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Transylvania Medical Alumni Served Both Sides During Civil War

In the several decades before the Civil War, most of the doctors practicing in the South and the far West had trained at Transylvania University's medical school. Through 1857 this school had enrolled 6,456 students and granted 1,881 medical degrees.¹ Founded in 1799, it was the fifth medical school in the U.S., following that of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (1765), King's College in New York City (now Columbia, 1767), Harvard (1783), and Dartmouth (1797). For a decade or so during the 1820s-30s Transylvania's Medical Department rivaled Philadelphia's—then the largest in the country and judged its best. Transylvania's prominence was due to its richly endowed medical library and its respected medical faculty.

Initially, Transylvania medical students were taught by preceptorship, or one-on-one instruction. In 1817 scheduled classes began with the reorganization of the faculty to include five medical professors, each of whom gave three lectures a week per term. A term lasted four months, beginning on the first Monday in November and ending the first Saturday in March. To earn a degree, students were required to take two years of courses (first-year lectures were

repeated largely verbatim in the second year), write a short thesis (medical dissertation), and pass two oral exams.²

Alumni of Transylvania's Medical Department were represented by three groups: graduates whose theses are extant, graduates for whom no theses are available today, and those who took courses for only one or more sessions without graduating but later worked as successful physicians.³ Transylvania's Special Collections library preserves theses of about 1,770 graduates. These documents are a rich source of information about what early nineteenth-century physicians in the Ohio River Valley thought and taught concerning the diseases and medical conditions they encountered.

The Medical Department attracted 37 pupils during its 1819-20 term. The number rose to 281 in 1825-26 and remained at this level for a decade or so.⁵ Medical students from 11 Southern states numbered 262 of the 282 matriculating in 1828-29 and 200 of the 203 enrolled in 1820-30.⁶ While most

graduates returned to their home states to practice medicine, some went west.

Several factors led to the demise of the Medical Department, which closed after its 1858-59 term. By the late 1830s rival medical schools had been established in Louisville and Cincinnati. The advent of steamboat traffic on the Ohio River in the 1820s accounted for the gradual economic eclipse of Lexington by these two growing cities. Louisville had the Marine Hospital, where medical students could obtain clinical training, while Lexington students had no comparable hospital.

Up through the nineteenth century, anatomical studies filled a greater part of the medical curriculum than today. In 1834 the Kentucky legislature rejected a bill that would have allowed the bodies of executed criminals to be delivered to chartered colleges for dissection and experiment.⁷ Medical students were thus obliged to procure their own anatomical subjects by robbing fresh graves or buying bodies from "resurrectionists." Cadavers for anatomical study likely were more readily obtained from the latter sources in the river towns.

The insignia on the front of this Union Army cap indicates that it belonged to a member of the Medical Service.

Left: The city of Lexington claimed the Medical Hall after the Transylvania Medical Department closed in 1859. City authorities gave professor Robert Peter permission to use it for a "course of Experimental Lectures to the Young Ladies of the Female schools" before the Union command took it over as a hospital in 1862. When the building burned in 1863, all the sick and wounded were evacuated safely.

Right: This traveling apothecary belonged to Benjamin Dudley, professor of anatomy and surgery in the Transylvania Medical Department from 1817-50. A widely recognized surgeon, Dudley helped bring the college to national prominence and trained many of the physicians who served in the Civil War.

photo by Mollie Eblen



MEDICINE DURING THE CIVIL WAR

In 1859, fights erupted in Philadelphia between Northern abolitionists and Southerner sympathizers. Among the latter were many students who rebelled at the idea of being taught by abolitionist-minded professors. On Dec. 22 a trainload of 244 angry medical students left the city to complete their education at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, which welcomed them with free tuition. Had Transylvania's Medical Department still been in operation, some of these students might have enrolled and perhaps helped in its survival. This dramatic migration of medical students has been viewed by some historians as the beginning of the story of Civil War medicine.⁸

When the War Between the States erupted in the spring of 1861, the U.S. Army included 131 physicians, who were termed either surgeons or assistant surgeons. Twenty-four resigned to join the Confederate States of America.

continued on page 10

TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL GRADUATES WHO SERVED IN THE UNION ARMY

Listed by name, home state, beginning year/s at Transylvania, and thesis subject/s:

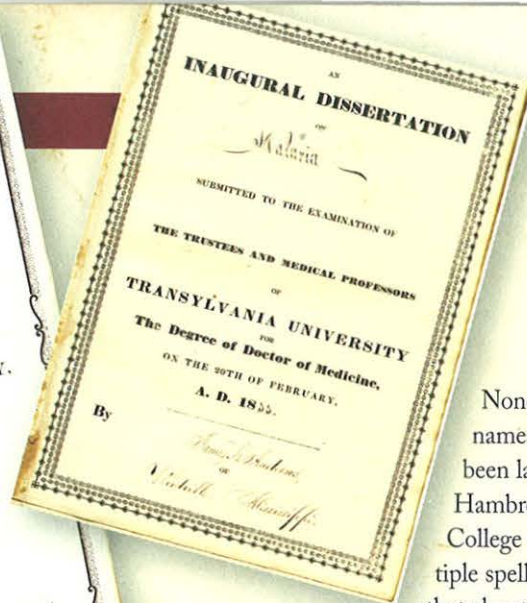
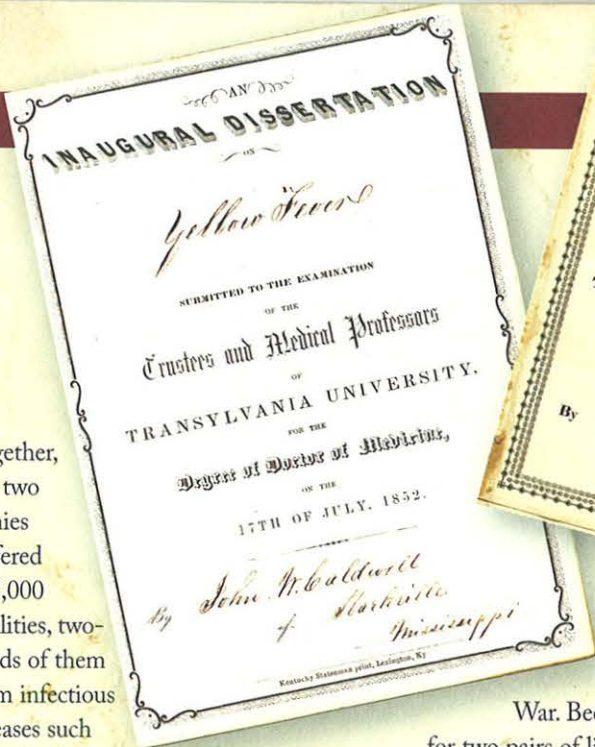
- Adam, Samuel L.; Ky.; 1855/57; cholera
 Anderson, William; Ky.; 1834/44; leukorrhea, gynecology
 Armstrong, J. A.; Ky.; 1843-44; *E. perfoliatum*
 Bailey, Jonathan R.; Ky.; 1835-36; lobelia, botany (Baldwin, William Owens, a Columbia University medical graduate)
 Black, James R.; Ky.; 1820/23; conception, obstetrics
 Blackburn, Luke P.; Ky.; 1833-34; burns, surgery
 Brown, John R.; Ky.; 1834-35; none
 Campbell, James M.; Tenn.; 1837; none
 (?) Campbell, Wm.; Ky.; 1824; none
 (?) Campbell, Wm.; Tenn.; 1837-38; none
 Cartmell, Simon M.; Ky.; 1837; none
 Castle, A. B.; Ohio; 1843/47; none
 Castleman, Alfred Lewis; Iowa; 1843; none
 Cloak, Burkitt; Ky.; 1838/49; dysentery
 Cooper, S.; S.C.; 1842; none
 Davis, B. F.; S.C.; 1846; tuberculosis
 Davis, Joseph W.; Ky.; 1833/37; tuberculosis
 Duncan, James R.; Ky.; 1849; typhoid fever (Dunlap, Albert; a University of Maryland medical graduate)
 Dunn, Williamson D.; Ind.; 1841; fever
 Field, Nathaniel; Ind.; 1847; dyspepsia
 Fisher, Elias; Ky.; 1829/31; smallpox
 Gray, J. M.; Ala.; 1841; opium
 Hensley, James W.; Ky.; 1841-44; tuberculosis
 Houston, William M.; N.C.; 1833; none
 Hunt, William; Tenn.; 1837-38; heat on body
 Jaquess, Geo. D.; Ind.; 1847; remittent fever
 Johnson, Thomas J.; Ky.; 1821; none
 Jones, James H. T.; Ala.; 1832; none
 Jones, John H. W.; Ala.; 1848; typhoid fever
 Jones, Lewis J.; Ky.; 1855; none
 Jones, William Henry; Ky.; 1855; none
 Knight, William; Ky.; 1819; none
 Lawrence, Jasper W.; Ga.; 1833-35; leukorrhea, gynecology
 Lewis, John M.; Ky.; 1844; none
 Lloyd, Frederick; Ky.; 1846; intermittent fever
 Lytle, Francis; Tenn.; 1839; none
 Maguire, Samuel; Ky.; 1839; none
 McCann, James; Ky.; 1850-51; pleuritis
 McPheeters, Joseph G.; Ky.; 1837/39; bandages
 Menzies, Samuel Garber; Ky.; 1828/30; dysentery
 Miller, Samuel F.; Ky.; 1835/37; cholera
 Mills, John; Ky.; 1848; none
 Mills, John A.; Ky.; 1849; iretis, ophthalmology
 Montmollion, James; Ky.; 1858-59; none
 Moore, James; Ala.; 1829/32; emmenagogues
 Murphy, Alexander M.; Ind.; 1843; congestive fever
 Neil, Alexander; S.C.; 1825; none
 Parker, John T.; Ky.; 1819-20; none
 Pearson, Charles D.; Ky.; 1840; none
 Phillips, William H.; Va.; 1848; tuberculosis
 Pinkerton, L. L.; Ky.; 1841; medicine's progress
 Richardson, Edward; Ky.; 1848-49; tuberculosis
 Rogers, Edwin; Tenn.; 1828; none
 Sanders, Thomas; Va.; 1822-23; cholera
 Scott, John H.; Tenn.; 1835; none
 Scott, John W.; Ky.; 1839-41; local injuries
 Scott, Wm. F.; Ky.; 1848-49; tuberculosis
 Sharp, William S.; Ky.; 1842-43; phrenitis infantilis
 Smith, C. C.; Ky.; 1844; none
 Smith, Charles James; Va.; 1823; none
 Smith, John R.; Ky.; 1832; none
 Smith, Lionel J.; N.Y.; 1843; none
 Smith, Robert K.; N.C.; 1825; none
 Smith, Thomas C.; Ky.; 1854; lobar pneumonia
 Smith, William A.; Ky.; 1834/57; none
 Smith, William F.; Ga.; 1855; typhoid fever
 Smith, William H.; Ky.; 1827-28; none
 Smydth, W. C.; Ind.; 1839; none
 Sparks, James B.; Ky.; 1855/57; obstetrics
 Spilman, Charles T.; Ky.; 1842-43; cinchona, malaria
 Stevenson, Benjamin F.; Ky.; 1839-40; skin
 Stewart, William J.; Ky.; 1856/58; pneumonia
 Stone, William D.; Tenn.; 1835; none
 Sullivan, John; Ky.; 1841-42; none
 Sweeney, John; Ky.; 1834/36; purgatives
 Taylor, Augustus B.; La.; 1842-43; none
 Taylor, John L.; N.C.; 1832-33; intermittent fever
 Taylor, Samuel W.; Ky.; 1850; obstetrics
 Taylor, William; Ga.; 1839; none
 Thompson, James H.; Tenn.; 1835; none
 Walker, William H.; Ky.; 1833; none
 Welch, John C.; Ky.; 1845; menstruation
 Wilcox, Thomas E.; Ky.; 1834-35; none
 William, J. A.; Ga.; 1843; none
 (?) William, John H.; Tenn.; 1838; none
 (?) William, John H.; Ky.; 1840; none
 Williams, Thomas; S.C.; 1830-31; intermittent fever
 Wilson, James; Ky.; 1828-29; prolepsis uteri
 Wilson, John C.; Ky.; 1832; none
 Wilson, John P.; Ky.; 1826; none
 Young, John; S.C.; 1828; none

