

FERTILE GROUND



THE STORIES OF NORTH CAROLINA'S HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

BY VIRGINIA L. SUMMEY, PH.D. & JAMES E. FORD



LISTENING TO THE

NC 10

CREED
Center for Racial Equity in Education

INTRO

North Carolina has long been known as a state with outstanding institutions of higher education. Colleges like the University of North Carolina, Duke University, and Wake Forest University are consistently ranked among the best in the nation. But the story of higher education in North Carolina cannot be accurately told without including its ten Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), which are also ranked among the best in the nation. Yet they have received a fraction of the attention – or funding – as their predominantly white counterparts.

The story of HBCUs in North Carolina is one of self-determination

and Black agency. Prior to emancipation, when educating African Americans was a crime, the enslaved consumed information voraciously. Despite the legal and social restrictions imposed on them, it is estimated that between 5 to 10 percent of enslaved people in the United States were literate. With no tools provided for reading and writing, the enslaved sometimes traced letters in the sand of the plantations when they were not toiling in the fields. While literacy could fulfill practical as well as psychological needs during slavery, it was not until emancipation that African Americans could legally receive an education. As soon as they were able, multiple generations of freed men and women converged on to new schools established specifically for Black students. According to historian James Anderson, “In the South the history of black higher education from 1865 to 1935 involves largely a study of the interrelationship between philanthropy and black communities – or at least black leaders – in the development of colleges and professional schools for black youth.”¹ The partnerships between Black leaders and philanthropists created a proliferation of schools within just a few years of emancipation, including five in North Carolina which eventually became some of the HBCUs discussed in this report.

Early schools blurred the lines between primary and secondary schools as formal education had previously been unavailable to African Americans. Children, along with their parents and even grandparents, were often all in the same classroom. Many of the schools that are now our HBCUs started as primary schools after emancipation, later evolving into high schools, and then colleges or universities. Many of the primary schools and high schools established for Black students have long since closed their doors due to lack of funding or falling to the wayside after school integration mandates in the mid-twentieth century made

them unnecessary. The HBCUs of the twentieth century have withstood the test of time and change.

In all, twelve HBCUs have advanced Black education in North Carolina, with ten currently accredited. The stories of these HBCUs are fundamentally stories of Black agency and advancement, in which African Americans took control of their education despite white objections. As historian Adam Faircough states, Black parents were “Forced to live within the political constraints of white supremacy, they sought a future for black children that would transcend poverty and prejudice. Dissatisfied with broken-backed, white-controlled systems of public education, they did what the states were signally failing to do.”² The inception stories found here are not monolithic, but reflect the different educational philosophies for black students by white benefactors and government officials, the Sisyphean efforts of Black teachers, and how each school ultimately became a source of pride and uplift in their communities and around the state.

Today the ten accredited HBCUs in North Carolina continue to fulfill the missions established upon their founding. They provide education for underrepresented populations still in need as well as some of the highest achieving students in the country. They cultivate the genius of the most coveted students looking for a place to grow. They close achievement gaps perpetuated by continued inequitable



Shaw University faculty on steps of Estey Hall, Raleigh, NC, c.1905-1910. Original glass plate negative is from the J. C. Knowles Collection, PhC.182, State Archives of North Carolina.

funding and systemic racism found in most aspects of life. They provide love, belonging, and a sense of place to marginalized students, who otherwise would not have the opportunity to receive a college education. For the students they serve, HBCUs are home; they are family.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are also diverse, the first truly integrated spaces in American society. While all of these schools might be classified as HBCUs, they all carry

¹ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 239; Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved In The Americas* (New York: New York University Press, 1998) 164, 177.

² Adam Faircough, *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007) 178.

their own distinct histories, strengths, and futures. HBCUs across America have a rich history. In this moment, while honoring their past, they look towards the horizon to the future. These are the stories of the North Carolina Ten.

SHAW UNIVERSITY (1865)

The history of HBCUs in North Carolina starts with its "Mother Pearl." Founded in 1865, Shaw University, initially named Raleigh Institute, was the first Black collegiate institution to be established in the South. Henry Martin Tupper, with aid from the northern American Baptist Home Mission Society, founded Shaw to help provide Bible and literacy classes to the formerly enslaved and their children.

