

Today in Columbus History: On Saturday, May 31, 1873, *The Daily Enquirer* reported on the case of a 15-year-old black female with mental disabilities: Frances David. Frances, listed as mulatto on the 1870 census, may have been a former slave on the estate of John I. David, a wealthy farmer from Chambers County, AL. By 1870, Mr. David and his family, along with a number of his former slaves (who had taken the David surname), were living nearby each other just outside Columbus. In 1873, Frances was declared insane and taken to Milledgeville, to the state Lunatic, Idiot and Epileptic Asylum, which had opened in December 1842. The hospital, later known as Central State Hospital, took in individuals with disabilities: mental, psychiatric, and intellectual; as well as the chronically ill and physically disabled (including Civil War veterans). Most patients did not leave; over 25,000 of them are buried in the hospital cemetery. Frances is probably among them.

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*Our snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.*

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu>

#### **Lunacy Case.**

**Frances David, a colored girl, was on yesterday taken before Ordinary Brooks on a writ of lunacy. The case was tried before the following jury: T. J. Word, M. D., C. J. Moffett, T. M. Threlkeld, H. W. Verstill, C. A. Klink, Charles Haiman, G. H. Fleming, E. M. Lynch, Chas. J. Howell, M. E. Goldsmith, J. H. Franklin, and A. Illges, who returned a verdict that the said Frances David is an idiot and epileptic, incapable of taking care of herself, and a fit subject for the Insane Asylum. We understand she will be sent off to Milledgeville to-day.**



Ca. 1905. Photo from New Georgia Encyclopedia.