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The Difficult Tenure of George W. Blaettermann, First Professor of Modern Languages at the University of Virginia

In the spring of 1825 recently arrived German expatriate Charles Follen¹ continued his teaching career as a German instructor at Harvard, where he also taught French. Between 1830 and 1835 he held the title of Professor of the German Language and Literature,² and should be acknowledged as the first professor of German in the United States. Coincidentally, at virtually the same instant another recently arrived German expatriate, George W. Blaettermann,³ began his duties as the first Professor of Modern Languages at the newly opened University of Virginia, founded by former president Thomas Jefferson. Both men had reasons for not returning to Germany. Follen's outspoken criticism of the repressive political measures and absence of democratic reform in Germany coupled with charges that he had been involved in the assassination of German dramatist August von Kotzebue eventually led to his flight to the United States. Blaettermann's role—however minor—as a member of Napoleon's army during the Russian campaign, the loss of which “drove me as far as London,” as he wrote Jefferson on 27 April 1819,⁴ would have complicated his return to his native Thuringia.

Follen's participation in the *Freiheitskriege* against Napoleon's forces is well known. Blaettermann's involvement in the French army at approximately the same time is documented only in the memoirs of his adopted son George Walter Blatterman (*Memoirs*) and in the letter of 1819 to Jefferson. Although Follen's nationalist sentiments are clear, Blaettermann's motivations for allying himself with the opposing camp have not been recorded. Despite their apparent political differences both men became intensely interested in the new American democracy. They viewed the United States simplistically as a haven of democratic thought and practice, and both men were disappointed in what they discovered in America. Their careers in the United States differed considerably, however, and the differences lie partly in the cultures in

which they lived, Blaettermann in a repressive Southern culture holding on to slavery, and Follen in a New England becoming increasingly aware of the injustice of slavery. Follen turned his attention to improving democracy in his new country and became a fervent abolitionist; Blaettermann fell into the Virginia pattern and purchased slaves.⁵

Unlike Follen, Dr. Blaettermann⁶ is relatively unknown. Despite some indications that he was initially well-liked at the University of Virginia, his reputation to date is a poor one. When he is mentioned at all, it is usually in unflattering terms. For example, Philip Alexander Bruce referred to "his constant spleen"; Klaus Wust called him "irascible but gifted"; Virginius Dabney said he was "endowed with a Prussian personality"; and Garry Wills called him a "despotic linguist."⁷

There are several important reasons for Dr. Blaettermann's reputation. First, there is very little information about him available to the researcher. This is especially true of the period before his emigration to the United States. Even nineteenth-century writers had trouble finding anything to say,⁸ and the earliest published statement about him (1842) was brutal.⁹ The most positive assessment of his contributions was the brief mention of Dr. Blaettermann by his former student Gessner Harrison in Duyckinck's *Cyclopaedia*, published in 1856. Harrison noted that Blaettermann "gave proof of extensive acquirements, and of a mind of uncommon natural vigor and penetration." He added that in connection with German and Anglo-Saxon Blaettermann "gave to his students much that was interesting and valuable in comparative philology also, a subject in which he found peculiar pleasure."¹⁰

A second reason for the reputation of Dr. Blaettermann lies in his failure to publish in his field, except for his contribution of grammatical tables for John Lewis' *Tables of Comparative Etymology and Analogous Formations in the Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, English, and German Languages*.¹¹ It is possible that he contributed articles to the University's short-lived publication (1829–30), the *Virginia Literary Museum and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts &c.*,¹² but most of the articles in that journal were signed simply with cryptic abbreviations such as "Wy." and "X.Y." or with initials that may not be those of the author. There is simply no body of work on which we may judge his scholarship as a counterbalance to the scattered negative reports of the professor's behavior. Dr. Blaettermann's temperamental disposition resulted in frequent clashes with his students and is at the core of most evaluations of him. Lastly, the reason for which he was fired from the University—the public whipping of his wife—would suffice for many researchers to avoid considering any possible contributions he might have made.

Much of what has been written about Dr. Blaettermann has been drawn from material taken out of context. There are comments in student letters and

diaries and some notations in faculty minutes¹³ that are offered as characterizations of Blaettermann, but a careful examination of these sources as well as the *Journal of the Chairman of the Faculty*¹⁴ provides context for the professor's actions that one should not overlook. For example, one writer faults Blaettermann for attempting to teach his Spanish class of about forty students with only three texts,¹⁵ but he fails to consider that the lack of textbooks was endemic. Even Jefferson took note of the problem and complained to a bookseller, writing that Dr. Blaettermann told him he would write to London himself for books, adding that the Anglo-Saxon class had but one dictionary, grammar or other Anglo-Saxon book for his thirteen students;¹⁶ and as late as 1830, five years after the institution had opened, James Lawrence Cabell noted that his class in differential calculus had to share three texts.¹⁷

When George Blaettermann began teaching at the University of Virginia in 1825, his "School of Modern Languages" jumped to the forefront of modern language instruction, for not only was he the first to teach Anglo-Saxon in an American college,¹⁸ but his school was one of only two institutions of higher education that taught modern languages at the time, the other being Harvard. The College of William and Mary possessed a chair of modern languages, but it was apparently unoccupied when the University of Virginia opened.¹⁹

This time period is the beginning of modern foreign language instruction as we have come to know it. It is significant that Thomas Jefferson played a decisive role in the development of the field at a time when few recognized the importance of modern languages other than French. Jefferson granted the new field equal status with that of Classical languages. His educational reform efforts had produced the country's first Chair of Modern Languages at the College of William and Mary in 1779,²⁰ and Virginia's second chair in the field at the University of Virginia. Jefferson's own interest in languages was far-reaching. He dabbled in German, but he apparently never learned the language thoroughly (Hauer 882 and 896, note 10). Perhaps his most unusual linguistic interest was the Anglo-Saxon language. He even wrote a treatise on the subject intended for the future professor of modern languages at the University, but there is no indication that Dr. Blaettermann ever received it (886). Since the professor tutored Jefferson in Anglo-Saxon (*Memoirs*), one may speculate that the former president believed his own production to be inadequate and withheld the manuscript.²¹

Although Jefferson recognized the importance of the German language, he was not truly aware of the expanse of German literature and the academic atmosphere in Germany until after 1815, the year he met George Ticknor, who was preparing to leave for an extended stay in Europe. Ticknor wrote Jefferson long and detailed letters about the German educational system and

the state of German literature.²² In 1819 he assumed the newly created Smith Professorship of the French and Spanish Languages and Literature and of Belles Lettres at Harvard (Long 20) and was in charge of the modern language program when Follen began teaching there in 1825.

Ticknor also played a crucial role in the employment of George Blaettermann at the University of Virginia. The future professor first came to Jefferson's attention in two letters written in 1819. In an effort to express his gratitude to the former president for his friendship and to do something for his University Ticknor wrote Jefferson on 27 May 1819 during his return voyage to the United States and proposed George Blaettermann, whom he had met only three times in England, for the position of Professor of Modern Languages.²³

Ticknor's assessment of Dr. Blaettermann is particularly relevant, for not only is it the first description of George Blaettermann, aside from the few comments he made himself, but it also gives us some indication of the difficulties the professor would face in Charlottesville. He wrote: "[Blaettermann's] love of knowledge is evidently very strong—and from some anecdotes I heard, I should think he easily attaches himself to young men who show a disposition to learn. . . ." Conversely, the available evidence shows that Dr. Blaettermann resented young men who did not show a disposition to learn.