Tupper, a Civil War chaplain, first taught theology to a group of largely illiterate freedpersons in a log cabin, and was nearly lynched by the Ku Klux Klan

for opening the school. Women were first admitted in 1870 when the school was renamed Shaw Collegiate Institute, making it the first historically Black college to open its doors to women.³ Named for Elijah Shaw, a Massachusetts benefactor, the school quickly became a model of Black classical education dedicated to uplifting African Americans. In 1873, Estey Hall was built, making it the first women's

dormitory at a co-educational college in the United States.⁴ When the school received its official charter in 1875, it was renamed Shaw University.

Shaw took the education and reputation of its students seriously. Shaw's third president, Charles F. Meserve, who served from 1894 – 1919, took a Du Boisian approach and felt the school should focus on classical training (emphasis on history, literature, and language) and that industrial training (practical application of a trade) was "relatively insignificant to the higher education of black students." The focus on classical training at Shaw and other similar black institutions



President James E. Cheek and family. c. 1968

aimed to make its alumni competitive with college-educated whites after they graduated. Shaw graduates were expected to achieve respectable status within the expanding black

middle-class. In June 1893, Tupper, stated that the "strongest feature . . . of Shaw University has been and is the moral and religious influence exerted, constituting a moulding power in the development of student life which almost every pupil feels and acknowledges."⁵ Not only were Shaw students expected to graduate and be professionally successful, but they also were expected to become upstanding exemplars of Christianity and morality.

In 1882, the Leonard School of Medicine at Shaw University was established, making it the first four-year medical school for African Americans in the nation. While Tupper intended for Shaw to be a theological seminary, he advocated for the addition of the medical school by arguing that like ministers, black physicians represented the best of the race. Despite initial fundraising success, Leonard Medical School continually operated on a minuscule budget and in the absence of Black doctors, relied on white doctors, many of them former slaveholders, as instructors. Increasing standards by the medical licensing boards made it difficult to attract students, as many incoming students at Shaw still lacked high school diplomas at the time. As Tupper, followed by Shaw's second president Charles Meserve, continued to appeal to white benefactors for financial support, the increasing belief that industrial education was best for Black students dissuaded many whites from donating. After operating for close to forty years, Leonard Medical School at Shaw officially closed in 1919.⁶

Another detrimental factor of Shaw's medical school was the United States Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*,

which established the doctrine of "separate but equal" in 1896. Schools serving Black students quickly found out that separate was anything but equal, as public funds for Black schools, including HBCUs, lagged far behind that of schools for white students. As Shaw struggled, the Black Baptist churches in the Raleigh area held "Shaw Days," to raise money for the school.⁷

Shaw, however, continued to face some difficult financial times in the early twentieth century. In August 1931, the school's first black president, William S. Nelson, embarked on a vigorous fundraising campaign, only hired black faculty, and imposed new restrictions on student life.⁸ In 1963 Shaw brought back one of its own,



SHAW HALL, SHAW UNIVERSITY.

³ Clara Jenkins, "A Historical Study of Shaw University: 1865–1963," (Ed.D. Diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1965), 22, 49; UNCF. ⁴ Harry Thomas, "Shaw University: The First Historically Black University in the South," <https://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/shaw.html>.

⁵ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 107. ⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, "The Anatomy of Failure: Medical Education Reform and the Leonard Medical School of Shaw University, 1882 – 1920," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Autumn, 1985), 512 – 525. ⁷ "Shaw Rising," Documentary Premiered April 17, 2020. ⁸ "The Tradition of White Presidents at Black Colleges," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 16 (Summer 1997): 93 – 99.

Dr. James Cheek, to lead the school. Dr. Cheek embarked on a vigorous fundraising campaign, implemented a \$10 million building campaign, and revamped the curriculum and increased academic standards. During his five years at the helm Shaw doubled its enrollment, and drastically increased its operating costs, leaving the school a large amount of debt. By 1986 the situation was so dire that Shaw alums mortgaged their homes in order to raise money to keep the doors open, which contradicts narratives about HBCU alums giving back to their alma maters.⁹

Today Shaw sits on twenty-seven acres in downtown Raleigh. Building on its history of leadership in Black education and civil rights, the school established the Center for Racial and Social Justice in June 2020. Shaw also is a leader in nontraditional education. By the 1960s, half of Shaw's student population were adult learners, putting the school ahead of the curve in providing education for nontraditional students. Shaw's adult degree program currently offers B.A. and B.S. degrees at nine locations across North Carolina.

