

# Private Veterinary Colleges in the District of Columbia: Daniel E. Salmon's National Veterinary College and Its Successors

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## Introduction

As the veterinary profession was developing in the late nineteenth century, the need for qualified practitioners became increasingly evident. As a result, a number of veterinary colleges were established in the United States. Many of these schools were private, while others began on campuses of land-grant universities.<sup>1</sup> This need for trained veterinarians was also felt in Washington, DC, where the US Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) was involved with combating animal plagues and gearing up to establish a nation-wide meat inspection program. Established in 1884 under the US Department of Agriculture, the BAI, led by Dr. Daniel E. Salmon, was primarily charged with preventing diseased animals from being used as food.

Between 1892 and 1927, several private veterinary colleges were established and produced graduates in the District of Columbia. These included the National Veterinary College (which merged into the Columbian University Veterinary Department), the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, and the George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine.

This paper addresses the sequence of private schools influenced by Daniel E. Salmon, first as the National Veterinary College, and later continued by the College of Veterinary Medicine affiliated with George Washington University.

## D.E. Salmon as Educator

Daniel Elmer Salmon, BVS, DVM (1850–1914)<sup>2,3,4</sup> (Fig. 1) is widely known for his work as Chief of the BAI for 21 years. He is also honored by having the newly discovered *Salmonella* bacteria named in his honor and by being the first to be awarded a DVM degree in the United States in 1876 from Cornell University. “Educator” should also be added to his credentials for his initiatives in veterinary education.



**Figure 1. Daniel Elmer Salmon, BVS, DVM (1850–1914), founded the National Veterinary College in Washington, DC, in 1892.** Source: Salmon DE. *The United States Bureau of Animal Industry at the close of the Nineteenth Century*. [Souvenir volume]. Washington: Published by the Author.

Dr. Salmon was influential in establishing a private veterinary college in Washington, DC, that merged into a university-based curriculum several years later. A decade would pass before another college associated with a major university would be established in the District of Columbia.

## National Veterinary College (1892–1896)

In 1892, Dr. Salmon founded the National Veterinary College (NVC) in Washington, DC.<sup>5,6,7</sup> Not initially affiliated with

a university and despite its name, “this was a private school and consequently not a ‘national’ veterinary college in the true sense of the word.”<sup>8</sup> It had been created, in part, “to train veterinarians for service in the federal government as meat inspectors, chiefly, and as researchers.”<sup>9</sup> Not sponsored by the United States government, it was supported by tuition from its students and fees from clients.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, earlier in that century, establishment of a truly national veterinary college funded by federal appropriation from Congress had been discussed, but such a college never materialized. Bierer<sup>11</sup> explained “that Dr. George H. Dadd had first suggested the utility of a national veterinary college as early as 1856. Nearly a decade later, U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture Horace Capron’s 1868 report pointed out the value of having that department initiate the establishment of a national veterinary college. Similar sentiments were urged by Dr. James Law in his 1877 paper on veterinary education and by Professor Alexander Liataud who urged Congress to appropriate funding in Washington or a large city in editorials in the *American Veterinary Review*. Furthermore, Dr. F.S. Billings “strongly recommended the establishment of a national veterinary institution in a series of articles in 1878 in the *Turf, Field and Farm* agricultural journal.”

Salmon’s two-year school was chartered on August 27, 1892.<sup>12</sup> The first of two 6-month sessions began several months later on October 18 and lasted until March 1893. Classes were first held at 1227 R Street NW “pending the erection of the commodious college and hospital buildings.” Trustees were D.E. Salmon, President; W.H. Heiser, Vice-President; Ch. B. Michener, Secretary and Treasurer; A.M. Farrington; and A.W. Swedberg.

According to its *First Annual Announcement*,<sup>13</sup> “the faculty is made up of well known veterinarians and experienced lecturers who are recognized as authorities on the subjects which they teach.” The inaugural faculty included:

**D.E. Salmon, DVM, ARCVS (Hon)**, Professor of Sanitary Medicine, Control and Eradication of Contagious Diseases, Inspection of Meats

**Ch.B. Michener, VS, DVS**, Professor of Theory and Practice, and Clinical Medicine

**W.H. Heiser, MD**, Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics

**A.M. Farrington, BSc, BVS**, Professor of Obstetrics and Zootechnics

**A.W. Swedberg, BSc, VS**, Professor of Surgery, Surgical Pathology and Canine Practice

**Geo. Jobson, VS**, Professor of Anatomy and Pathological Shoeing

**E.G. Smith, MD**, Professor of Physiology

**F.L. Kilborne, BVS**, Professor of Bovine, Ovine and Porcine Pathology

**E.A. von Schweinitz, AM, PhD**, Professor of Chemistry

**C.W. Stiles, AM, PhD**, Professor of Medical and Veterinary Zoology

**Theobald Smith, PhB, MD**, Professor of Bacteriology and Histology

**V.A. Moore, BSc, MD**, Professor of Microscopy

In addition, A.W. Swedberg was Chief Surgeon with Geo. Jobson as Assistant Surgeon of the Hospital Department.

Courses were arranged to suit “the modern requirements of veterinary education.” In particular, eventually shifting from day to evening hours between 4:30pm and 9:30pm, “the lectures on the control and eradication of contagious diseases and on meat inspection are a special feature designed to fit the students for the many responsible and lucrative positions which have been opened up to competent men, by recent State and National legislation.”<sup>14</sup>

At the time of its second commencement on March 19, 1894, the school was curiously reported as being at 208 and 210 Eleventh Street NW<sup>15</sup> and finally would operate from buildings at New Jersey Avenue and O Street, NW.

The following year in October 1893, the *Washington Post* described,<sup>16</sup> “A new feature of the college this [second] year will be free clinic held at the hospital, corner of Nineteenth and H Streets northwest, for the benefit of people unable to pay for medical attendance. These clinics will be held every Wednesday and Saturday, at 10 a. m., and all having sick horses are invited to have them treated free of charge. Another new and praiseworthy feature this year is the reservation of one box stall, which has been placed at the disposal of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, free of charge.”