The matter of elegance is at the core of Ticknor's comments about Blaettermann. He first noted, "I was struck with the elegance and purity of his style in conversation," but a few lines later he wrote, "His appearance is respectable—& his manners good; but not elegant." Ticknor then hesitated in his recommendation:

I feel quite uncertain, whether I have described to you a person such as you want. I really think Mr. Blaettermann's talents are much more than common—indeed, that he has rather a philosophical cast of mind—his industry is certainly great, and his acquirements very remarkable. But he has laboured chiefly to make himself a good language master; and, I fear, you would expect an elegant lecturer, which a foreigner can hardly become and for which, though I believe Mr. Blaettermann who speaks good English could qualify himself to a respectable degree, I suspect he is not now qualified either by his knowledge of Rhetorick & criticism or his acquaintance with literary History.

Although George Blaettermann reportedly knew more than thirty languages and dialects,²⁴ he did not present himself as "an elegant lecturer" in the classroom and had considerable difficulty with his students, due partly to his heavy accent and slovenly appearance. Jefferson wrote James Madison on 26 December 1824 that Dr. Blaettermann was "rather a rough looking German, speaking English roughly, but of an excellent mind and high qualifications."²⁵

The professor's own son described his father as "careless in his dress and general appearance" (*Memoirs*). Ticknor's comments, however, linked elegance with rhetoric, criticism, and literary history. The weaknesses to which he pointed became a central problem in Blaettermann's teaching and are reflected in a set of charges made against him in 1830, which we will address below.

The second letter that brought George Blaettermann to Jefferson's attention was the one the future professor himself Jefferson wrote on 27 April 1819, a month before Ticknor's letter. It is likely that Ticknor brought this letter plus supporting testimonials with him on his return to the United States and forwarded the materials on to Jefferson. Having learned of the new college in Virginia, Dr. Blaettermann applied to Jefferson for the job of Professor of Modern Languages. With remarkable foresight he wrote in French.

Dr. Blaettermann claimed to have taught French, German, Italian, English and Latin, and to have a knowledge of Spanish, although he admitted having difficulty with Spanish for want of having lived in Spain. He added:

As for Anglo-Saxon, as I know the dialects of the coast of the Baltic Sea, a few months of study will easily familiarize me with it. Moreover, the necessity of knowing, and the wish to make myself useful, will make me pursue these studies at once and with greater keenness than would simply the love of knowledge.

He gave his age as thirty-six, somewhat older than the other men who would eventually be hired in England for the University, and claimed that while serving under Napoleon he had participated in the Russian campaign.

The letter was audacious, but effective. Jefferson wrote James Madison on 7 July 1819:

I have recieved [*sic*] from London the offer of a Professor of modern languages, of qualification literary and moral, so high as to merit our suffrage, if we can get over the difficulty that, French being the most important of the modern languages, Mr Blaettermann [*sic*] is not a native of France. (*The Republic of Letters* III, 1813)

The following December Jefferson wrote to Ticknor:

We feel particular preference towards him [Blaettermann] from his readiness to prepare himself to teach the Anglo-Saxon, for which a qualified teacher is the more rare in proportion to the obsolescence of the study.²⁶

Blaettermann's letter and testimonials made quite an impression on Jefferson, who must have been satisfied with Blaettermann's command of the French language. What tipped the scales in Blaettermann's favor, however, was his readiness to prepare himself to teach Anglo-Saxon. Jefferson seems not to

have taken note of the hesitation expressed in Ticknor's original letter of recommendation.

It was to be five years before Dr. Blaettermann was given a contract. In 1821 American ambassador to England Richard Rush informed the future professor of Jefferson's positive views toward him. Blaettermann's letters to Rush in response indicate that he considered himself, for all practical purposes, hired.²⁷ The letter of 8 October 1821 sheds light on Dr. Blaettermann's expectations:

[M]y duty will call me to instruct the rising Citizens of a Country where government, founded on the rights of man, and the eternal principle of justice, aims only at the good of the community, and whose ministers, distinguished by simplicity and grandeur of character, hold forth a noble example to direct and animate even distant nations in their march to knowledge, to virtue, to freedom and to happiness.²⁸

Although these comments may appear overblown and insincere to the modern reader, it is likely that Dr. Blaettermann believed what he wrote. The expectations he expressed were later to become a crucial mistake.

In 1824 the Board of Visitors sent Francis Walker Gilmer to England to obtain professors for Jefferson's University. The only one he was specifically ordered to hire was George Blaettermann,²⁹ which he did on 21 June. Gilmer noted in a letter to Jefferson written the same day:

Blaetterman[n] is in the prime of life—has a wife and two small children, and they appear amiable and domestic; he speaks English well, tho' not without a foreign accent; that we are obliged to encounter every way, as there are no profound English professors of modern language[s]. (*English Culture* 57f. Brackets present in the original)

Gilmer's comment about Dr. Blaettermann's pronunciation is typical of the period, as was Jefferson's earlier concern about Dr. Blaettermann's nationality.

When Dr. Blaettermann arrived in Charlottesville to begin his tenure as professor, his view of American culture was simplistic. He had expected to meet dignified youth in a society based on democratic principles. His language training and abilities were great and he looked forward to educating Virginia's young men, as suggested in his letter to Ambassador Rush. This expectation changed after perhaps a year as he became accustomed to the realities of Virginia culture. Self-absorbed young Virginia gentlemen were far different from the students he anticipated. The nature of the earliest students is well known in the literature.³⁰ These students came from plantations, were independent, arrogant, had an enormous sense of entitlement, and expected to be served, not instructed. The inelegant Dr. Blaettermann must have been a particular source of amusement to many.

Barely six months after the University opened, a number of student disturbances occurred that came to the attention of the Board of Visitors. Several professors had attempted to deal with one disturbance only to be rewarded by a brick being thrown at one of them and a cane being used on another. The next day over half the student body gave a resolution to the faculty criticizing the two professors for laying hands on one of them (Bruce II 298f.). As a result, the entire faculty, composed mostly of men hired in England, threatened to resign. The student body was summoned to appear before the Board in the unfinished Rotunda. Jefferson was, of course, present. After a stirring admonition to the students by Board member Chapman Johnson, the guilty parties stepped forward. Among the students who were expelled was a great-nephew of Jefferson.³¹ Thus began the series of expulsions which were a hallmark of the early years of the University.

Dr. Blaettermann was the target of a student's assault in 1828 (FM 22–23 April), which we will address below. Other faculty members experienced not merely youthful pranks but violence at the hands of students. In 1830 Dr. Gessner Harrison, who had recently graduated from the University and been appointed to teach ancient languages, was struck by a student who had once been his classmate. When the student was expelled, the student body passed a resolution justifying the assault (Bruce II 293f.). In 1839 the same professor was whipped by a student while another held his arms. The assailants fled, but one was shot by his pursuers. His bloody coat was displayed by other students in the dormitories as a mark of pride (294). Finally, in 1840 Faculty Chairman John Davis was murdered by a student (309).

