Southwestern Virginia

Mental Health Institute

Walking Tour Guide

The original Henderson Complex. All that remains today is the domed portion of the building in the left center of the circle.

The map that follows will take you around Bagley Circle, beginning with the oldest building on campus, The Henderson Building. The description pages that follow will correspond to the numbered buildings on the map.

SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE
Walking/Driving Building Tour
Begin at the Henderson Building and walk counter clockwise around Bagley Circle

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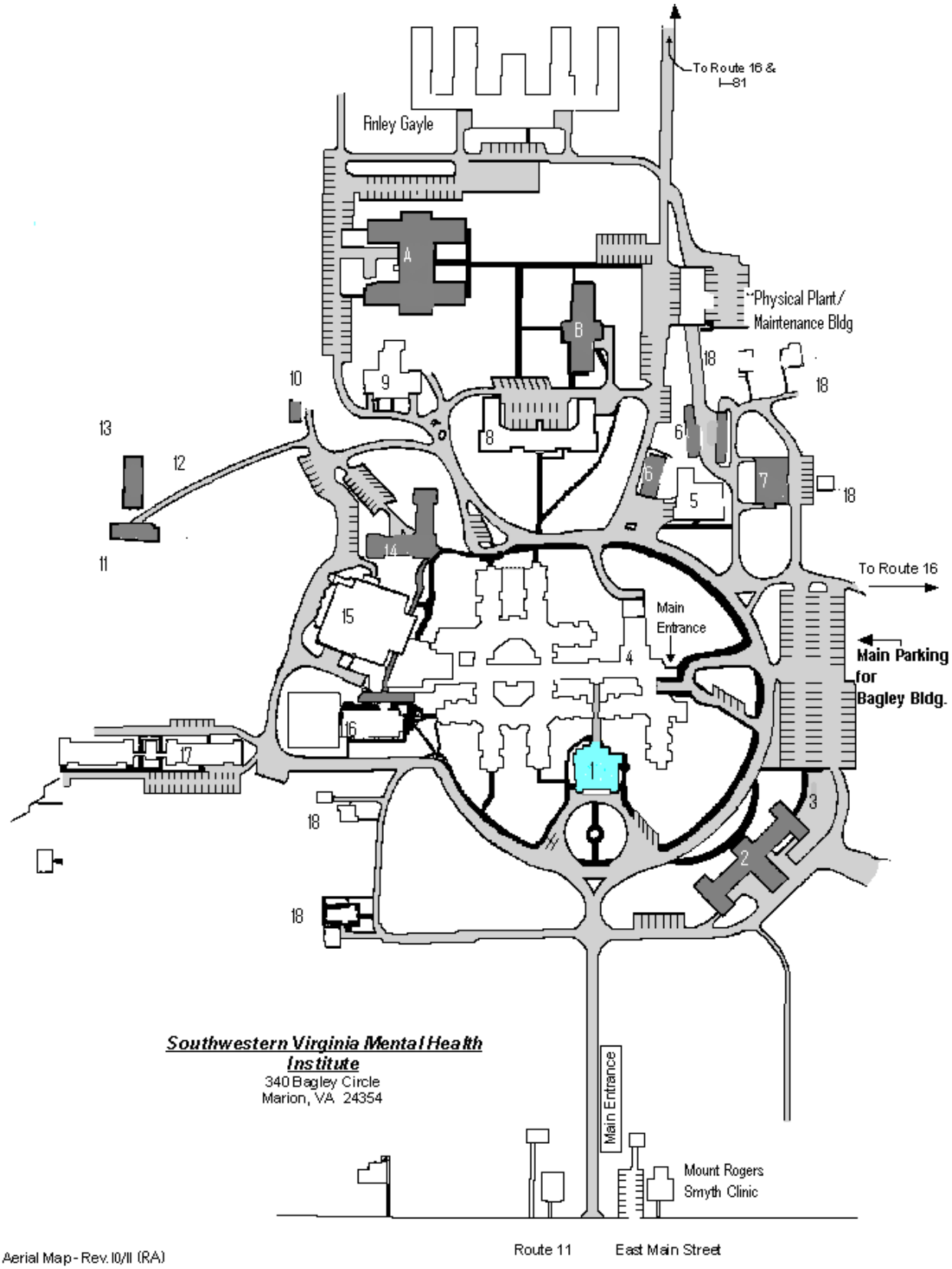

