

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY FEBRUARY 19



Roscoe Conklin Harrison, noted physician and founder of Harrison Hospital, was born on February 19, 1880.

CSO: SS.8.7, SS.8.24, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (*Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, November 22, 1923)

1. Although printed in the *Bluefield Telegraph* (Mercer County), Dr. Harrison's body was laid to rest in Kimball, located in *this* county whose government resides in Welch.
2. Reverend Johnson used a metaphor to describe Dr. Johnson's passing and felt that it would difficult to find any man who could fill his place. What was the metaphor that was used to describe Dr. Johnson's larger-than-life impact?

Think Critically: What obstacles do you think Dr. Harrison had to face as an African American physician during the early twentieth century? Do you think that African American physicians were trusted as equally as their white counterparts? What made McDowell County a lucrative opportunity for a young Dr. Harrison?

Bluefield Daily Telegraph

269.

Bluefield, W. Va., Thursday Morning, November 22, 1923.—Twelve Pages.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
LEARNED WIRE.

A GREAT CROWD ATTENDS FUNERAL

Last Sad Rites Over Dr. Harrison, Well Known Colored Physician, Took Place at Kimball Yesterday.

Never in the history of the city of Kimball has such solemn and sincere homage been paid to the memory of a departed citizen as that which marked the saying of the last sad rites over the body of Dr. R. C. Harrison yesterday afternoon at the Ebenezer Presbyterian church.

Dr. Harrison was the leading figure of the colored race in the medical fraternity, and a man generally esteemed by both races.

In compliance with the request of the deceased and the wishes of his family, the services were conducted by the Flat Top Medical Association of which the deceased was a member and staunch worker. Dr. Bamfield, of Omar, president of the state medical association was master of ceremonies.

As the church bell slowly tolled, the cortege wound its way to the little church perched upon the hill side of one of West Virginia's picturesque mountains.

A hush fell upon the waiting crowds as with tender hands and heavy hearts the pall-bearers, life long friends and professional associates, lifted the casket and bore it between lines of school children who chanted "Nearer My God to Thee," and as the procession reached the door of the church the organ pealed forth the strains of "Holy Ghost With Light Divine." The casket, literally banked with floral tributes from friends, was placed before the altar and for the last time all that was mortal of Roscoe C. Harrison rested within the walls of God's house, the one in which he had been so active and the one in whose doctrines he found so much of solace and relief when burdened with the cares and strife of a busy world.

The edifice was taxed to its utmost capacity and hundreds of loving friends were turned back at the door, unable to gain admittance.

The services were impressive indeed and the music seemed to be inspired from above.

Program follows:

1. Hymn, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."
 2. Invocation, Prof. W. W. Sanders, board of education.
 3. Hymn, "Jesus Lover of My Soul."
 4. Scripture reading, Rev. Inman, First Baptist church, Kimball.
 5. Solo, Dr. C. E. Yancey.
 6. Sermon, Rev. R. P. Johnson.
 7. Solo, Prof. S. G. Hough.
 8. Eulogy, Dr. Eugene L. Youngue. (On behalf of Flat Top Medical Association.)
 9. Hymn, "One Sweetly Solemn Thought."
 10. Eulogy, Dr. Gamble, of Charleston. (On behalf of the Chi Delta Mu.)
 11. Remarks on behalf of the medical profession, (white), Dr. Campbell and Rutherford.
- On behalf of the citizens, Judge I.

C. Herndon and Judge Strother.

On behalf of the colored citizens, Messrs. T. Edward Hill, R. L. Benton and R. P. Sims.

12. Hymn, "In The Hour of Trial."
13. Hymn, "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?"

Resolutions from the Pythians, Elks, Golden Rule, Senior Class (high school), schools and the First Baptist church were presented and read for publication.

Roscoe Conkin Harrison was born on February 19, 1839 in Raleigh, N. C., where he attended the public schools and later attended the schools in Franklin county, Ala. Being of poor but honest parentage the responsibility of his younger brothers and sisters soon fell upon his shoulders and true to his stamp he never faltered. He later attended the Bluefield Colored Institute and from that institution graduated prior to taking institute, from which he graduated up the study of medicine at Meharry in 1904.

He selected Kimball as his field of operations and his devotion to the work to which he had pledged his life aided him materially in building up the splendid institution which will always stand as a monument to the indomitable will and unconquerable spirit of a man chosen by God to be a friend and healer to mankind.

His devotion to his blood kin never wavered and just a short time before his death he journeyed far to the bedside of his brother and brought him back to Kimball to be under his own care. His brother Hubert Harrison passed away just one month and three days before Roscoe Harrison married Miss Edna B. Grimes in 1909. There were two children to bless this union, Willis R. and Phoebe Elaine Harrison.

During the course of his remarks, Rev. Johnson, the pastor of the Ebenezer church, said in part that "God and Nature strove to do their best in the creation of Dr. Harrison and his accomplishments prove that neither God nor nature had failed and that words will be a hollow mockery unless those of the medical profession carry on the work at the institution started and built by Harrison."

"A truly great heart belongs to no race but instead belongs to all mankind. Born not to die but created for the infinite. Nations of the world came for his healing touch and none left unbenefitted. In order that he might better understand and serve his foreign patients, he learned to speak their language and over all of the defects of all mankind he cast the mantle of his charity. God made him a man and he made himself the foremost surgeon of this section of the country."

A mighty oak hath fallen and to find a man large enough to fill his place will be a task of no little difficulty, yet God in his infinite wisdom work in ways that we of mortal cloth see not.

Truly when the curtains of the firmament shall be pulled aside the star of Roscoe C. Harrison will be found shining forth with a greater luminancy and throughout the sons of time his name will grow and his memory linger in the hearts of men, and God will grant unto his tired soul rest and peace eternal.

As the sun was slowly setting behind the western hills all that was mortal of Roscoe C. Harrison was lowered into the tomb and consigned to rest within the bosom of the earth from whence he sprang.

Noticeable among the vast throng assembled at the grave were many foreigners, patients of the deceased, who clad in their picturesque attire gathered to pay the last tribute of love and respect at the bier of their friend and benefactor.

The pallbearers were: Dr. J. S. Brown, Dr. A. A. Staples, Dr. J. C. Kinslow, Dr. J. E. Hereford, Dr. C. E. Yancey, Dr. W. A. Brown, Dr. G. Wanen, and Dr. Luther Drew.

The honorary pallbearers were: Dr. Barnett, Huntington; Dr. R. R. Jones, Charleston; Dr. C. A. Rogers, Bluefield; Dr. Gamble, Charleston; Dr. Critchlow, Denmor; Dr. Low, Hinton; Dr. W. C. Mitchell, Bluefield; Dr. E. W. Lomax, Bluefield; Dr. E. S. Loung, Welch; Dr. J. S. Bamfield, president of State Medical Association, Omar; Dr. W. L. Colston, Welch; Dr. Sadler, Keystone; Dr. Wewen, Dr. Mae Whittico, Williamson, Dr. W. A. Holley.

A large number from all sections of southern West Virginia attended the funeral and Hon. A. G. Free, recorder of deeds of the district of Columbia, came from Washington to be present.