Dr. Blaettermann was apparently well-liked in the beginning. Jefferson's granddaughter Cornelia Jefferson Randolph wrote on 3 August 1825: "The old D's manners I think are mended and he is very popular among the students."³² The School of Modern Languages drew sixty-eight students in its first session (1825), fifty-five percent of the total of 123 students. This percentage was second only to that of Mathematics, in which seventy-three students, fifty-nine percent of the total, were enrolled. In the second session (1826) ninety students—fifty-one percent—had enrolled in Dr. Blaettermann's School.³³

Despite whatever success he may have had initially, Dr. Blaettermann's outlook must have changed relatively early. The circumstances into which he had placed himself were hardly an appropriate learning environment. On the one hand the classroom presented a group of privileged students who insisted on recognition of their status; on the other hand the professor who taught them was a foreigner—a German, no less—who spoke English with an accent, whose personality was occasionally abrasive, and whose lectures were not regarded as "elegant."

The range of subjects that Dr. Blaettermann was required to teach was probably greater than that of the other professors. Like his counterpart at Harvard, he taught German and French, but he was also required to teach Spanish, Italian, and Anglo-Saxon, and to deliver additional lectures on the literature, history and geography relevant to these languages. The University Catalogue for the 1834–35 session notes that Dr. Blaettermann also offered to teach “the Danish, Swedish, Hollandish and Portuguese Languages” to students who desired them.

Dr. Blaettermann’s teaching experience had been primarily in a tutorial setting, although he had taught in a *Gymnasium* in Germany (Ticknor to Jefferson, 27 May 1819). His lectures at the University were frequently poorly received. One student wrote in 1828 that Blaettermann’s way of teaching history was “all Fudge, for their [*sic*] is nothing to be learn’d from his lectures which are nothing more than a collection of facts jumbled together.”³⁴

There are several student notebooks that give some indication of Blaettermann’s methodology. One set of notes on geography from 1827 is instructive:

Geography includes a description of the earth and its inhabitants. It may be considered under four distinct heads:

1st The history of the origin and progress of geography;

2nd The mathematical and astronomical branches of the science:

the figure and magnitude of the earth, together its diurnal & annual revolutions . . .³⁵

This hierarchical manner of presentation is clearly better suited to a written text than to a lecture room.

A brief set of notes from an Anglo-Saxon class about 1835 gives further indication of Dr. Blaettermann’s style. The relevant portion of the document consists of a few lines from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* followed by the student’s notes on Dr. Blaettermann’s commentary. Even this short excerpt, almost certainly directly quoted from the professor, demonstrates Dr. Blaettermann’s reliance on a strictly rule-oriented approach common at that time:

In the first place observe that there is very extensive application of the rules for the interchange of vowels and of consonants; and this is constantly exhibited in the mere translation of the Anglo Saxon into English.³⁶

Blaettermann’s philological expertise becomes evident later in these notes, for he connects Anglo-Saxon words to Latin, Greek, Welsh, Gaulish, Gallic, French, and German. The student also wrote that his professor thought “the Teutonic more frequently the source of words than the Sister languages of Latin + Greek,” an observation that was still novel in the early nineteenth century. The brevity of this set of notes does not prevent the conclusion that Dr. Blaettermann prized the Anglo-Saxon language over its literature, for he

appears to have paid no attention to the *Chronicle* as a literary work. Furthermore, his reliance on correlations between Anglo-Saxon and other languages would not have been of interest to many of his students.³⁷

One may safely assume that Dr. Blaettermann's traditional teaching methods were one source of his difficulty with students. If, however, his methods were poorly received, one would expect to see students withdrawing from his classes frequently, but faculty records indicate that his losses were comparable to those of other professors. Requests for permission to withdraw from courses are abundant in the records. Gessner Harrison lost eight students from his courses on a single day (FM 3 April 1832), a record unmatched even by Dr. Blaettermann. It is also important to note that the other professors used traditional teaching methods.

Dr. Blaettermann taught over 700 students in the fifteen years that he was associated with the University of Virginia.³⁸ While many students failed to profit from his instruction, there were several during the early period who appear to have seen past his idiosyncrasies. One was future University professor James Lawrence Cabell, the nephew of Board member Joseph C. Cabell. In his letters to his uncle, James mentions Dr. Blaettermann a number of times, but never exhibits the resentment one sees elsewhere. He was one of four students who signed up for German in 1829 and later began the study of Anglo-Saxon. James wrote his uncle in October of that year:

I have commenced Anglo Saxon and like it very well; it is exactly like the English & German & is easy to learn; the German is not quite so easy: it is very difficult to translate as yet; I suppose it will become less so after a while. (October 23, 1829)

We note in passing that these comments suggest that Dr. Blaettermann taught German simply by requiring his students to translate German texts into English. What is today called the communicative approach to foreign language instruction appears to have been absent in his teaching. James also wrote that he had a room in Dr. Blaettermann's pavilion:

The Doctor wanted someone to stay in his house as he very often left all his things open & the out door open to any one that might choose to come in. I knew you wanted me to get in one of the professor's houses if possible, so I accepted his proposition without hesitation.

Cabell's words are hardly those of someone who despised the professor.

Another of Blaettermann's early students who managed to profit from his instruction was Gessner Harrison, who succeeded George Long as Professor of Ancient Languages. Although it was Professor Long who later sent Harrison a copy of Bopp's earlier philological work,³⁹ it is likely that both Blaettermann and Long kindled Harrison's consuming interest in etymology.

Both Harrison and Cabell would eventually sit on the faculty with Dr. Blaettermann. In all, more than a dozen of Dr. Blaettermann's students became professors at various colleges and universities, and many others became teachers at lower levels (*Students of the University of Virginia*).

The most famous of Dr. Blaettermann's students was Edgar Allan Poe, who attended the University for a few months in 1826. According to the professor's son Poe was "a frequent visitor" at the Blaettermann house, "especially when we had young ladies visiting us, which was frequently the case" (*Memoirs*). Poe took French and Italian and possibly Spanish from Dr. Blaettermann and did well in his classes. The degree to which the professor may have influenced the poet is subject to speculation. One writer claimed that Poe "thrived" under Dr. Blaettermann's way of teaching (Silverman 30); another claimed that Dr. Blaettermann's "influence is perceptible all through Poe's humorous, imaginative work";⁴⁰ and yet another claimed that Poe rebelled against Dr. Blaettermann's traditional approach.⁴¹ There is simply insufficient information to make a determination. One is tempted to look to Blaettermann's etymological musings for the source of Poe's use of the word "quoth" (Anglo-Saxon *cwaeth*⁴²) in "The Raven," but there is no evidence to substantiate such an inference.

Dr. Blaettermann served at the University from 1825 to 1840. He frequently reported student offenses to the faculty, but in this regard he was no different from his colleagues; however, during the period from 1825 to 1830 one begins to see that his relationship to many of his students was worse than that of other professors. In most instances he began with a corrective comment or action that was poorly received. The most serious incident involving Dr. Blaettermann and a student occurred in April 1828 (FM 22–23 April 1828), and increased Blaettermann's dissatisfaction with his colleagues to the point of alienation. Having ordered a student (Thomas G. Tucker) to leave the classroom for offensive behavior, the professor struck at the student's hat, possibly knocking it off his head. The result was the student's assault on the professor that was stopped only when the other students intervened at Dr. Blaettermann's request.