Aerial Map - Rev. 10/11 (RA)

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1. **1887 – Henderson Building (Administration)**. On July 16, 1884, the Atkins Farm, consisting of 199 acres, was selected as the site of the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum. Construction began in 1885, and the building was completed on February 12, 1887. The first two patients were admitted on May 17, 1887. The main patient buildings were attached to the rear of the current Henderson Building. The initial building contained six wards and could accommodate 280 patients. It was expected that 800 patients could be housed when the wings were extended. This was accomplished in 1896 with the construction of the East and West Wings adding six additional wards to the Asylum. The building also housed a kitchen, laundry, bakery, two dining rooms (one for men and one for women), a sewing room, elevator, and patient and attendants' rooms. An extra $30,000 had been appropriated for the incandescent electric system. It was considered the most modern asylum built by the Commonwealth of Virginia at that time. The Henderson Building was renovated in 1925 with the addition of two patient wards, a general kitchen, sewing room, laundry, storeroom, bakery, employees' dining room, and living quarters. The building was named after Dr. E. H. Henderson, who served as Superintendent from November 10, 1915, until his death on February 25, 1927. In 1969, the main dining area was moved to the Blalock Building. This area was then remodeled with offices for the Record Room, File Room (with their necessary offices), the Nursing and Social Services Departments, and the Personnel Department. Demolition of patient wards attached to the Henderson Building was begun in April, 1986, to build the current Bagley Building. The Henderson Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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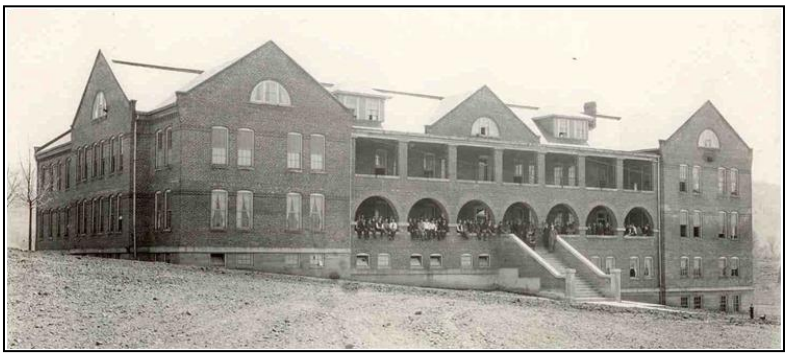
2. **1953 – Rufus A. Morison Reception and Treatment Center (Admission Building).** Named in honor of Rufus A. Morison, this building was dedicated in September, 1953, and provided accommodations for 120 patients. The building also had offices, staff rooms, admission suites, a classroom, pharmacy, and occupational and recreational therapy rooms. On April 26, 1968, Ward 16 was designated and utilized as the male alcoholic ward. Ward 16 was vacated in 1969 when male alcoholic patients were relocated to the new Geriatric Building. A total of 53 patients were transferred to this building on October 19 and 20, 1969. Additional improvements were made to this building in 1978 – 1979. This building was closed in 1990 when the Bagley Building was opened. It is currently leased to Smyth County and houses several county offices.



3. **1921 – Davis Clinic Building. (No longer standing).** Named in honor of Governor Westmoreland Davis, the building was located in front of the current Bagley Building. It was established to meet the high standards of the U.S. Public Health Services Hospitals and only ex-servicemen could be treated therein, primarily. After the Veteran's Administration hospital was built in the 1930's, the demand for this service decreased and other types of patients were housed there. The Davis Clinic was vacated in March 1961 when the Criminal Insane Building was

remodeled. *The Clinic was then torn down to make room for construction of the Morison Building and adjacent parking lot.*

4. **1990 – Bagley Building.** Demolition of the old Henderson Building Complex and construction of the new patient care building began in 1986. Dedication ceremonies for the new facility were held on September 14, 1989, at 9:30 a.m., with the special guest of honor being Governor Gerald Baliles. The coal mine strike was going on during this period of time and threats had been made against the Governor. To protect the Governor, sharp shooters were positioned on top of the Morison Building during the ceremonies. The building was named in honor of Delegate Richard M. Bagley, who was well known for his mental health initiatives throughout the Commonwealth. The move to the Bagley Building began in January, 1990, and was completed on March 9, 1990, with the last adult patients being moved from the Harmon Building. Adolescents continued to be served in the B Building until January 2002.