In many ways, Shaw is the foundation on which other HBCUs in North Carolina rest. The founders of Elizabeth City State and North Carolina Central were both Shaw alums. Early

leaders of Fayetteville State, North Carolina A&T, and Livingstone College all attended and/or graduated from Shaw. Additionally, before moving to Greensboro, North Carolina A&T was housed at Shaw during its first year. Known as the "mother of HBCUs," less than fifty years after the Civil War and the establishment of Shaw, approximately 800 schools for black students were built across the South, many of which turned into our HBCUs of today.¹⁰

Eighteen sixty-seven alone saw a proliferation of HBCUs as nine schools were founded, including four in North Carolina.¹¹ Two years after the Thirteenth Amendment was passed by Congress the education of the formerly enslaved was a top priority in Black communities and for northern missionary associations. While three of the nine HBCUs established in 1867 eventually became state-supported institutions, they all initially started as private colleges or schools.

FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY (1867)

In North Carolina, the origins of Fayetteville State University started in the basement of a church before seven African American men purchased a lot on Fayetteville's Gillespie Street to provide a location for local African American children to receive an education. The school was originally named the Howard School, after Union General Oliver Otis Howard, first commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, who had a building erected on the site. Howard, in his role as Freedmen's Bureau commissioner, also founded Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1867. Today, Fayetteville State is sometimes colloquially known as "The Other Howard." In Howard's role as commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, no less than \$200,000 was spent in North Carolina for the education of African Americans.¹²

Like the growth of Shaw, the roots of Fayetteville State

demonstrate that while financial aid from the northern philanthropists and the Freedmen's Bureau was important, freedpersons took control of their own destinies and education. The Black citizens of Fayetteville bought their own land for the school, which became a continued theme of segregated education. In a system known as "double taxation," many Black citizens not only paid taxes to fund schools for white students, but also had to use their own money and community resources to provide adequate education for Black students.

Additionally, as with most schools that became HBCUs of the time, the Howard School provided a high-school education. As more African Americans sought education, it was suggested that a branch of the University of North Carolina open for Black students. In 1877 the North Carolina state legislature instead selected the Howard School to establish a normal school for the training of black teachers, changing the name to the State Colored Normal School. The school opened on September 3 with an annual appropriation of \$2,000, twenty-five men and seventeen women.¹³ It was the first public institute established to train Black teachers in the state and only the second school, after the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to be supported by the State of North Carolina. The mission of the school was overwhelmingly successful, as during Reconstruction North Carolina and Louisiana had the highest proportion of black teachers of any state in the South, with 300 African Americans teaching at day and night schools, outnumbering white teachers 2 to 1.¹⁴

The school also attracted some of the most prominent Black educators in the country. In 1880, Charles W. Chesnutt became the second Chief Executive Officer, before moving to New York three years later to become a prominent writer. Replacing Chesnutt was Dr. E.E. Smith, a graduate of Shaw