Eleven students enrolled during its first year, followed by 25 the next.<sup>17</sup> Four lectures were scheduled daily, in addition to

the clinic held at the hospital in the morning session.<sup>18</sup> The school awarded the Doctor of Veterinary Science (DVS) degree.<sup>19</sup> The first class of 6 graduates matriculated in March 1893,<sup>20</sup> with 15 students passing the final examination for the second commencement on March 19, 1895.<sup>21</sup> By 1894, the College was noted to have had 21 graduates “in successful practice.” To accommodate students who held full-time jobs, “lecture hours are arranged to suit government employees.”<sup>22</sup> (Fig. 2)



**Figure 2. Announcement.** *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), 1894 Sep 20, p. 5.

“The faculty was largely made up of veterinarians of the Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture.”<sup>23</sup> Dr. D.E. Salmon, Chief of the Bureau, was president of the board of trustees while C.B. Michener, Assistant Chief of the Bureau, was dean of the faculty until his death in 1894.

Several years earlier in 1889, the United States Veterinary Medical Association (USVMA) (later changing its name to the American Veterinary Medical Association) had taken a very determined stand on the length of veterinary education needed.<sup>24</sup> Bylaws were revised stating that after January 1, 1893, applicants could only apply for membership if they had completed a curriculum of at least 3 years from a recognized veterinary school. This became known as the “rule of 1893.” It also meant schools would need to offer a 3- or 4-year curriculum for their graduates to become USVMA members. Moreover, it was proposed at the 1894 AVMA annual meeting to suspend membership in the national association to those connected in any way with the two-year schools. However, when “this was opposed by all the school men who spoke on the subject,” that resolution was finally tabled.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the USVMA’s intentions toward raising educational standards by instituting the “rule of 1893” membership requirement, the NVC was one of 9 or 10 new schools, 5 of which were private colleges, to open offering only 2 years of study in the 1890s.<sup>26</sup>

As a consequence, news of the establishment of a private 2-year national veterinary college in the District created opposition even before the school opened in October 1892.<sup>27</sup> It “elicited a feeling anything but approbatory of the undertaking, or friendly to the gentlemen connected with it.”<sup>28</sup> Merrillat noted that,<sup>29</sup> “The severest criticism...was directed at Doctor Salmon and various members of the Bureau of Animal Industry at Washington, who immediately following the action of the national association, established a two-year school in that city.”

Among open letters addressed to editors of professional journals was one from Dr. Milliken Stalker (1841–1909) who was dean of the Iowa State Agricultural College.<sup>30</sup> He wrote that he was shocked and dismayed “that those in high official places, those whose station best fits them for giving force and effect to this movement [for 3-year courses of study] should be the first to aid in balking it.”<sup>31</sup>

In a letter published in the *American Veterinary Review* in 1895, Dr. Salmon “vigorously defended the 2-year course as being adequate so long as livestock owners in many parts of the country were without the services of a trained veterinarian. He conceded that the 3-year course was appropriate for persons intending to practice in larger cities and that in the future, more thorough training of veterinarians would be advantageous.”<sup>32,33</sup>

Along with letters and criticism of Salmon, several state veterinary medical associations were especially concerned that the 2-year program (ie, 2 terms of 6 months each) was inadequate and would undermine progress being pursued to raise educational standards. In particular, the Philadelphia Veterinary Society represented by A.E. Conrow, MD, the Pennsylvania State Veterinary Medical Association by Leonard Pearson, VMD, and New York State Veterinary Medical Society by A.E. Willyoung, DVS, each passed resolutions condemning the NVC and even challenged Secretary of Agriculture Jeremiah P. Rusk to intervene and prohibit involvement by the BAI.

Aspects of those resolutions are as follows:

*WHEREAS, it has come to our notice that the officers and staff of the Bureau of Animal Industry...*

*Resolved, that this Society recognizing the utter impossibility of imparting sufficient veterinary instruction to students in two college sessions to enable them to practice veterinary medicine and surgery intelligently...that this Society protests against such use of the Bureau of Animal Industry, and that the Honorable Jeremiah P. Rusk, Secretary of Agriculture, be respectfully requested to prohibit this attempt to use the Bureau as above described. --- Philadelphia Veterinary Society, September 27, 1892<sup>34,35</sup>*

*WHEREAS, some of the officers of the Bureau of Animal Industry have established a veterinary school in Washington, which is but poorly equipped and requires but two years attendance upon instruction...*

*Resolved, that we greatly regret the action of these officers and feel that they are doing the veterinary profession of this country an injury, and are retarding the progress of veterinary education. --- Pennsylvania State Veterinary Medical Association, 1892<sup>36,37</sup>*

*Resolved, That we, the Empire State Veterinary Medical Society, believe the establishment of another two year course school, tends to retard and menace the progress of Veterinary science in the United States. ...*

*Resolved, That this Society appeals to the Hon. J. M. Rusk, Secretary of Agriculture, to exert his influence and power to prohibit this enterprise, which seems to us too intimately connected with the Bureau of Animal Industry...--- New York State Veterinary Medical Society, January 12, 1893<sup>38</sup>*

There would be further pressure on 2-year private schools several years later when, “in 1897, the Bureau of Animal Industry adopted the three-year course as the minimum for eligibility to examinations for veterinary positions in the Bureau.”<sup>39,40</sup>

In addition to curriculum length, criticisms were aroused concerning association with the BAI and possible impropriety that government employees might benefit personally and financially from such a private enterprise while serving on the federal payroll. It was noted that the NVC opened “with a faculty of twelve, among whom are some of the most prominent authorities in veterinary surgery in the country,” but was alarming that 8 of them were already employed by the BAI or Department of Agriculture.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, there were concerns that course descriptions in the prospectus indicated preferential training for lucrative positions open to competent individuals, particularly in meat inspection, that would provide an unfair advantage to NVC’s graduates.

In a letter addressed to Dr. A.E. Conrow,<sup>42,43</sup> Dr. Cooper Curtice (1856–1939) raised a more serious objection related to conflict of interest. As a fellow BAI staff member, he was aware that BAI salaries were much lower than other departments causing employees to teach at private schools or seek other enterprises to supplement their income. With tuition at \$250 per student, “neither was it likely they welcomed the additional demands on their time and energy.” Dr. Curtice thus “refrained from criticizing the integrity of the faculty of the NVC, but called for salary increases and postgraduate training programs.”