5. **1923 – Power Plant.** Construction for this building begun in 1923 and was the building was operational by 1925, enlarged in 1941, and further improved in 1972, 1989, and 1999. The plant serves as the central steam generating plant for the facility. The smoke stack was torn down in 1999.

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6. **1906 and 1925– Old Carpenters Shop and Garage.** These buildings were built in 1906 and 1925 respectively, behind the power plant, and currently serve as storage facilities for the Physical Plant Services Department.

7. **1949 – Laundry Building.** A modern laundry facility was constructed in 1949 to take care of all patient laundry. It included a sewing room and for the first time patients' clothes were ironed. Major renovation work was carried out in 1970. The building is currently vacant and is being used for storage.

8. **1913 – Criminal Building ("C" Building).** This building was originally built to house "criminally insane" patients. Construction began in 1910 and the first patient accepted in January, 1913. It was enlarged, remodeled, and fire-proofed in 1927 and 1941. An article written in 1954 stated that the building housed 200 patients with a

capacity of 140 (no, that's not a typo). When the Finley Gayle Building was completed in the late 1950's, the "criminally insane" patients were moved to that building. The C Building was remodeled in 1961, being redesigned for geriatric patients, and contained four wards with a total bed capacity of 152 patients on the first and second floors, an elevator and adequate provision for food service. Additional renovation work was carried out in 1987 to accommodate moving offices during the demolition of the Henderson Complex and the construction of the Bagley Building. The C Building currently houses the Reimbursement Department, several offices, and is also used as a storage area for Health Information Management and other departmental records.

Located behind the C Building are several other buildings no longer used by SWVMHI including:

- **1969 – "A" Building.** This was originally one of the geriatric buildings known as the Porterfield Geriatric Center. It was named in honor of Mr. T. L. Porterfield, former member and chairman of the State Hospital Board. On June 30, 1969, 80 male geriatric patients were transferred to the first two wards and on August 18, 1969, the third male geriatric ward was occupied with 28 male patients. The remaining ward was occupied by 30 female patients on September 22, 1969. *This building was closed in 1990 when the Bagley Building was opened and currently serves as the Department of Corrections Academy for Staff Development – West.*

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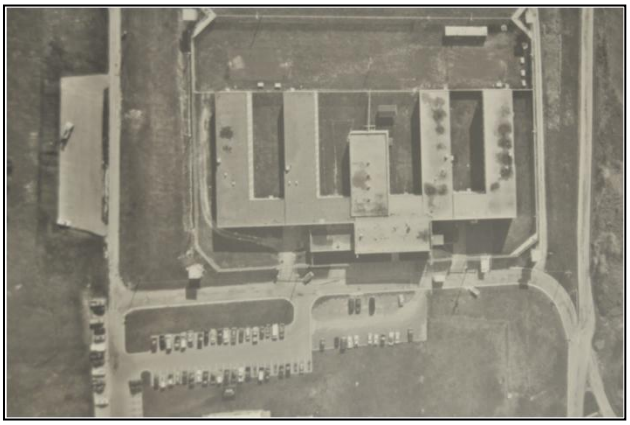
- **1970 – "B" Building.** This building was one of the geriatric buildings for patients who were feeble and required more care. This building originally housed 148 male geriatric patients. Adolescents were transferred to the building in 1987 and it subsequently received improvements in 1990. The building was most recently leased to the Marion Youth Center, a private residential treatment center for boys, which lease ended in March, 2012.

- **1974 – Physical Plant Services (Maintenance/ Transportation).** Originally built at a cost of $330,000, the building received improvements in 1979, as well as in 1988 – 1989 when the Bagley Building was constructed. It currently serves as headquarters for maintenance operations and houses transportation, grounds, carpenter, electrical, plumbing, and refrigeration/air conditioning staff.



