

Tufts, Edgar ^[1]

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by Thomas H. Spence, Jr., 1996

4 Dec. 1869–6 Jan. 1923

Edgar Tufts, [Presbyterian](#) ^[2] minister and educator, was born at Kirkwood, Ga., the son of Joseph F. A. and Anna Robinson Tufts. In 1898 he married Mary Elizabeth Hall, of Hampden-Sydney, Va., who survived him. They were the parents of Edgar Hall, Margaret, and Mary.

Tufts was graduated from [Washington and Lee University](#) ^[3] in 1894 with the A.B. degree and from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia in 1897. Concord Presbytery ordained him to the ministry on 26 Sept. 1897, after which he served as evangelist for [Watauga County](#) ^[4] while residing at Banner Elk (1897–1901). During 1901–2 he was pastor of the Presbyterian church at Hazelhurst, Ga., returning in 1902 to Banner Elk, where he remained until his death. For a portion of this time he also supplied the Blowing Rock, Newland, Linville, and Pineola churches.

In 1898 Tufts began a school at Banner Elk that eventually became Lees-McRae Institute and then [Lees-McRae Junior College](#) ^[5] (1929). He established Grace Hospital at Banner Elk in 1907 and what was later known as [Grandfather Home for Children](#) ^[6] in 1914. From 1916 to 1922 he supervised publication of the *Pinnacles*, a periodical promoting these institutions. After his death, the Edgar Tufts Memorial Association was set up for the oversight of the school, hospital, and home. His son, Edgar Hall Tufts (1899–1942), was the first president of the association and served as administrative head of the school and, later, college. The Reverend Edgar Tufts died at Banner Elk and was buried in Banner Elk Cemetery. His portrait was hung at [Lees-McRae College](#) ^[5], but few of his papers were preserved.

References:

Ministerial Directory of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., 1861–1941 (1942).

Pinnacles, April 1927.

Presbyterian Standard, 24 Jan. 1923.

Edgar Tufts, *Souvenir, Lees-McRae Institute* (1919).

Margaret Tufts, *To the Lees-McRae College Alumni* (1975).

Additional Resources:

"Fouder's Day Ceremony to be held Friday, September 23 with dedication of Rev. Edgar Tufts statue." September 12, 2011. Press Releases & News from Lees-McRae College. http://www.lmc.edu/about_the_college/enews/articles/2011/index0c42.htm ^[7] (accessed May 8, 2014).

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[Banner Elk](#) ^[13]

[Lees-McRae College](#) ^[14]

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[15]

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