

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY AUGUST 19



On August 19, 1899, W. E. Stathers, superintendent of Weston Hospital for the Insane, was found not guilty of charges that he engaged in improper relations with female employees.

CSO: SS.8.23

Investigate the Document: (Ar1731, *George Wesley Atkinson Papers, 1899*)

1. How did the Board of Governor's rule regarding the charges brought against the Superintendent of the West Hospital, W. E. Stathers?
2. Why does the author of the letter seem angry?
3. In which county could you have found the Weston Hospital for the Insane?

Think Critically: Why was there a need for this hospital? What is the building used for today?

State of West Virginia,
Executive Chamber,
Charleston.

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Private Secretary

October 21, 1899.

Rev. A. Mick,

Buckhannon, W. Va.

My Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter to His Excellency, Governor Atkinson, who has handed the copy to me for reply, I am to say that I did show the letter to Dr. Stehens, written by Rev. J. S. Robinson, and forwarded to this office by you, and I am glad I did so, - under similar circumstances would do so again when a man's character is assailed. I think it a duty I owe to good citizenship to let the one so wilfully traduced know who his traducers and villifiers are.

This letter, written by a minister of the Gospel, is a vile, unjust and unwarranted attack upon a man who, at the time it was written, had not one single charge preferred against him, and when the charges were made, the Board of Directors (composed of the best men of both political parties in West Virginia), promptly rendered a verdict of "Not Guilty." Either Mr. Robinson, who professes and preaches charity to all mankind, good will toward all, is in error, or else seven of the biggest, broadest, men of our State perjured themselves. Which would you believe? A man who, under his ministerial garb would write a letter traducing a brother, villifying him under cover, and then when exposed request his letter returned, or seven disinterested men who were at the meeting and heard the evidence and rendered a verdict in accordance with the testimony adduced at the trial, and without political bias or prejudice? Let me ask why does Mr. Robinson want this letter returned to him? He wrote it. Why not stand to it? Why say a thing behind a man's

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#2. Mick.

back, and not be willing to back it up? Is this a christian, Godlike spirit?
Is it honest? Is it just?

Would you stoop to so low a thing, as to write such a communication,
and then not be willing to stick to what you said? No, from all I know and
hear about you, you are above such contemptible business. Why does not Mr.
Robinson come out like a man and a minister and stick to what he said in
his letter, go to Dr. Stathers and tell him "he ought to be egged out of this
county", and say to him direct as he does in this letter, "Dr. Stathers, of
the Hospital, has been guilty of immoral conduct." How did he know Dr. Stathers
was guilty of immoral conduct? Does he put himself up as a Judge for the
citizens of Lewis County? Perhaps it would be well to let the citizens there
judge him a little too. If he knows what he wrote was true, which he did not,
why does he wish his letter returned? Why not, as a minister of the Gospel,
consider others before making such a wide, vile unwarranted assertion, and
endeavor to smirch a brother's character. Why did he not have manliness
enough to write to the Governor himself in place of endeavoring to make a tool
of you? --"and decided to write you and have you write Atkinson." If such
villifiers as he had control of the Chapel services, my opinion is it was well
they were discontinued. The people demand something more than commonplace
billingsgate from ~~such~~ a minister of God's word. They want and demand straight-
forwardness, honesty, truth, and fair dealing from one whose duty it is to lead
them in the narrow path toward God and Heaven, and they will not follow any
narrow-minded, bigoted, selfconstituted Judge(?) who is not willing to stand
up to what he says. *His* letter will not be returned. It is a part of the

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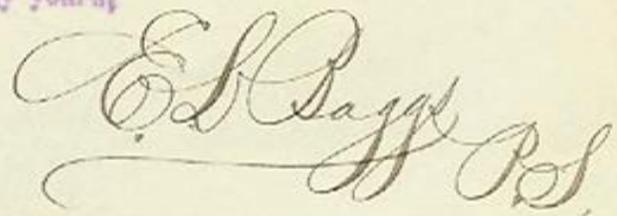
B. H. H.

files of this office, and is public property, as is all the evidence and
contents in the case of Dr. Stathers.

I assume all responsibility of having the letter to Dr. Stathers,
as well as the contents of this letter, and you are at perfect liberty to
show to Rev. Mr. Robinson if you see fit.

With respect, I am, sir,

Most truly yours,



P. S. I have great respect for you, because I know you, but I have no
respect for Mr. Robinson, or any other man who will vilify a neighbor and
then try to sneak out of it.

Will was here yesterday, and is always a welcome visitor, as are
all such noble boys.

B.