Stalheim suggested that, “The NVC was not an attempt by BAI veterinarians to earn extra income and to beat down education standards.”<sup>44</sup> He postulated that “Instead of selfish motives, the BAI veterinarians probably organized the NVC because Congress failed to establish it and because trained personnel were urgently needed to staff new projects in animal disease control and consumer protection.” Furthermore, “Although Salmon’s motives can’t be determined definitely, he probably was looking for veterinary graduates with a particular background or aptitude for his rapidly expanding staff. By close contact during instruction, Salmon could study each student and encourage certain kinds of specialization to prepare the student better for future service with the BAI.”

As of the 1895–1896 session, the NVC Catalogue indicated,<sup>45</sup> “There being an apparent desire on the part of some students to take a three-year course, and this college being in full sympathy with the movement to raise the standard of veterinary medical education, and wishing to keep pace with the recent rapid medical advancement, there is now offered to those who wish to take it, a three-year graded course.” Thus, beginning with the fall 1895 session, the new course was optional but became obligatory for following sessions. It would make graduates eligible to practice in states having laws regulating veterinary practice.

By the time the *Fourth Annual Announcement* for the NVC’s 1895–1896 session was published, it noted that<sup>46</sup> “the college building is a two-story structure, completely isolated from other buildings, thus allowing an abundance of light and pure air to



stream in through its numerous windows.” A large lecture hall and an Anatomical Laboratory, occupying most of the second floor of the college building and adjoined by a Histological Laboratory, were equipped for study. The National Veterinary Hospital was adjacent to the college building. In addition to stalls for treatment of all classes of animals, it featured a large yard in the rear for examining and exercising patients as well as for enlarging the hospital when that would become necessary.

Earlier, the Class of 1892 had organized a Medical Association.<sup>47</sup> Members included faculty, graduates of the school, and junior and senior veterinary students. Graduates were given a certificate of Honorary Fellowship. Along with electing officers annually, papers on subjects of medical interest were read and discussed at regular meetings. An Alumni Association had been organized in April 1895,<sup>48</sup> and all graduates were encouraged to become members.

Interestingly, the *Fourth Annual Announcement*<sup>49</sup> explained the need for a postgraduate program for “many veterinary graduates in this country who desire an opportunity to learn more concerning some of the important branches of their profession than can be acquired during the usual undergraduate course of study.” In response to inquiries from prospective applicants desiring further qualifications to pass examinations for positions as sanitarians and other aspects of government service, “the directors of this college have decided to inaugurate a post graduate course the coming session.”

As indicated, the 6-month postgraduate course at a \$75.00 fee “will consist of lectures and laboratory work in the following subjects: Contagious Diseases, Meat Inspection, Sanitary Police, Special Therapeutics, Bacteriology, Immunization, Geneneral [sic] Special Pathology, Histology, Comparative Osteology and Myology, Chemistry and Toxicology, Zootechnics and Special Economic Botany.” Those who attended the lectures were to be given a “Certificate of Attendance.”

### **Columbian University Veterinary Department (1896–1898)**

Founded by Reverend Luther Rice, Columbian College had been chartered in the District of Columbia by an act of Congress on February 9, 1821. Proprietary departments of law and medicine were soon established and operated as financially independent programs. In 1883, formal discussions centered on establishing a new College of Dentistry, but a committee report presented at a meeting a year later determined it was inadvisable at that time. Kayser notes that, “curiously, though, the organization of a Veterinary Department was discussed at the same meeting.”<sup>50</sup> While no action was taken regarding veterinary medicine, a Dental Department was formally approved by the University’s governing board in 1887.

As previously noted, in the 1890s as part of the movement to improve veterinary education and raise professional qualifications of veterinarians, many private schools came under increasing pressure to lengthen professional curricula to 3 years and add additional courses. When coupled with consequences of the national economic and agricultural depression in the

1890s and resulting increasing costs of medical education, private veterinary school operations were threatened with significant tuition increases and saw their student enrollments dwindle.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, surprisingly in 1896, it was announced in the *Journal of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Archives* that,<sup>52</sup> “We understand from reliable sources that the National Veterinary College of Washington, D.C., announced in connection with the closing exercises, that the three-term curriculum would be adopted with the opening session of 1896-97.”

Rather than closing, the 4-year old NVC had merged with Columbian University of Washington, DC. In accomplishing “a most important change in the organization and direction of the College,” it was reconstituted as a veterinary department as part of that academic institution until 1898.<sup>53,54,55</sup>

When this affiliation occurred, it was said,<sup>56</sup> “*The founders of this College have always been of the opinion that there should be an institution in Washington for the study of veterinary science, with broader foundations and more complete facilities than could be provided in any private school. The union now accomplished with the Columbian University raises the National Veterinary College to the desired plane, and places within its grasp all the advantages possessed by the great endowed institutions of the country.*”

Kayser noted,<sup>57</sup> “*For some time the question of union with the National Veterinary College had been under consideration. In 1893, it was proposed to incorporate the Veterinary College as a new department of Columbian University, but the matter was dropped because the College did not want to become a part of Columbian University. In March, 1896, the Board of Trustees voted to accept the faculty and curriculum of the [National] Veterinary College, providing that it would in no way be a charge on the University, that its relationship would be like that of the Law and Medical Departments. Organized in 1892 as the National Veterinary College and affiliated with the University four years later, it was discontinued in 1898, except for some postgraduate work. It was reorganized as an affiliated college in 1908 and again discontinued in 1918.*”

The Columbian University Veterinary Department (Fig. 3) was located at New Jersey Avenue and O Street NW and offered a 3-year course of study of 6 months each session from October through April. Tuition and dissecting fees were \$75 each year, with an annual matriculation fee of \$5 and a final examination fee of \$10.<sup>58,59,60</sup> The College continued to grant the Doctor of Veterinary Science (DVS) degree.<sup>61</sup>

In the September 1896 issue, the *American Veterinary Review* indicated that<sup>62</sup> “*By the coalition the National College secures exceptionally fine laboratory facilities, with a distinguished corps of teachers in the collateral branches of veterinary science, while the professors in the veterinary specialty who were connected with the school previous to amalgamation will retain their branches...The news of the increase in the college course and the increase in the facilities for imparting greater knowledge is enough good news for this issue...*”

In addition to Dr. Salmon as dean, a notice in an 1896 issue of the *Journal of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Archives* listed faculty members changes as:<sup>63,64</sup> “*William P. Carr, M.D.,*



### THE COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY, VETERINARY DEPARTMENT.

(Formerly the National Veterinary College.)