The entire class was called to testify before the faculty over a two-day period. In his succinct summary of the evidence prior to Tucker's second appearance before the faculty Dr. Robley Dunglison remarked that the student had struck the professor "under the impression he would have been disgraced had he not done so." This observation, with which Dr. Blaettermann agreed, goes to the heart of the matter. The testimony of the other students concerned matters of fact; Tucker's testimony concerned a matter of honor. He indicated that if he could be convinced that the professor had no intention of striking him, "he would do what any other gen[leman] would do,

viz. he would say that he had acted wrong"; "he would apologize to Dr. B. according to the rules of honor;" "[i]f Dr. B. were to state he had no intention of striking him—he would be compelled by the rules of honor to act as every other gentleman" (FM 22–23 April 1828). While the offense of wearing a hat in a classroom is trivial by today's standards, we should note that Blaettermann's action was taken in view of a specific enactment of the Board of Visitors that proscribed wearing a hat during class (BOV 4 October 1824). Dr. Blaettermann could not have perceived Tucker's action as anything but a violation of the enactment and an indication of disrespect.

The faculty could not come to a decision about the student and turned the whole matter over to the Board of Visitors. The Board declined to act, noting that punishment for offenses lay within the purview of the faculty. Their response also clearly suggested that Dr. Blaettermann was partly to blame for the assault against him (BOV 21 July 1828). The Board's response was presented at the faculty meeting the next day. Dr. Blaettermann told his colleagues that he had had no intention of offering personal violence to the student, but that his actions may have been misunderstood, and withdrew his complaint. These words were enough for the faculty to dispense with the whole affair (FM 22 July 1828).

Considering that he had been beaten by a student over what was likely a trivial gesture of reprimand and had not been supported by his colleagues or employers, Dr. Blaettermann was probably more disgusted with the Board and the faculty than with the student. In reporting the incident he certainly did not expect the faculty's meek response of censuring Tucker and sending a note home to his parents. Tucker's defense stressed his understanding of the event as one in which his honor had been affronted. In his offer to apologize, as recorded in the minutes, he twice mentioned "the rules of honor." Dr. Blaettermann's son noted that his father had a "violent temper" (*Memoirs*). Tucker's behavior suggests a similar temperament; yet even according to the code of honor the student had other options at his disposal to respond to Dr. Blaettermann's gesture.

The available literature makes much of Dr. Blaettermann's inability to be a congenial colleague, but his dissension from the majority of the faculty on some matters was not so excessive that one should view him as an obstructionist. The minutes are full of dissenting votes by others, and even a full-scale rebellion against the Chairman in 1830. Dr. Blaettermann's experience with the faculty and the Board over the Tucker matter in 1828 almost certainly had exasperated him to the point that he cared little about faculty matters.

The collegiality that one would expect among the early professors may not have lasted long under the pressures of the teaching load and recurring difficulties with the students. Although Dr. Blaettermann had a thorough

command of the English language, his pronunciation coupled with his manners would only have exacerbated an already tense relationship. We must also mention that Professor Key seems to have gone out of his way to vote against Dr. Blaettermann whenever possible, and on one occasion even kicked him under the table, to which Dr. Blaettermann responded that Key kicked like an ass (Bruce II 34, 198). Key's dissatisfaction with his position caused him to break his five-year contract with the University and return to England (144).

Complicating Dr. Blaettermann's relationships with faculty and students was the presence of a French school operated by a V. Ferron near the University since 1827. Since a professor's salary consisted in part of fees paid by each of his students, Dr. Blaettermann lost considerable income because of Ferron's school. Any student who wanted to learn only French or who resented Dr. Blaettermann could avoid him entirely. On 27 September 1827 the faculty acceded to the professor's request for intervention and agreed to notify the University's Rector of the problem the French school had created, labeling it "the evil" in their resolution, language on which Dr. Blaettermann himself likely insisted. The proximity of the school to the University justifies the inference that the school was opened precisely to attract its students, i.e., to gain student revenue with the least effort. Furthermore, its teacher did not confine himself to his school and was confronted by the faculty in 1828 for having taught French within University precincts. On 5 July 1828 the faculty voted to forbid students to attend the instruction of any person not licensed or authorized by the University unless they had special permission from the faculty.

Despite the faculty's support of Dr. Blaettermann in the matter of the French school, in the second half of 1828 there was a serious rift between the professor and his colleagues concerning library books. Apparently Dr. Blaettermann kept books and periodicals as long as he saw fit. On 5 November the faculty assessed fines against him for overdue periodicals according to an agreement the faculty had signed in April. Dr. Blaettermann did not vote on the matter, but told the faculty a few days later that he wanted his name removed from the agreement. The faculty complied, but printed the agreement in the minutes (FM 8 November 1828). Blaettermann's actions likely reflected his resentment over the failure of his complaint against Tucker. For Blaettermann this represented his colleagues' lack of appreciation for his tribulations, or so he would have viewed it. In taking the unusual step of causing his name to be withdrawn from an agreement he had signed, Dr. Blaettermann placed himself outside the realm of the "Virginia gentleman" as a pariah of sorts. It is likely that he thought his withdrawal in this fashion was his best rejection of his treatment by the rest of the faculty, and he offered it *on their turf*, to put it colloquially, not on his own. By doing so he declared the gentleman's code irrelevant.

The summer of 1830 was an especially difficult time for the faculty, and Dr. Blaettermann was caught in the middle of it. Faculty minutes for the first half of 1830 show no particular problems involving the professor. He missed only three faculty meetings and lost only one student during this time; however, testimony from students indicates that some were taking his classes only because they were required to study under three professors.

In June Chairman Dungleison handled a student petition privately under his interpretation of his authority as Chairman. The faculty viewed his action as peremptory and asked for details about how he had handled the petition. When Dr. Dungleison refused, the faculty passed a resolution asking the Board of Visitors to clarify the Chairman's authority to act independently (FM 10 June 1830), to which Dungleison protested a few days later. On 19 July the Board supported Dungleison's interpretation and vested in him the sole authority to decide which offenses were to be referred to the entire faculty and the right to withhold information if he chose. The Board also forbid the faculty to punish or even try a student for an offense that the Chairman had not specifically referred to them. We should note here that the position of Chairman of the Faculty made Dr. Dungleison the most powerful individual at the University apart from the Rector of the Board of Visitors. The office of President of the University did not then exist; the Chairman of the Faculty was, in effect, the president.

It was also during July 1830 that matters came to a head with regard to Dr. Blaettermann. Faculty reports show that there were no graduates in Modern Languages in July. In addition, there were problems with the Junior French class examinations from the previous February. On 20 July the Board issued a broad resolution that denied Dr. Blaettermann the use of the pavilion promised him in his contract; however, this provision was not implemented. In addition, the resolution freed him from attending faculty meetings, but required him to fulfill all other duties, especially concerning weekly reports, and ordered him to instruct his students in literature and resume his lectures on history and geography. The most serious part of the resolution was that his salary would be reduced from \$1500 to \$1000, with the remainder to be given to a tutor the Board would hire.

If Dr. Blaettermann's behavior was so reprehensible that it was brought before the Board, one wonders why the Board did not simply dismiss him. On the other hand, we must acknowledge that firing a professor whose employment Jefferson himself had specifically ordered would not have been their preference; the manner in which the Board acted allowed them a clear conscience if the professor chose to resign.

The charges that provoked the resolution, and Dr. Blaettermann's responses to them, are found in an unsigned and hastily written document in the Special

Collections Library of the University of Virginia. The single sheet carries only the date of "Saturday," and may have been written on 17 July 1830, the last Saturday before the Board meeting on the 20th.⁴³ The charges against Dr. Blaettermann were probably given to him directly by the Chairman of the Faculty, as suggested by the Library's bibliographic entry for the document.