Together, the two armies suffered 618,000 fatalities, two-thirds of them from infectious diseases such as typhoid, dysentery, typhus, and malaria. Transylvania medical graduates' familiarity with these diseases can be gleaned from their medical dissertations.

THE NORTHERN ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

Various accounts give estimates of 11,000-13,000 doctors having served in the Union Army, but a roster compiled by N. A. Strait and published in 1882 listed 7,106 entries. Because many worked in successive regiments, the total number of surgeons and assistant surgeons was only around 6,280.⁹ Strait's roster listed the names by regiment. New York provided the largest contingent of surgeons (around 900), while about 260 served the 72 Kentucky regiments.

To identify Transylvania alumni who served in the Union Army, I compared Strait's roster of the Union regimental surgeons and assistant surgeons with a list compiled by Transylvania Special Collections Librarian B. J. Gooch of those having attended the Transylvania Medical Department and found 89 names common to both. Among them, five names corresponded to five pairs of identically named Transylvania students. The correct member of three such pairs could be distinguished based on the dates



Most of the theses that survive from Transylvania's Medical Department just before the Civil War focus on infectious diseases, including this 1853 dissertation on yellow fever by John W. Caldwell and an 1833 paper by James Andrews on malaria.

of their theses, which preceded the Civil

War. Because no theses are listed for two pairs of like-named students, it is uncertain which of the following served: Wm. Campbell of Kentucky, 1824, or of Tennessee, 1837; and John H. William of Tennessee, 1838, or of Kentucky, 1840. In the table on Page 9, both pairs of these names are listed but indented together.