The course of instruction is graded and extends over three years. Each session begins October 1st, and lasts six months.

Practical and theoretical instruction given in modern laboratories in **Anatomy, Histology, Pathology, Bacteriology, and Chemistry.** Other subjects taught by means of didactic and clinical lectures. Full courses on **Sanitary Medicine, Meat Inspection, Practice of Medicine, Surgery, Human and Veterinary Physiology, Obstetrics, Zootechnics, Materia Medica, Therapeutics, Canine Pathology, Animal Parasites, Embryology.**

The faculty has been strengthened by the addition of competent veterinarians as instructors. Time allowances made to students from other colleges. Veterinary graduates may enter senior class. For announcement, address, DR. CHARLES F. DAWSON, SECRETARY, DR. D. E. SALMON, Dean. New Jersey Ave. and O St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

**Figure 3. Advertisement for Columbian University, Veterinary Department, 1898. Source:** *Journal of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Archives*. 1898 Feb;19(2):iv (ad pg) and 1898 Mar;19(3):xiv (ad pg). *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015070490969>

has been added as professor of general physiology. E. A. de Schweinitz, A.M., Ph.D., M.D., enters upon the duties of professor of chemistry in place of Edwin R. Hodge, M.D., resigned. D. E. Buckingham, V.M.D., succeeds as professor of materia medica and therapeutics. J. W. Hodges, M.D. James Carroll, M.D., succeeds Veranus A. Moore, B.Sc, M.D., as professor of pathology and bacteriology. Cecil French, D.V.S., has been added to the staff as professor of canine pathology. The chair of anatomy is unfilled owing to the retirement of William Fink, D.V.S., and W.S. Washburn, M.D., will deliver the course on histology, succeeding Charles R. Clarke, M.D. Charles J. Hadfield, D.V.S., one of the special lecturers of the preceding year, has been added to the faculty and will fill the role of demonstrator of anatomy. B. E. Harper, D.V.S., R. H. Hadfield, D.V.S., and C.H. Lockwood, D.V.S., have also been added as assistant demonstrators. To the hospital staff as visiting and consulting surgeons Drs. D.E. Buckingham and Cecil French.” Continuing were D.E. Salmon, DVM, ARCVC (Hon.) as Professor of Sanitary Medicine..., Charles F. Dawson, MD, DVS, Professor of Special Physiology and General Pathology, A.M. Farrington, BSc, BVS, as Professor of Obstetrics and Zootechnics, and Albert Hassall, MRCVS as Professor of Parasitology. Listed as Special Lecturers were Ch. Wardell Stiles, AM, PhD, MS (Hon.), Lecturer on Zoology, and Hon. Edwin Willits, AM, LL.D, Lecturer on Medical Jurisprudence. In addition, Victor A. Norgaard, VS, from Copenhagen was Professor of General Pathology during the 6th session in 1897–1898.<sup>65</sup>

As the result of the union with Columbian University, veterinary students used well-equipped laboratories of histology, pathology, bacteriology, and chemistry in that institution located in the medical school’s Medical Department building. They would thus “be given instruction in the above-named branches in common with the medical students.”<sup>66</sup>

The facilities at the College’s National Veterinary Hospital provided an “ample” number and variety of clinical cases with instruction by Dr. John Lockwood, House Surgeon, and Dr. C.F. Hadfield, Assistant House Surgeon. In addition, “the private practices of ...veterinarians [Dr. D.E. Buckingham and Dr. Cecil French, Visiting and Consulting Surgeons] will

be used as far as necessary to give thorough and complete instruction in the diseases of horses, cows and dogs, as well as in the smaller animals to be found in the household.”<sup>67</sup>

Dr. Cecil French, a graduate of McGill and the Royal Veterinary School in Munich, served as chair of canine medicine. From his private practice at the Washington Canine Infirmary, which was devoted exclusively to diseases of dogs, he would also be called on from time to time to address public health issues, such as the incidence of rabies in the District.<sup>68</sup> Dr. David Buckingham would later become dean of the George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine in operation from 1908–1918.

Unlike earlier criticism when the NVC was established as a 2-year curriculum in 1892, there were high hopes for this school with its 3-year program. As noted in an editorial in the *Journal of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Archives*,<sup>69</sup>

“This step of the National Veterinary College will place it among the strong competitors for the future, and it will not lag in the race of recognition, for none have ever doubted the ability of its teachers or the excellence of its instruction; they only regretted that too short a time was afforded its matriculants to properly take advantage of the valuable instruction there afforded them. Its sincere friends and the tried and true advocates of higher veterinary education regretted, with a keen sense of sadness, that it was not a four-year school, or one where a post-graduate course was obtainable. It will now command a support that will add vastly to its growth and power, and it will realize at once that nothing will be lost from this advance step. It will wield a stronger power for good, to the general advancement of the profession than most others could do, be they ever so willing, and none will reap a greater direct reward than the school itself. Its location and associations, and the environments that have grown so strong and powerful in making Washington one of the great educational centres of the future, will add no little to its growth and development, and win for its projectors a high place among the roll of colleges.”

Furthermore, another editorial in the same publication touted,<sup>70</sup> “As we close the last forms to going to press we are favored with the glad news that the National Veterinary College will hereafter be the Veterinary Department of the Columbian University. It will enjoy all the laboratory facilities and the aid of such of the corps of instructors as may be needed. This is a grand step and will aid this school in becoming one of the foremost in the country. Entering for the first time on her obligatory course of three years, she will now be afforded means and power to better demonstrate the worth of the teachers already associated with this school, and thus give to the profession well-equipped men as her graduates.”

The Medical Association that had been organized by the NVC’s Class of 1892 continued. It held weekly meetings.<sup>71,72</sup> “All students were required to attend, it being considered a very important part of the instruction given in the college.” Moreover, “several members of the faculty are habitual attendants, and by their presence encourage good work and at the same time correct any error into which the essayists or critics may fall.”

In 1898, it was reported to the AVMA Committee on Intelligence and Education that Columbian University “had abandoned its undergraduate course and hence forth would be the first post-graduate veterinary school in the world.”<sup>73</sup> Columbian’s president stated in an Annual Report<sup>74</sup> that “*The Faculty of the Veterinary School have reached an important decision. Hereafter they propose to offer only graduate work. It is probable that, with the particular situation they occupy at the Capital, this will prove a wise decision.*” However, Salmon’s attempt to make the former NVC an exclusively postgraduate institution failed when no post-graduate students appeared and the Veterinary Department was discontinued.