Six charges were made against the professor. To the first charge, that he did not reside in his pavilion, Dr. Blaettermann answered that although his wife did not reside there, he maintained his residence in the pavilion, that there was where he slept, "[had] his breakfast and tea," and "where his books and study [were]." He added that he slept elsewhere for eight or nine days at a time when ill.

The second charge accused him of neglecting his duties because of teaching at the "French school." The identity of this school cannot be easily determined, as the writing at this point is illegible to anyone but its author. Dr. Blaettermann's wife maintained a school for young ladies near the University (*Memoirs*). The professor's answer to the second charge suggests that the accuser had her school in mind. Dr. Blaettermann claimed to have "nothing to do with the conduct of that school, or with instruction given in it—except that he instructs his little boy in Latin and occasionally examines his exercises . . . ;" any assistance he gave those in his wife's school was "bestowed in the hours of his leisure" and did not interfere with his duties at the University.

The third charge was that Dr. Blaettermann had failed to teach his history and geography lessons. He responded that the courses were taught as long as there were students to attend them and that he presently had no students who would attend those lectures. The fourth charge was similar to the third and concerned negligence in regard to teaching literature. Dr. Blaettermann rejected the charge outright and claimed not to understand what the faculty meant with regard to teaching literature. He stated that since literature was a part of his lectures in history, and his lessons in history had been discontinued, he gave his students some explanation of the literature of the countries whose languages they were learning. At this point we recall Ticknor's assessment of Dr. Blaettermann's lack of "elegance" as a lecturer and the suspicion that he lacked sufficient knowledge of rhetoric, criticism and literary history (George Ticknor to Thomas Jefferson, 27 May 1819). The fifth charge concerned his inattention to filing reports, and the inaccuracy of those he did file. The professor claimed to have filed the reports as required, but had not known until recently that he was required to file weekly reports. Any inaccuracy in his reports, he said, was accidental.

The last charge concerned his allowing students to live in his pavilion. He answered that he had allowed only two students to live there. Dr.

Blaettermann could only have been referring to James Lawrence Cabell, who moved into the pavilion in October 1829, and to a Mr. Saunders, named by Cabell as the other resident in his letter of 23 October 1829 to his uncle. Dr. Blaettermann indicated that since he lived in the pavilion, he thought he had the right to extend this hospitality in this instance. This charge appears unusual, for James had written his uncle, "I knew you wanted me to get in one of the professor's houses if possible." It strains credulity to believe that the faculty, its Chairman, and the Board were unaware that James was the nephew of a Board member.

The Board had made its decision with limited information, and that information had been provided by Chairman Dunglison. Robley Dunglison played a more important role in the actions the Board took against Dr. Blaettermann in July 1830 than anyone has previously acknowledged. While one should not cast Dr. Dunglison as a stereotypical villain, the several years during which he was Chairman were a period of increasing tension between him and Professor Blaettermann. Dr. Dunglison's own reputation is considerably more solid than that of Dr. Blaettermann. He published widely, is well known to students of the history of medicine, and was Jefferson's last attending physician. He served several times as Chairman of the Faculty and seemed to enjoy the power he had. Dr. Dunglison was also very attentive to details and insisted on strict adherence to rules. He was accused in an anonymous letter of attending to petty regulations that had not been enforced by previous chairmen (*Journal*, 24 April 1829).

An example of Dr. Dunglison's fervent attention to regulations is his admonishment of Dr. Blaettermann for having told the janitor to ring the class bell at 4:15 rather than at 4:30 for his supplemental classes. The following letter is found in the entry for 18 October 1828 in the Chairman's *Journal*:

Sir

In accordance with an order of the Faculty, made October 6th and apportioning 1/2 past 4 o'clock on Monday, Wednesday & Friday as the time for the lectures (extra) on Modern Languages I directed the Janitor to have the Bell rung at that time, on those days. I find that on Friday & Wednesday he rang the Bell at 1/4 past 4—not at half past—and on questioning him regarding this act of insubordination he expressed himself as having been sanctioned in it by yourself.

I feel satisfied that if any such authorization were given by you, it was done in ignorance of the previous direction of the Chairman, under an order made by the Faculty and which none but the Faculty can alter.

I am Sir

obediently yours,
Robley Dunglison.
Chairman pro tempore.

Prof. Blaettermann.

Dr. Blaettermann's reply appears in the same entry:

Sir,

Your official note is before me, and I have the honor to say in reply, that, as the arrangement of the hours of lectures has been made for the convenience of the Lecturers, I was, I think, perfectly in order to lecture a quarter of an hour or even an hour sooner than usual, especially when, from the absence of Mr. Tucker, no one Professor was lecturing at that time--So far I have sanctioned this act of insubordination as you please to call it.

I am, Sir,

your very humble Servant

Dr Dungleison.

G. Blaettermann

The trivial nature of Dungleison's letter is evident, as is the sarcasm in Blaettermann's response.

Dr. Blaettermann's name appears frequently in the *Journal* between 1828 and 1830, the period dominated by Dungleison as Chairman of the Faculty. Some matters were minor, but the cumulative effect of recording such incidents did little to create harmony between the German professor and the English Chairman, who certainly viewed his colleague as an annoyance.

The remainder of 1830 was a difficult time for Dr. Blaettermann due to the enormous pressure put on him by the Board, much of which was unwarranted. He apparently considered abandoning the University but had already invested heavily in property and believed he would not get a fair price if he sold it, as Joseph C. Cabell wrote James Madison on 28 October 1830.⁴⁴ Dr. Blaettermann's reaction to the resolution of the Board of Visitors in 1830 is evident most clearly in this letter. Cabell wrote:

I had several interviews with Doct: Blatterman [*sic*], the result of which was a confirmation of my favorable disposition towards him. He appears to be deeply affected by the late proceedings of the board of Visitors, & repeatedly shed tears in speaking of them. Those proceedings seem to have had a favorable effect on his conduct as a Professor, and if they should not drive him from the Institution, will make him one of its most valuable members.

Given what is known about Dr. Blaettermann's temperament, one should not be surprised at his emotional reaction in front of Cabell. Cabell noted elsewhere in the letter that "the burthen of his complaint is that we have lessened his compensation whilst we have added to his duties."

Dr. Blaettermann had resigned himself to his reduced salary and the imposition of new duties, including the duty of managing a tutor. Cabell noted that the professor was preparing "a separate course on English, French, Spanish, Italian & German Literature, besides a course of Lectures on History." and called the professor's task "Herculean." His most significant

comment, however, shows how little the Board understood the men it had hired, and how much Cabell had learned in his visits with Dr. Blaettermann:

I more than ever deprecate *the rash policy of driving such a man from the Institution*, when we know that his learning will go with him, not to return in another, & when we hold our ablest professors by a brittle tenure. (emphasis added)

Cabell's comment confirms that the Board had intended to force Dr. Blaettermann's resignation.

Neither of the tutors that the Board hired over the next two years accomplished much, and the Board abolished the position of tutor on 18 July 1832. In the same year the faculty split the School of Modern Languages into two divisions, both still taught by Dr. Blaettermann. To graduate in Modern Languages a student had to master either three "Romanic" languages or one Romanic and one "Teutonic" language (FM 6 April 1832).