- **1957 – Finley Gayle Observation and Treatment Center.** This building was named in honor of R. Finley Gayle, M.D. When this building was completed in 1957, the "criminally insane" patients from the Criminal Building ("C" Building) were relocated to this building. In July, 1980, the Department of Corrections took over the building with the patients housed there at that time. From that point forward the population was divided and the Department of Corrections began receiving adjudicated patients/inmates, and

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Southwestern State Hospital received patients who had not been adjudicated (e.g., those in local jails awaiting trial, those sent here for restoration of competency, and those deemed "not guilty by reason of insanity" or NGRI). *The Finley Gayle Building is currently named the Marion Correctional Treatment Center, is operated by the Department of Corrections and located behind an electronic fence. It is not accessible to the public.*

9. **1933 – Wright Building.** This building was also built with patient labor, being named in honor of Superintendent George A. Wright, who served from 1927 to 1938. It was later remodeled in 1958. A total of 90 male patients occupied this building. Most of these patients worked in farming, the kitchen, on the grounds, etc. *The building is currently used by the Department of Corrections, Marion Correctional Treatment Center.*

10. **1933 – Old Incinerator.** Built in 1933, it is currently not being used.

11. **1966 – Picnic Shelter.** This structure serves as a recreational facility for patients and staff. It was officially opened on August 26, 1966, by Superintendent Blalock, who served from 1938 to 1971, with a joint patient picnic given by maintenance, laundry, and power plant staff.

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12. **1989 – Recreation Area/Track.** Dirt from construction of the Bagley Building was used to fill in the area where the track is now located. Under the leadership of Jerry Deans, Facility Director, who served from 1992 to 2002, this dirt was smoothed down and a paved track/recreation area was created.

13. **1997 – Restroom/Storage Building** –This building is located beside the picnic shelter and provides restrooms and storage for the recreational facilities at the track.

14. **1933 – Harmon Building.** Built at a cost of $115,000, construction of the Harmon Building began in 1930. It was dedicated in May, 1933 when the first patient was accepted. It was named in honor of Col. King Harmon of Pulaski, Virginia, who was chairman of the special board that put through the proposal to erect the new building and worked for Southwestern State Hospital for 15 years. The building was completed at minimal cost due to the use of patient labor for construction, and could accommodate 100 patients. It housed the medical and more infirmed patients on the second floor. The third floor was used for female medical patients, with the laboratory and diagnostic facilities located on the first floor. The operating room was located on the fourth floor. When first opened, the

operating room was not only available for surgery to be performed on patients, but also members of the public as well. Additional improvements were made to this building in 1963 and 1975. While the patient wings of the Henderson Building were being torn down, the Harmon Building housed Admission and Medical Detox patients, as well as the Infirmary. This building was closed in 1990 when the new Bagley Building was opened. The building is currently being used for storage.

15. **1969 – Blalock Building.** This is the food services building and when completed in 1969, the main dining room was moved to this building from the Henderson Building. The building was named in honor of Superintendent Joseph R. Blalock, who served from 1938 to 1971, a total of 34 years. Additional improvements were made in 1988 – 1989 when the Bagley Building was built and attached to this building. The building also houses Centralized Rehabilitative Services, patient activities, the central storeroom, and offices.

16. **1941 – Auditorium Building.** This building was originally known as the Recreation Building and included an auditorium. It was remodeled in 1952 with a library, game room, and canteen in the basement. Additional improve-ments were made in 1988 – 1989 when the Bagley Building was being built and a “tube” (enclosed walkway) attached to the Auditorium Building. Currently Training/Staff Development, the Rehab Department, and

Quality/Risk Management staff offices are located in the basement of the Auditorium Building.

17. **1939 – Rehabilitation Building (formerly known as the New Tuberculosis Building).** The building, opened in 1939, originally housed 80 patients and had its own kitchen and dining room. Use of the building for tuberculosis patients was discontinued on December 15, 1969. This building was then designated as the Rehabilitation Unit, which officially opened in February 1970. The building received further improvements in 1978-1979, and was closed in 1989 when the Bagley Building was opened. The building is currently used by the Training, Nursing, and Rehabilitative Services Departments.

18. **Houses** – Several houses have been constructed over the years to house superintendents, physicians, and others who have worked at the facility. These houses have been deeded to the Department of Corrections.