A name change occurred as presented in the *Announcement* for the sixth session for 1897–1898. “The National Veterinary College will hereafter be known as the Veterinary School of the Columbian University.”<sup>75</sup> (Fig. 4)

Unfortunately, instruction at Columbian University lasted only 3 years with few graduates.<sup>76</sup> As a means of resolving financial difficulties, Columbian University would later be renamed as George Washington University in 1904.

While the NVC and its immediate successor were in operation for about 6 years, “the school [had] conferred the DVS (Doctor of Veterinary Science) degree and when it closed its doors in 1898 had less than 50 graduates.”<sup>77,78</sup> The *6th Announcement* in 1897–1898 listed all of 60 graduates for the years 1894 to

1897.<sup>79</sup> Bierer felt it was interesting to note that Dr. Pierre A. Fish had graduated from this school in 1896.<sup>80</sup> In addition to being an original professor of physiology and later dean of the New York State Veterinary College at Cornell University, Dr. Fish was editor of the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* for several years.

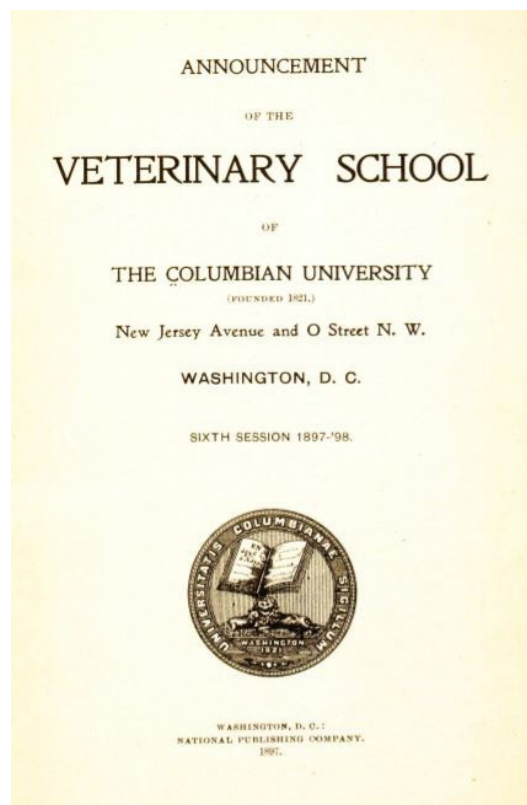
Dr. Salmon retired from the BAI in December 1905, but his involvement with educating future veterinarians did not end. He relocated to South America when asked by the government of Uruguay to teach and head the Department of Veterinary Science. This led to the establishment of the veterinary school at the University of the Republic of Uruguay in Montevideo, where he served as founding dean from 1906 until 1911. After his 5-year contract expired, Salmon returned to the United States to continue veterinary work and research in Montana until his death on August 30, 1914.<sup>81</sup>

Although closed, the NVC, followed as the Columbian University Veterinary Department and then Veterinary School, were among the veterinary colleges endorsed by the AVMA at its 44th annual meeting in Kansas City in 1907.<sup>82</sup> As a result, their graduates qualified and were eligible to apply for AVMA membership. In contrast, the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, the other private school in the District, did not appear on that endorsed list.

### George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine (1908–1918)

About 10 years after the closing of the NVC as the Columbian University Veterinary Department, another attempt was made at establishing a second veterinary college in Washington, DC. Because of the ongoing demand for veterinarians and their services for municipal or public hygiene, the availability of veterinary instruction was expanded in the District in 1908 at George Washington University. It joined the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, founded in 1894 as a private school by C. Barnwell Robinson, VS, that remained in operation until 1927.

Establishment of this new school was made possible by a Congressional act approved on March 3, 1905, that supplemented Columbian’s original charter of 1821. It enabled<sup>83</sup> “*colleges carrying on special lines of educational work could be made ‘educationally’ a part of the system of the University, but upon independent financial foundations.*” In addition to a National College of Pharmacy, “under the same provision, the College of Veterinary Medicine’s charter was adopted on March 17, 1908, and this College was incorporated into the University as an affiliated institution, related educationally but fully autonomous financially. Negotiations with the College of Veterinary Medicine had been in process for years. Because of the important research being carried on by the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture, there were many personal ties and considerable cooperation between the veterinary specialists in the Bureau and the Medical faculty. During his entire tenure in the [Medical] School [from 1897–1904], Dean [Emil Alexander] de Schweinitz [M.D.], for example, was at the same time an important scientific investigator of the Bureau of Animal Industry. The way to union had first been opened in 1896 when the Trustees voted to accept the faculty



**Figure 4. Veterinary School, Columbian University. *Announcement*, Sixth Session 1897–1898, p. 3.**



and the curriculum of the National Veterinary College. Its relationship to the University was to be the same as that of the Law, Dental, and Medical Schools, that is, no financial risk to the University was involved. The Veterinary College, however, was unwilling to give up its identity and become a department of the University. The charter amendment took care of the situation. The College retained its identity and its financial autonomy within the University structure as an affiliated college.<sup>84</sup>

This associated College of Veterinary Medicine was organized on March 17, 1908, under a charter with George Washington University “with financial autonomy and Board of Trustees of its own.”<sup>84,85</sup> Despite having separate financial foundations, both the veterinary college and a second associated college, the National College of Pharmacy, were educationally part of the University.<sup>86</sup> (Figs. 5a,b) The University’s other professional departments included medicine, law, and dentistry (which was discontinued in 1921).

