the price of books becoming too high. (Henry was also featured in the cover photograph of this issue, standing in front of a statue of Lord Botetourt.)

²⁹Interview with Dean Lambert, July 11, 1975. Often commenting on his lack of knowledge as to the "truth" of certain stories, Dean Lambert nevertheless reported those that were current when he was at William and Mary.

³⁰For use of such terminology, see "Sixty Years With Henry Billups."

³¹Interview with Mattie Braxton, July 9, 1975. Mrs. Braxton is a member of one of the three or four black families in Williamsburg who have a history of service to the College. She worked in various capacities at William and Mary for a total of 58 years.

³²Interview with Nathaniel Reed, July 8, 1975 and with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Baker, July 11, 1975.

³³Interview with Bessie Billups Henderson, July 29, 1975.

³⁴"Henry Billups Tells Story as Janitor Here for Forty-four Years," p. 4.

³⁵Homecoming was one of the big occasions on which Henry received money from alumni. Remembering former students by name, according to one witness, enabled Henry to collect numerous dollar bills.

³⁶Alumni Gazette (December, 1951), p. 7.

³⁷Album--The Story of Henry Billups--George Passage News, October 11, 1951.

³⁸"Sixty Years With Henry Billups," p. 4.

³⁹In 1948, three of Henry's "old boys" escorted him to the rostrum at the annual meeting of the Society of the Alumni to receive "an illuminated scroll in testimony of the appreciation and affection" held for him during the sixty years at William and Mary where he "progressed from college employee to college tradition." (Alumni Gazette, October, 1948, p. 11)