In 1833 Dr. Blaettermann's relations with the faculty were apparently acceptable, but the Board of Visitors attempted to abolish the School of Modern Languages, failing by one vote on 19 July, the day after Public Day (graduation), at which only two students, both in French, had graduated in Blaettermann's School. With their resolution of 20 July 1830 effectively scuttled for the moment and the School back in the hands of its professor since the abolition of the position of tutor, the Board may have considered that the time had come to dispose of both Blaettermann and his School. They could easily have hired someone to teach only French or relied on a school outside the precincts to provide the necessary instruction. Had the Board found grounds to dismiss Dr. Blaettermann at this time, they could have done so without dismantling the School of Modern Languages. That they chose the latter route strongly suggests a bias against the School itself. Curiously, having failed to get rid of the professor, the Board added a language requirement to the master's degree.

In 1835 Dr. Blaettermann had to deal with the problem of another French school nearby operated by a Mr. Vincent. The faculty had permitted students to attend his school under a license that provided that any student attending the school also be a member of the University's School of Modern Languages. After determining that the instructor had violated their terms, the faculty withdrew its license to Vincent on 8 April.

On 29 March 1836 Dr. Blaettermann's lecture was interrupted by students throwing shot at him (Bruce II 159), but we note that this was also the year in which dozens of members of the student militia company were dismissed for keeping weapons in their dormitories in violation of University regulations (FM 12 November 1836). In 1838 a student petition to remove

the professor was tabled by the Board, by which action the Board effectively rejected it (BOV 5 July 1838).

In September 1840 Dr. Blaettermann was reported to the Board of Visitors for having "cowhided" his wife in public. We do not know what rationale Blaettermann had for his attack on his wife nor is it likely that the matter was ever referred to the civil authorities, but the public nature of the offense was serious enough for the Board to dismiss Dr. Blaettermann from his position on 14 September (Bruce II 159), the only one of the original professors brought over from England to be discharged. A few weeks later Professor Charles Bonnycastle died of natural causes, and in November Professor John A. G. Davis was fatally shot by a student. Almost a third of the faculty was gone within eight weeks.⁴⁵

Dr. Blaettermann's dismissal precipitated a crisis in the Modern Language School that lasted four years, due primarily to the difficulty of finding someone with his broad knowledge of languages that would be acceptable to the Board. During this period some University students who wished to take the master's degree would find their degrees crippled by a notation that they had not completed the Modern Language requirements (BOV 2 July 1841). The University first appointed Charles Kraitser to Blaettermann's post (BOV July 3, 1841), but he resigned in 1844 (BOV 5 July 1844). Finally, on 25 September 1844, Schele de Vere assumed the post and remained at the University for fifty years.

After 1840 Dr. Blaettermann tended to his farm and wrote articles for a farm journal. He attempted to open a school himself in 1846, but nothing came of it,⁴⁶ and he died in January 1850 of apoplexy while walking back to his farm after visiting a neighbor (*Memoirs*).

One can justly censure Dr. Blaettermann for his temperament, especially concerning the incident of domestic violence that caused his dismissal from the University. We may also find fault with his treatment of students, particularly those whom he singled out as lazy, but we should take into consideration the pronounced cultural bias against the foreign professors. H. L. Mencken noted that the American after 1814 was far different from the one of revolutionary days. He was "ignorant, pushful, impatient of restraint and precedent, an iconoclast, a Philistine, an Anglophobe in every fiber."⁴⁷ It is hardly a stretch to conclude that their attitude toward Germans was no better.

We note, too, the obvious inconsistency in Dr. Blaettermann's ownership of slaves and his professed enthusiasm for American democracy. That he was aware of this inconsistency is unlikely, but he was one of several early professors at the University who accepted their new culture by adopting its most objectionable practice. Dr. Blaettermann's widow freed his slaves about five years after his death.⁴⁸

We also regret the fact that Dr. Blaettermann did not publish his philological insights or take a more active role in promoting the field of modern language study in the United States by publishing a grammar, for example. In this regard he differs considerably from Charles Follen. On the positive side we must give Dr. Blaettermann credit for maintaining a school of modern languages at a time when such a school was a novelty. Furthermore, the population in general was not yet ready to abandon the notion that only a Frenchman should teach the modern languages, especially when one of those languages was French. Although there is only scant evidence concerning his teaching of the German language, it is likely that he frequently introduced students in all his courses to German history and politics. Of the twenty-five questions on Dr. Blaettermann's examination in "Modern Geography, History &c." in 1828 all but four deal with German-speaking countries (*Virginia Literary Museum*, 24 June 1829).

One should not underrate the fifteen-year stability of the School of Modern Languages that Dr. Blaettermann provided. Despite his temperamental personality and the attitudes of the student body he managed to provide hundreds of students instruction in four modern languages at a time when such an offering was rare, and in fact, unavailable in Virginia for the first few years of his tenure. He was for some time the only person in higher education in the United States who taught Anglo-Saxon, and this fact alone contributed to the University's growing reputation. Dr. Blaettermann's insights in philology specifically, and the broad expanse of his linguistic capabilities in general were assets that set the standard by which his successors would be measured. Had he abandoned the University in 1830, his learning, as Joseph C. Cabell had indicated, would have gone with him. It would have been relatively easy to find a teacher of French, but one who also knew a wide range of modern languages, and Anglo-Saxon, and could teach them from a philological perspective would have been impossible to find at the time. Jefferson's School of Modern Languages, if it had survived at all, would have become a shadow of what Jefferson had intended, and the modern field of foreign language instruction would have suffered as a result.

Perhaps the words a more generous and reflective Robley Dunglison wrote years later best sum up George W. Blaettermann: He was "a man of great philological knowledge, but by no means refined. He was kind hearted; and a greater enemy to himself than to any other person" (*Autobiographical Ana* 47).

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Notes

¹Frank Mehring, "Karl/Charles Follen: Rediscovering the Multilingual Oeuvre," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 42 (2007): 17–38. Unless otherwise noted, all information regarding Follen in this study comes from this source.

²*Historical Register of Harvard University, 1636–1936* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1937), 211.

³Dr. Blaettermann was born on 2 April 1782 in or near (Bad) Langensalza, Germany, and was baptized George Willhelm Blättermann (spelling confirmed in church records). *Geburtsregister St. Stephani 1770–1786*, Evangelische Kirchengemeinde, Bad Langensalza, Germany, p. 356, Nr. 34. Although his birthplace lay in Thuringia, he took pride in being a Saxon, as his son reported. (George Walter Blattermann, *Memoirs of George Walter Clements Blatterman [manuscript]*, ca. 1902. Accession #10233, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA; cited hereafter as *Memoirs*.) The son also noted that the professor chose to spell his surname "Blaettermann," but that he did not and "omitted two letters the better to adapt myself to American usage and custom."

⁴"J'ai voyagé quelque temps, j'ai vu le monde, j'ai même fait la campagne de Russie, en Qualité de Commissaire, sous Buonaparte dont la chute m'a poussé jusqu'à Londres" (translation mine). Letter of George Blaettermann, London, to Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, April 27, 1819. ALS. French. The Jefferson Papers of the University of Virginia, 1732–1828, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA.

⁵See "Getting Word_Lucy Blaetterman," Site Name: Monticello, Home of Thomas Jefferson, page created September 14, 1998, sponsor of site: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. 1 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.monticello.org/gettingword/GW/lucy.html>>. See also Catherine S. Neale's discussion of the early professors who purchased slaves (Catherine S. Neale, "Slaves, Freedpeople, and the University of Virginia." B.A. Honors thesis, University of Virginia, 2006, 29–30).