The June 1909 George Washington University Bulletin Catalogue issue noted,<sup>87</sup>

*“The organization of a College of Veterinary Medicine under the charter of George Washington University was authorized by the Board of Trustees on March 17, 1908. The great demand for the services of trained veterinarians by the Federal and State governments and the increasing importance of veterinary science in municipal hygiene show the need of the development of this branch of medical sciences in Washington in a regularly organized college under University auspices.”*

In his Resident Secretaries’ Report to the AVMA at Philadelphia in September 1908, Dr. B.T. Woodward expressed support of the new school. He reported,<sup>88</sup> *“This college appears to be a step in the right direction as it is not controlled by private interests [unlike the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons], but is a department of the George Washington University...It will be a three-year school...its laboratory subjects will be taught in combination with the Medical and Dental Departments. The general veterinary subjects, clinics, and hospital practice will be given in special buildings erected for the purpose.”*

Furthermore, Dr. Woodward remarked,<sup>89</sup> *“Not being in operation as a College at the time of the investigation of the Committee [of the United States Department of Agriculture] which was appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to visit the veterinary colleges throughout the United States, it does not appear in Bureau of Animal Industry Circular 133, and has therefore not received a rating.”*

George Washington University recognized that<sup>90</sup> *“there is a large and growing demand in the District of Columbia for technical education by ambitious men who do not care to enter the government service as clerks, but who earnestly wish to fit themselves for professional and technical service throughout the country....The University established last year a College of Veterinary Medicine, which opened with thirty-seven students.”*

About 1910 to ease financial difficulties, the University made an attempt to obtain an appropriation from Congress under the Morrill Acts, but such funding never materialized.<sup>91</sup> The Gallinger-Boutell Bill had been introduced by the House Committee on Agriculture that would have granted benefits to the District and designated George Washington University as

### THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington, D. C.

Offers a graded four year course leading to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V. M.), beginning with the session 1912-13.

This course is designed for well educated young men employed in the government service or elsewhere during the day. Lectures begin at 5 P. M.

School recognized by American Veterinary Medical Association, U. S. Civil Service Commission, U. S. Bureau of Animal Industry and State Examining Boards.

Clinics, hospitals, military posts, government laboratories and experiment stations located at the National Capital give students superior advantages in acquiring a broad education in veterinary science. For catalog, address

DAVID E. BUCKINGHAM, V. M. D.

Dean of Veterinary Faculty, 2113-15 FOURTEENTH ST., N. W.

**Figure 5a. Advertisement, 1913.** Source: *American Veterinary Review*. 1913 Oct;44: ad p. 5.

### THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington, D. C.

Offers graded, four-year course leading to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D. V. M.).

Designed for well-educated, young men employed in the government service or elsewhere during the day. Lectures begin at 5:30 p. m. Recognized by the A. V. M. A., the U. S. Civil Service Commission, U. S. B. A. I. and State Examining Boards. For catalog, address

Dean of Veterinary Faculty, DAVID E. BUCKINGHAM, V. M. D. 2113-15 Fourteenth St., N. W.

**Figure 5b. Advertisement, 1914.** Source: *American Journal of Veterinary Medicine*. 9(4):308, 1914 Apr. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951d002008699>

the recipient, primarily to establish a new College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts.<sup>92</sup> By 1912, despite favorable reports by House and Senate committees and passage by the Senate, the House took no action. Thus, the effort was lost because of “bitter” opposition, both open and secret, on grounds that the University was a private institution along with other political developments that year.<sup>93</sup>

David Eastburn Buckingham, Jr., VMD (1870–1963) (Fig. 6), an 1893 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, served as dean of the faculty from 1909 until the school closed in 1918.<sup>94</sup> He also taught materia medica, therapeutics, and canine medicine. A native of Delaware, he had previously been on the faculty of the Columbian University Veterinary Department teaching materia medica and therapeutics<sup>95</sup> and was founder and president of the District Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine, before being chosen as dean. His father, David E. Buckingham



**Figure 6. David E. Buckingham, Jr., VMD, dean and professor. He had been president of the District Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine, before being chosen as dean.** From: Kayser, Elmer Louis. *A Medical Center: The Institutional Development of Medical Education in George Washington University*. Photo courtesy: Special Collections and University Archives, Gelman Library, George Washington University.



(1840–1915), had served as first lieutenant in the 4th Delaware Volunteer Infantry and received the Medal of Honor for valor in the American Civil War.

Later, in June 1917, Dr. Buckingham as dean was called on by the Government “to assist in passing upon the 425,000 horses and mules needed for the army [in World War I]... with the rank of major in the Veterinary Corps.”<sup>96</sup> By that time, he had spent “nearly twenty-five years of his life in Washington, and is personally acquainted with the majority of lovers of animals, including dogs in the capital.” Moreover, his expertise was recognized as having “inspected about one-third of all the horses and mules used in the Spanish-American War” as well as many at the Mexican border in case of war with Mexico. He predicted it would be difficult to obtain that many animals for service in Europe and advised the Secretary of War not to purchase brood mares.

In subsequent years, Dr. Buckingham remained active as a veterinarian in the area. After becoming White House veterinarian in 1915, he treated presidential pets for the next 25 years, including President Franklin Roosevelt’s Scottie dog, Fala.<sup>97</sup> In 1930, “as health guardian of White House dogs,” he selected, examined, and supervised care of 36 Labrador huskies for a possible second expedition to the Antarctic by Admiral Richard E. Byrd (1888–1937) just as he had done for the first expedition.<sup>98,99</sup>

Later in the 1930s, with two associates, Dr. Buckingham operated a veterinary hospital at 2115 Fourteenth Street, the same address of the former George Washington University veterinary college. When the position of District Veterinarian became unexpectedly vacant in 1935, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a personal letter<sup>100</sup> to the Civil Service Commission endorsing his part-time appointment at a salary of \$2,850. She noted “he has rendered us very good service. I can speak very highly of him for his kindness and ability.”



**Figure 7. “National Veterinary College 2113-2115 14th St. NW. Discontinued 1918.”** Photo courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Gelman Library, George Washington University. Source: [https://archive.org/details/RG0031-001-0003-00110-00117\\_0003](https://archive.org/details/RG0031-001-0003-00110-00117_0003) [https://archive.org/details/RG0031\\_s001\\_b0205\\_f03\\_i013](https://archive.org/details/RG0031_s001_b0205_f03_i013)

The College’s faculty consistently numbered about 25 each academic year.<sup>101,102</sup> Some had previously taught at the NVC, including a few concurrently employed by the BAI.<sup>103</sup> Among them were John Lockwood, John P. Turner, Robert J. Formad, J.J. Kinyoun, Adolph Eichhorn, Albert H. Hassel, and Adrian Hall.