The largest number of Transylvania medical alumni in the Union Army were from Kentucky and Tennessee. Seven were from Northern states (Indiana, Ohio, and New York.), but, surprisingly, 21 were from slave states, including five from Alabama and six from South Carolina. Of these 89 Transylvania surgeons, 44 are immortalized in the Special Collections by their student medical dissertations. The theses reviewed various medical topics, of which half concerned infectious diseases: typhoid (3), dysentery (2), cholera (3), tuberculosis (6), and other fevers (10). Four discussed botanical medicines or other remedies.

THE SOUTHERN ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

Many of the records concerning Confederate medical personnel were destroyed near the end of the war to keep them from falling into enemy hands, and countless government records were lost in the fires that swept over Richmond, the Confederate capital, in April 1865.

Nonetheless, a database of 10,563 names of Confederate physicians has been laboriously compiled by F. Terry Hambrecht and others at the Medical College of Virginia.¹⁰ Because of multiple spellings of surnames, he estimates that about 9,000 individuals served the Confederate States of America as surgeons, assistant surgeons, and acting assistant surgeons (contract civilian physicians). The largest group came from Virginia, and the number from Kentucky is not accurately known.

Hambrecht identified 62 Transylvania medical alumni who served the Southern forces as physicians. Comparing this list with a master list of medical students at Transylvania, I found that the largest number serving in the Southern army were from Kentucky (20), followed by Tennessee (11), and other southern states (27), but also two Northern states (New York and Delaware). All 62 names are represented by medical dissertations in the Transylvania Special Collections. Their subjects involve various areas of medicine, but again most notably infectious diseases: typhoid (1), dysentery (3), malaria (1), and various other fevers (20).

A CAVEAT

It is unlikely that either of the lists of Transylvania alumni serving as army doctors is complete. According to Hambrecht, Strait's roster of Union Army physicians contains very few acting assistant surgeons (contracted civilian physicians, some of whom might have trained in Lexington).



Additionally, among the Union Army surgeons, 44 of the 89 Transylvania alumni are repre-

sented by a thesis in the Special Collections and 45 have no extant thesis. A comparable ratio would be expected among Transylvania alumni in the Confederate Army medical corp. The fact that all 62 names on Hambrecht's list of Southern army physicians wrote a thesis suggests that others who did not are missing from this list. ¶



Charles T. Ambrose is a Professor in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology,

and Molecular Genetics at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. In recent years, he has published widely on medical history.

1. Robert Peter, *The History of the Medical Department of Transylvania University*. Filson Club Publication No. 20. Louisville, Ky.: John P. Morton, 1905, p. 167, Schedule B.
2. John D. Wright Jr., *Transylvania: Tutor to the West*. Lexington, Ky.: Transylvania University, 1975, p. 84.
3. *Catalogue of the Transylvania University Medical Library*. Lexington, Ky.: Transylvania University Press, 1987, pp. 482-612, Appendices A and B.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 609.
5. Peter, *The History* (1. above), p. 55, see table.
6. Walter W. Jennings, *Transylvania, Pioneer University of the West*. New York: Pageant Press, 1955, pp. 105 and 169.
7. Wright, *Transylvania* (4. above), p. 85.

8. J. M. Schmidt and G.R. Hasegawa (editors). *Years of Change and Suffering: Modern Perspectives on Civil War Medicine*. Roseville, Minn.: Edinburgh Press, 2009, p. 3.

9. *Roster of All Regimental Surgeons and Assistant Surgeons in the Late War, with their Service, and Last-known Post-Office Address*. Compiled by N.A. Strait, Washington, D.C., 1882. (This was not an official government listing but, according to Hambrecht [see below], one apparently intended by Strait for his profit by its private sales.)

10. Communications by e-mail from F. Terry Hambrecht on Sept. 10–Dec. 13, 2010. Hambrecht is Senior Technical Adviser to the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, Md.

TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL GRADUATES WHO SERVED IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY

Listed by name, home state, beginning year/s at Transylvania, and thesis subject/s:

- Akin, Joseph William; Ky.; 1834/50-51; effect of the mind on disease
 Avent, Benjamin Ward; Tenn.; 1832-33; scarlatina
 Baldwin, William O.; Ala.; 1835-36; puerperal fever (see Union roster)
 Barton, Welborn/Wilbern; S.C.; 1844-45/48; syphilis
 Beale, Andrew Jackson; Ky.; 1854; dysentery
 Benton, Charles H.; Ky.; 1858-59; inflammation

Blackburn, Luke Pryor; Ky.; 1833-34; cholera

Luke Pryor Blackburn (1816-87) rendered aid in many yellow fever outbreaks after the war. He served as governor of Kentucky from 1879-83. His signature accomplishments were in the area of penal reform, and the Blackburn Correctional Complex, a minimum-security penal facility near Lexington, is named in his honor.

- Blair, James M.; Tenn.; 1846-47; tuberculosis
 Bouchelle, Ezra F.; S.C.; 1836; puerperal fever
 Boyd, Montgomery W.; (?); 1843; climate
 Boykin, James Owen; Ga.; 1840-42; intermittent fever
 Bronaugh, George W.; Ky.; 1841-42; endermic medication
 Brown, Bedford Jr.; Mo.; 1846-47; local disease
 Cabaniss, Alfred B.; Ala.; 1831-32; cutaneous diseases
 Cochran John Lynch; Miss.; 1844-45; proof of pregnancy
 Coffey, Ephraim McDowell; Ky.; 1851; congestive fever
 Coombs, Samuel William; Ky.; 1823-24; power of passions on disease
 Cooper, William H.; Mo.; 1844-45; genital organs
 Core, Jesse G.; Tenn.; 1840-41; variola
 Crockett, Greenbury F.H.; Del.; 1820-21; asthma
 Dabbs, Christopher Hunt; Ala.; 1827/29; sedatives
 Dulancy, Joseph D.; Tenn.; 1854; dysentery
 Dunlap, Albert; Ark.; 1850; malaria (see Union roster)
 Duvall, Benjamin F.; Ky.; 1855-56; blood letting, phlebotomy
 Fox, Henry Thomas; Calif.; 1855-56; bandages
 Frierson, James White Stevenson; Tenn.; 1821-23; fashions in female health

- Gaither, William N.; Ky.; 1839/42; hydrocele
 Garner, Henry C.; Ky.; 1848-49; medical profession, 1850
 Gillespie, Benjamin S.; Ky.; 1856-57; inflammation
 Gorham, Boswell T. P.; Ky.; 1856-57; pneumonia
 Hall, Allen M.; Tenn.; 1845-47; stricture of urethra
 Harrison, Gabriel; Ga.; 1835-36; syphilis
 Head, James Marshall; Tenn.; 1838/40; fever
 Howze, Horace Lafayette; Miss.; 1846-47; *causae morbi* (causes of illness)
 Hughes, James Neville; Ky.; 1826/31; puerperal fever
 Hughes, William; Ky.; 1851/53/56; obstructive labor, 1856
 Humphreys, William F.; Tenn.; 1853; hypertrophy of the heart
 Jameson, Thomas Y. T.; Tenn.; 1853; dysentery
 Johnson, Leander B.; N.C.; 1850; fever
 Jones, William E.; Mich.; 1840-41; mania
 King, John William; Ala.; 1840; typhoid fever
 Latham, Edward; La.; 1850; rubeola (measles)
 Lewis, Richmond Addison; Ky.; 1845-46; *chiasma nervorum opticorum*
 Long, John; S.C.; 1838-39; phlebotomy (bleeding)
 McDowell, Joseph Nash; Ky.; 1825-26; dependence of function
 Moore, George H.; Ala.; 1843; water as a remedy
 Owen, Joseph Richardson Nimmo; Ala.; 1836-37; *procidencia uteri*
 Rice, Cornelius Attwood; Miss.; 1855; pneumonia
 Scott, James T.; Ky.; 1838/40/43; gastritis
 Sheppard, David; S.C.; 1844-45; intermittent fever
 Shomo, Joseph Weatherford; Ark.; 1855; pneumonia
 Smith, George N.; Miss.; 1840; fever in Mississippi
 Swanson, Edward; Ark.; 1825; yellow fever
 Taliaferro, Edward/Edwin T.; Tenn.; 1842-43; gastritis
 Taylor, Charles M.; Ky.; 1854-55; abortion

Todd, George Rogers Clark; Ky.; 1845-47; young physic

George Rogers Clark Todd (1825-1902) was the brother of Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of President Abraham Lincoln. This is the only known photograph of him.



- Tompkins, Frank/Franklin A.; S.C.; 1851; intermittent fever
 Tracy, James Wright; N.C.; 1849; bilious remittent fever
 Willingham, Benjamin Vaughan; Ga.; 1836/44; inflammation
 Winston, John Dudley; Ky.; 1825-26; injuries to integument of the head