⁶According to records of King's College, Aberdeen, the future professor received the honorary degree of LL.D. on 20 March 1822, and was noted as having the A.M. degree from the University of Leipzig. *Officers and Graduates of University & King's College, Aberdeen, MVD–MDCCCLX*, ed. Peter John Anderson (Aberdeen: Printed for the New Spalding Club, 1893), 115.

⁷Philip Alexander Bruce, *History of the University of Virginia, 1819–1919, The Lengthened Shadow of One Man*, 5 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920–1922), II 160, cited hereafter by volume and page; Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1969) 164; Virginius Dabney, *Mr. Jefferson's University: A History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981) 14; Garry Wills, *Mr. Jefferson's University* (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2002), 125.

⁸In 1888 William P. Trent noted his regret that he could not "obtain more facts of importance" regarding Dr. Blaettermann. William P. Trent. "The Influence of the University of Virginia upon Southern Life and Thought" in Herbert Baxter Adams. "Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia, by Herbert B. Adams . . . with authorized sketches of Hampden-Sidney, Randolph-Macon, Emory-Henry, Roanoke, and Richmond Colleges, Washington and Lee University, and Virginia Military Institute." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1888) Google Books. 23 March 2007 <<http://books.google.com>> 160. The following year Trent made a similar comment: "Of Dr. Blaettermann's antecedents I have been unable to procure any information." William P. Trent, *English Culture in Virginia: A Study of the Gilmer Letters and an Account of the English Professors Obtained by Jefferson for the University of Virginia*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, ed. Herbert B. Adams, Seventh Series V–VI (Baltimore: N. Murray, Publication Agent, Johns Hopkins University, May and June, 1889), 58.

⁹The article "University of Virginia" appeared anonymously in the January 1842 issue of *The Southern Literary Messenger*. [Benjamin Blake Minor], "University of Virginia," *The Southern Literary Messenger* 8.1 (8 January 1842) 50–54. Making of America Journal Articles, University of Michigan: Humanities Text Initiative, 1 Nov 2007 <<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/acf2679.0008.001>>. Minor, who became the editor of the *Messenger* the following year, finally acknowledged authorship in 1897 (B. B. Minor, "The Chapel at the University," *Alumni Bulletin*. Published Quarterly by the Faculty of the University of Virginia. 3.4 [February 1897] 105). The attack on Dr. Blaettermann is given here in its entirety:

Disease and crime removed these Professors [Bonnycastle and Davis], and inflicted a serious blow upon the pride of Virginia. But disgrace has also done its part; which is mainly attributable to the neglect and inaction of the Visitors [*sic*]. Dr. Blaettermann [*sic*], who was displaced for gross misconduct, was also one of the professors brought over by Mr. Gilmer. He was always said to be a man of great attainments, but it is doubtful whether he has added any thing to his information for several years past. His habits and character rendered him totally unfit for his office, had he been the most resplendent genius. The Visitors would not have assigned him any important part in the government of the institution, and yet retained him as an instructor, in despite [*sic*] of his well known improper conduct. For several sessions the students openly complained of his unfitness; and it was a common jest that he was retained because of his acquaintance with the Anglo-Saxon language, which was said to be a great hobby of one of the Visitors. In 1838, a large number of students, thinking that their duty required it, signed and presented to the Board a memorial praying to have him removed. The Visitors would not grant the prayer, though they had themselves reduced his salary for the same offences [*sic*] with which the students charged him. It was not until he plainly degraded himself, that they had the independence to dismiss him. Thus a vague fear of giving offence, and of doing injustice to individuals, causes men to be retained in office to the public detriment, when their unfitness is manifest. These things are not said in malice against the dismissed professor, nor in angry feeling against any one; but in love and zeal for the University, whose cause should be advocated plainly and positively. ("University of Virginia" 51f.)

¹⁰Dr. Gessner Harrison, "The University of Virginia," *Cyclopaedia of American Literature* (New York, 1856). Google Books, 1 Nov. 2007 <<http://books.google.com>>. II 730.

¹¹John Lewis, *Tables of Comparative Etymology and Analogous Formations in the Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, English, and German Languages; or, The Student's Manual of Languages. Designed to Facilitate the Study of Them, by a Connected View of Their Declensions, Methods of Comparison, Conjugations, Interchangeable Letters, and Similar Terminations*. The Greek by G. Long, the German by Dr. G. Blaettermann, Professors of Ancient and Modern Languages in the University of Virginia (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828). Copy in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society.

¹²*Virginia Literary Museum and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, &c.* 1.1 (June 17, 1829)–1.52 (June 9, 1830) (Charlottesville, VA: F. Carr, 1830). Special Collections. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA.

¹³University of Virginia Faculty Minutes Vols. I–XIX, 1825–1970, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. All references to the minutes of the faculty are from these volumes. Cited in the text as FM with the date of the meeting, or simply the date if the context is clear.

¹⁴*Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, 1827–1864*, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. All references and quotations from these journals are from these volumes. Cited in the text as *Journal*, or when the context is clear, the date of the entry.

¹⁵ Ronald B. Head, "The Declension of George Blaettermann. First Professor of Modern Languages at the University of Virginia," *Virginia Cavalcade* 31, 4 (Spring 1982): 187.

¹⁶ Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson to William Hilliard, November 4, 1825. The Thomas Jefferson Papers, American Memory, Library of Congress. 25 October 2007 <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/>.

¹⁷ James Lawrence Cabell, Letter to Joseph Carrington Cabell, April 2, 1830, Correspondence of James Lawrence Cabell, 1829–37, Accession #1640 and #3894, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. All correspondence between James Lawrence Cabell and Joseph Carrington Cabell referenced in this article is from this source and is cited hereafter only by date.

¹⁸ See William P. Trent's "The Influence of the University of Virginia upon Southern Life and Thought" in Herbert Baxter Adams' "Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia" 160. See also Stanley R. Hauer, "Thomas Jefferson and the Anglo-Saxon Language," *PMLA* 98, 5 (October 1983): 891.

¹⁹ The first professor to hold the chair at William and Mary was Italian-born Charles Bellini, whose field encompassed the French, Italian, Spanish, and German languages. Bellini died in 1803 and was succeeded by Louis H. Girardin, who moved to Richmond in 1805. The position remained vacant until 1829. See Lyon G. Tyler, *The College of William and Mary in Virginia: Its History and Work. 1693–1907*. (Richmond, VA: Whitte & Shepperson, Printers, 1907) 61, 68. The dates of Bellini's and Girardin's service as given by Tyler may not be accurate. See J. Worth Banner, "Genesis in Modern Languages," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 17.1 (May 1951) 2 October 2007; 1, 6–7 <<http://www.jstor.org/search/>> 6. Banner gives Bellini's date of death as June 1804 (6) instead of 1803, as in Tyler. Bruce cites 1806 as the year Girardin "determined to resign his chair" (I 117), whereas Tyler claims he moved to Richmond in 1805. Banner notes that the catalogue for the 1829–30 session lists C. de la Pena (Peña) as Professor of Modern Languages (6). In any event, the chair was vacant until long after the University of Virginia had opened.

²⁰ See Bruce vol. I, ch. 2, "First Period. Struggle for a University."