Interestingly, after founding the District’s Board of Veterinary Examiners in 1906, Dr. Buckingham served as one of the five members of the Examining Board. In June 1908, that group issued a large placard showing the approved list of “persons licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the District of Columbia,” which contained 60 names. As reported by Woodward,<sup>104</sup> “the placards were freely distributed among drug stores, livery stables, and other places where horse owners are liable to congregate. They enable the layman to distinguish at once between the quack and the licensed practitioner, thereby assisting in the suppression of quackism.”

The University was able to obtain use of a large, 3-story, brown brick building with red tile roof at 2113-2115 Fourteenth Street NW.<sup>105</sup> (Fig. 7) It appears that this building may have been Dr. Buckingham’s own practice because that is the address listed for him when he was a professor of the Veterinary School of Columbian University for the 1897–1898 session.<sup>106</sup>

This facility was suitable for the veterinary college’s “office, consultation and library purposes, a veterinary hospital, a dog hospital, and an anatomical building.” The structure featured a wide central arcade leading to a rear courtyard. The north side of the arcade provided space for consultation, waiting, pharmacy, and small animal surgery, while the south side was occupied by the dean’s office, library, assembly room, and faculty room. The 2-story concrete building on the north side of the courtyard functioned as the dog hospital with hot-water heat and space for 75 small animals, along with 2 lecture rooms on the second floor for clinical presentations. The veterinary or large animal hospital was contained in another brick building in the courtyard with box stalls for sick and injured animals. Beyond those resources, students enrolled in the veterinary curriculum used facilities of the Medical School and University’s Department of Chemistry for laboratory and physiology work as well as local abattoirs and the government experiment station.

It was recognized that the University’s youngest department was “more fortunate than many schools of similar character, from the beginning it had access to the well-equipped laboratories of the Department of Chemistry and Medicine.”<sup>107</sup> In addition, by 1916, students would have opportunities at 3 well-equipped hospitals for clinical experience and “collateral training...at Fort Meyer, Bethesda and Beltsville Experiment Stations and the various government farms at their disposal as well as the various libraries and government departments, all of which help to train our men in a thorough and decisive way.”<sup>108</sup>

At its opening in fall of 1908, the school had an initial enrollment of 37 students and “is doing its work according to the latest scientific methods, and give promise of great success.”<sup>109</sup>

During the 1908–1909 session on October 17, the inaugural class of students organized the Veterinary Medical Association of George Washington University.<sup>110</sup> Intended “for the promotion of a closer relationship between the students and the professors,” it soon became “a real live wire within the Department” and a “strong college organization.” Most students were active members, while honorary membership privileges extended to faculty and alumni. Holding monthly meetings, each of the students would have the opportunity for “several turns” during their studies at “demonstrating [and defending] his proclivities as a lecturer on any subject connected with Veterinary Medicine as he cares to select.” With officers and an annual banquet, it was “an organization through which the student body could speak and be represented.”

Veterinary students at George Washington University also participated in other campus life activities by having staff on *The Hatchet* weekly newspaper, a representative on the Association of Class Presidents, and recognition with photos and class histories in the student yearbook, *The Cherry-Tree*. In addition, the Epsilon Chapter of Omega Tau Sigma, the veterinary fraternity, was founded there on December 18, 1915.<sup>111</sup>

As of the fall of 1911,<sup>112</sup> 65 students were enrolled in the initially 3-year program, and at the time, “The College of Veterinary Medicine is authoritatively recognized as ranking itself among the leading veterinary schools of the country.” In wake of advancements in the field, the course of study was lengthened to 8½ months per session.<sup>113</sup>

In 1911–1912, it was noted,<sup>114</sup> “owing to the rapid advancement of veterinary medicine in this country, and in order to maintain the high standard recommended by both the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the United States Department of Agriculture, the board of trustees deemed it wise to establish a four years’ course in veterinary medicine, commencing with the 1912–13 session. Each session will extend over a period of about seven months. Until the present time the requirement for graduation has been three years, with sessions of nine months each.”

The 1916 *Cherry-Tree* student yearbook would later comment that<sup>115</sup> “this University set a precedent by being the first in the United States to adopt a four-year course, and others have followed, since they deemed it the proper thing to do. At first it looked as though the four year course would be very detrimental to the matriculation in this department, as other colleges, especially private colleges in this country, objected to raising their courses to four years. But is proved the contrary; the number of matriculants has increased considerably even under the four-year regime.”

By implementing standards being developed nationally for veterinary education, “the graduates of the [George Washington University] College of Veterinary Medicine are eligible to membership in the American Veterinary Medical Association. They are also eligible to service in the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Army after passing the required examinations.”<sup>116</sup>

During the College’s fifth academic year of operation (1912–1913), Dean Buckingham reported having 38 students in the 3-year program (Fig. 8). He was gratified that 9 freshman students had registered for the lengthened 4-year course of study



**Figure 8. Dean David E. Buckingham (seated center holding derby hat on his arm) with faculty and students of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington, DC, April 16, 1913.** Photo courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Gelman Library, George Washington University. Source: Internet Archive, [https://archive.org/details/RG0031-001-0002-00029-00035\\_0001](https://archive.org/details/RG0031-001-0002-00029-00035_0001)

as “it was found impracticable to cover, in a comprehensive manner, the numerous subjects necessary to complete a full course in Veterinary Medicine given after 5 P.M.... The greater percentage of students of this college are Government employees, and the personnel is probably much higher than that of other schools of Veterinary Medicine.”<sup>117</sup> He furthermore indicated that “Financially the school is on a sound basis, gradually adding to its equipment, obtaining all of the paraphernalia essential to the proper instruction of its students.”

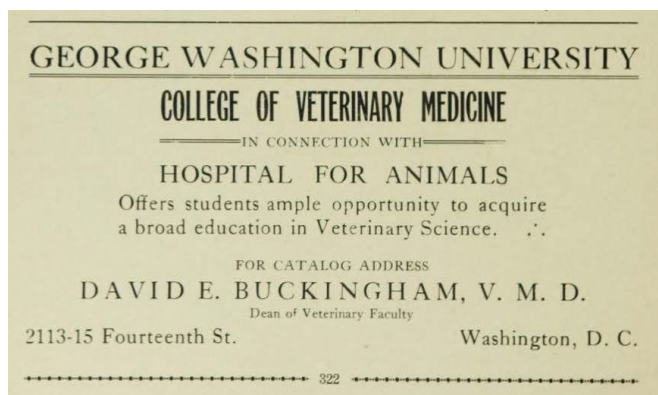
In addition, by its sixth year in 1913–1914, the College appeared to have gained another credential. In particular, “the further fact it is one of the few veterinary schools registered by the New York Department of Health speaks eloquently of its excellence and worth.”<sup>118</sup>

Meanwhile, at its 53rd annual meeting in Detroit in 1916, the AVMA approved a bylaws revision in which “the 4-year professional curriculum was made mandatory for association-approved schools of veterinary medicine beginning with the 1916–1917 academic year.”<sup>119,120</sup> (Fig. 9)

After George Washington University instituted a four-year curriculum, its 1918–1919 *Catalogue*<sup>121</sup> presented requirements for admission and full course descriptions offered by the College of Veterinary Medicine, yet the following year, the 1919–1920 bulletin<sup>122</sup> completely omitted veterinary medicine. Only the National College of Pharmacy was listed as an affiliated college.

In providing background on the school’s abrupt closing in 1918, the 1918 report<sup>123</sup> of the AVMA Committee on Intelligence and Education chaired by George E. Dunphy made special mention that “the George Washington University College of Veterinary Surgeons [sic] has inadequate facilities in buildings and equipment to give satisfactory instruction in the third and fourth year courses. It also lacks an adequate staff





**Figure 9. Advertisement in *The 1916 Cherry Tree*, p. 322.** *Internet Archive*, [https://archive.org/details/gwu\\_cherry\\_tree\\_1916](https://archive.org/details/gwu_cherry_tree_1916)

of competent veterinarians.” He warned that the World War I effort might further deplete the instructing staff. Moreover, “the fact that the ruling of the Secretary of Agriculture [D.F. Houston], preventing Bureau of Animal Industry veterinarians from assisting on the teaching staff of these [two] institutions renders it practically impossible for them to maintain satisfactory corps of veterinary instructors at both colleges.”

While recommending an amalgamation of the 2 veterinary schools existing in the District and in the absence of such a merger before the opening of the academic year in fall of 1918, the Committee indicated “that the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons be continued on the discredited list and that the George Washington College be automatically dropped from the list of colleges accredited by this Association.”<sup>124</sup> While loss of AVMA recognition was not a decisive criterion for a college staying open,<sup>125</sup> the status of the facilities coupled with discontinuation of BAI veterinarians as instructors likely caused the school to close.

Of the 13 students remaining in 1914, the College graduated 6 in 1917, and of the class that began with 25 in 1914, 12 matriculated in the last class in 1918.<sup>16,127</sup> Interestingly, “the first five veterinarians sent to France with our Expeditionary Forces were graduates of this school, class of 1917.”<sup>128</sup> According to Foster, George Washington’s College had produced a total of 100 graduates receiving the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree.<sup>129</sup>

After the College closed in 1918, Dr. Buckingham continued to operate a small animal practice from the clinical facilities at the College’s former building at 2115 14th Street, NW.<sup>130,131</sup> Throughout his career, “Dr. Buckingham’s principal interest was dogs,” leading him to serve as White House veterinarian for presidential pets for over 25 years from 1915 into the 1940s. He died on November 7, 1963, at age 93.<sup>132</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, various attempts had been made to provide instruction in veterinary medicine and produce qualified veterinarians in the District of Columbia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After the closing of the George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1918, the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons would remain open several more years until 1927, when it became the last of the private veterinary colleges in the United States.

The lessons are clear as to the challenges faced by faculty and governing officials of these institutions. First was recruiting sound, well-prepared students at a time when only a minority of students even finished high school. Second was ensuring adequate financial resources in the absence of public funding support to underwrite all the costs of instruction. Recruitment and retention of faculty likewise presented difficulty when the pool of truly educated veterinarians and specialists in the profession were very limited. Finally, a physical plant to conduct specialized instruction and accommodate laboratory and clinical activities was also a problem.

These considerations beg the question as to whether private or proprietary schools of veterinary medicine were worthy at all or in effect had a positive effect on the history of veterinary medicine in the United States. The distinguished veterinary historians Merillat and Campbell addressed this question candidly about the achievements of the proprietary schools. The private schools in the nation’s capital typified this evolutionary period in veterinary education in America, and in their 1935 book, Merillat and Campbell say:<sup>133</sup>

*The private schools created a veterinary profession in the United States. Beginning with nothing in the ‘50’s [1850s], they in the main supplied the personnel for the civil and military services, from the time of the Civil War until the end of the World War [I]; they manned colleges, experiment stations, and state and federal veterinary departments; organized the veterinary medical associations, and induced state legislatures to enact the veterinary practice acts which gave the veterinary profession in the United States its legal status. Nothing much has been done in that respect since they closed fifteen years ago [in 1927]. They came upon the scene as a necessary evil and filled a gap in American animal husbandry that neither the states nor the federal government attempted to fill for more than one hundred years.... Their achievements amply justified their existence and possibly also their methods for it is not certain that they could have existed on a much higher plane than they chose, or accomplished anything on more altruistic grounds. Under the circumstances what the public got was clear again, what it should have received from an educational system but didn’t, it would not have attained anyway. To them let us say, adieu avec bon gré [goodbye with goodwill].”*



### District of Columbia Veterinary Colleges TIMELINE

YEAR	EVENT	DEAN AND/OR FOUNDER
1891	Robinson's Veterinary Hospital established	C. Barnwell Robinson
1892	National Veterinary College (NVC) founded	Daniel E. Salmon, Dean
1894	US College of Veterinary Surgeons (USCVS) founded	C. Barnwell Robinson, President and Dean
1896	NVC merged with Columbian University as its Veterinary Department (CU-VD)	
1897	CU-VD name change to Veterinary School, Columbian University (CU-VS)	
1898	CU-VS faculty propose offering a postgraduate-only curriculum CU-VS[NVC] closed because of lack of students	
1904	Columbian University name change to George Washington University	
1908	George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine (GWU-CVM) opened	David E. Buckingham, Dean
1912	Robinson stepped aside as USCVS dean	
1918	AVMA proposed amalgamation of USCVS and GWU-CVM USCVS added to AVMA's "discredited college" list GWU-CVM closed when removed from the AVMA-accredited institution list and Secretary of Agriculture forbade BAI veterinarians from teaching at colleges	
1927	USCVS closed as last private veterinary college	

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