²¹ Jefferson referred to the "promiscuous use of the vowels" and the "unsettled orthography" of Anglo-Saxon. See Thomas Jefferson, *An Essay Towards Facilitating Instruction in the Anglo-Saxon and Modern Dialects of the English Language*, New York, 1851 11. In his letter to Herbert Croft in 1798 on the Anglo-Saxon language, included with the essay, Jefferson wrote, "[S]ome ideas occurred [to me] for facilitating the study by simplifying its grammar, by reducing the infinite diversities of its unfixed orthography to single and settled forms" (4). See also Hauer's critique of Jefferson's approach.

²² See especially Ticknor's letter of 14 October 1815, in O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor. A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamstown, Massachusetts: McClellan Press, 1933. Photocopy. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Preservation Section, 1991), 13–15.

²³ Letter from George Ticknor to Thomas Jefferson, May 27, 1819, The Thomas Jefferson Papers, American Memory, Library of Congress. 4 October 2007 <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/>.

²⁴ Commentary of Kate M. Blatterman, daughter of the professor's adopted son George Walter Blatterman, in George Walter Blaettermann [sic], *Reminiscences of His Step-father, George Blaettermann, Early Professor at the University of Virginia, 1830–1904*, Accession #789, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA, [ca. 1904]. Ms. Blatterman's commentary is based on and extends her father's holographic notebook cited in this article as *Memoirs*. See note 3.

²⁵ Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, *The Republic of Letters: The Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison 1776–1826*, ed. James Morton Smith, 3 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 3: 1912.

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²⁶Thomas Jefferson, Letter to George Ticknor, 24 December 1819, The Thomas Jefferson Papers, American Memory, Library of Congress, 22 February 2007 <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/>. Spelling modernized.

²⁷George Blaettermann, London, to Richard Rush, 6 October 1821, The Jefferson Papers of the University of Virginia, 1732–1828. Main Series III. 1821–1824. M 124 (microfilm) Roll 9. Spelling modernized.

²⁸George Blaettermann, London, to Richard Rush, 8 October 1821, The Jefferson Papers of the University of Virginia, 1732–1828. Main Series III. 1821–1824. M 124 (microfilm) Roll 9. Spelling modernized.

²⁹See the minutes of the Board of Visitors for 7 April 1824 (Board of Visitors minutes. University of Virginia, Board of Visitors, University of Virginia Library Digital Collections, 2006. Accessed on various dates. <<http://lib.virginia.edu/digital/collections/text/bov.html>>, cited hereafter as BOV with the date of the meeting or with simply the date where the reference is unambiguous).

³⁰See especially vol. II of Bruce.

³¹This incident is given in various accounts. See Bruce II 298f. and H[enry] Tutwiler, “Early Years of the University of Virginia. Address of H. Tutwiler, A.M., LL.D., of Alabama, Before the Alumni Society of the University of Virginia, Thursday, June 29th, 1882,” ([Charlottesville, VA], 1882) 10f. Professor George Tucker also recounted the event in his *Life of Jefferson* and noted the presence of Jefferson’s [grand]nephew among the guilty parties (excerpted in Samuel X. Radbill and Robley Dunglison, *The Autobiographical Ana of Robley Dunglison, M.D.*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, 53.8 [1963], <<http://www.jstor.org/search/>> 30).

³²Cornelia Jefferson Randolph, Letter to Ellen Wayles Randolph, August 3, 1825, Correspondence of Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge, 1819–61, Accession #9090, 38-584, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA.

³³University of Virginia, Catalogue of Students, 1825–1850. (A Catalogue of the Officers and Matriculates of the University of Virginia). LD5667. Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. The catalog for the first session (1825) incorrectly states that seventy-three students were enrolled in modern languages, but the list of students shows only sixty-eight names in that School. Note that students were expected to enroll in more than one School. Cited by session or year.

³⁴Kenneth Silverman, *Edgar A. Poe. Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 459.

³⁵Richard Cary Ambler, Richard Cary Ambler Notebooks, 1810–1877, Accession #10037, Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. Spelling and punctuation modernized.

³⁶Thomas T. Bouldin, Student notebook, ca. 1835, concerning lectures of George Blaettermann on the Anglo Saxon language at the University of Virginia, Sec. 13, Bouldin Family, Papers, 1737–1960, Part 3, Mss1 B6638 a 28-822, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. Owned by the Virginia Historical Society. Contrast Blaettermann’s attention to the rules governing vowels and consonants with Jefferson’s more casual, and less accurate, approach to Anglo-Saxon orthography.

³⁷I should also point out that in stressing etymology Dr. Blaettermann was not alone. Gessner Harrison’s similar emphasis in the School of Ancient Languages was a source of consternation for at least one of his students. In his diary entry for 15 June 1835, Charles Ellis thoroughly pilloried Professor Harrison for his “twisted Etymology”, arguing that it was absurd to be required to study the subject “after having Graduated in the Language,” and noting that bears “generally ascend tail foremost, and old Gess, alias Bear, seems to be mounting among the branches of his Etymological Tree pretty much in a backward fashion.” Charles

Ellis, Charles Ellis Diary, 10 March–25 June 1835, Accession #8745, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA.

³⁸ University of Virginia, *Students of the University of Virginia: A Semi-Centennial Catalogue, with Brief Biographical Sketches* (Baltimore: Charles Harvey & Co., [ca. 1878]) n.p.

³⁹ John A. Broadus, "A Memorial of Gessner Harrison, M.D., Professor of Ancient Languages in the University of Virginia: Read Before the Society of Alumni, July 2, 1873 / by John A. Broadus" (Charlottesville, 1874), 20.

⁴⁰ The quotation is found in Gustav Gruener, "Poe's Knowledge of German," *Modern Philology*, 2.1 (June 1904), repr. [Chicago], Printed at the University of Chicago Press, [1904]:

His [Poe's] chief instructor was Professor Blaettermann, who, according to Professor James A. Harrison, was "an accomplished German," and whose "influence is perceptible all through Poe's humorous, imaginative work." (127)

Gruener cites his source for the quotation from Harrison as a personal letter. Harrison was a professor at the University of Virginia and an editor of Poe's works. See Edgar Allan Poe, *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., Publishers, [1902]). Volume 1, which contains Harrison's biography of Poe, has no claim similar to the one he made in his letter.

⁴¹ Kevin J. Hayes, *Poe and the Printed Word [electronic resource]* Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge UP, 25 October 2007 <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ualib/Doc?id=2000928>> 12f.

⁴² *Cwæþ*: For example, see James R. Hulbert, *Bright's Anglo-Saxon Reader* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1935), 265.

⁴³ George Blaettermann, George Blaettermann Answers to Charges [manuscript] [1830?], Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA.

⁴⁴ Joseph C. Cabell to James Madison, 28 October 1830, *The James Madison Papers*, American Memory, Library of Congress, 24 June 2007 <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/madison_papers/index.html>.

⁴⁵ Dr. Blaettermann's dismissal is noted in the minutes of the Board of Visitors for 14 September 1840. Professor Bonnycastle's date of death is recorded on his tombstone in the University cemetery, as is that of Professor Davis, who died on 14 November. He was shot on 12 November (Bruce II 309).

⁴⁶ John W. Boitnott, "Secondary Education in Virginia, 1845–1870," dissertation University of Virginia, 1935, 206.

⁴⁷ H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, 1963, quoted in Michael I. Miller, "A Jacksonian View of American English." *Revue française* 18 398.

⁴⁸ Letter of Elizabeth C. Blaetterman to Victoria, 30 June 1860. Francis Lee Thurman Papers, 1827–1860, Accession #799, Special Collections. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. See also Catherine S. Neale, noted above.