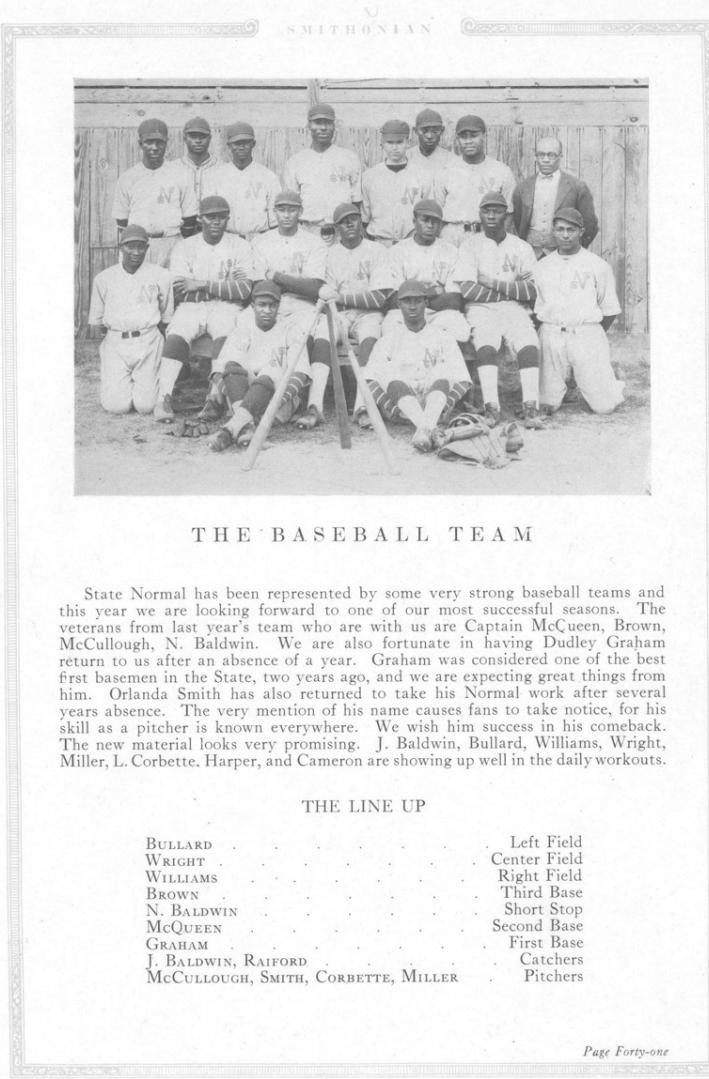


DR. E. E. SMITH

University, and one of FSU's more prominent early fathers. In 1888, President Grover Cleveland appointed Smith as United States Ambassador to Liberia, who was recommended for the post by Livingstone College President and founder, J.C. Price. Smith returned to Fayetteville State from 1895 – 1898, taking a leave of absence to fight in the Spanish-American War, and then returned in 1899, staying for over 33 years. During Smith's time at the helm the school moved to its current location in 1908. After three years the school boasted ten buildings and one of the best African American baseball teams in the state.¹⁵ After going through several

⁹ "Shaw Rising". ¹⁰ "Shaw Rising". ¹¹ <https://afro.com/nine-hbcus-celebrate150-years-black-excellence/>. In 1867, nine historically Black colleges and universities were founded and established: Barber-Scotia College, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Morehouse College, St. Augustine's University, Talladega College, Alabama State University, Morgan State University and Howard University. ¹² James A. Padgett, "From Slavery to Prominence in North Carolina: Preparation," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Oct., 1937), 433 – 487.

¹³ James A. Padgett, "From Slavery to Prominence in North Carolina: Preparation," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Oct., 1937), 433 – 487. ¹⁴ Michael Goldhaber, "A Mission Unfulfilled: Freedmen's Education in North Carolina, 1865 – 1870," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Autumn, 1992): 199 – 210. ¹⁵ "Ezekiel Ezra Smith and the Fayetteville State Normal School," in *Five North Carolina Negro Educators*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 117 – 142.



Fayetteville State University Baseball Team. c. 1927. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center.

name changes, the school officially became Fayetteville State University in 1969, and was incorporated into the University of North Carolina System in 1971.

Today Fayetteville State is also a leader in adult education, with 52%

of its students being nontraditional students. The campus also boasts two early college high schools, as well its nursing school, established in 1992 with the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. The school has also remained true to its original mission, as its Educational Leadership and School Administration Program offers degrees through the doctoral level and in June 2021 FSU announced that it was selected to serve as a partner institution with the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.

JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY (1867)

Unlike the founders of Fayetteville State, Johnson C. Smith University was founded by northern philanthropists. It was originally established as the Biddle Memorial Institute by the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen in 1867. Mary D. Biddle, part of the prominent Quaker Biddle family of Philadelphia, donated \$1,400 to the establishment of the school, which was then named for her late husband, Captain Henry Jonathan Biddle, who was killed during the Civil War. The primary goal of the school was initially to provide young men training to enter the ministry.

Biddle was originally built in the "Logtown" community just outside Charlotte, North Carolina. During the antebellum era the area was home to slave quarters for nearby plantations, and after the Civil War it remained home for recently freed Blacks. As the school grew, the community became known as "Biddleville," attracting more African Americans who established a thriving residential community. As Biddleville eventually

became subsumed by Charlotte, the extension of street car and telephone service brought growth and new residents to the area.¹⁶

As with other Presbyterian institutions, Biddle was located along railroad lines to provide accessibility in heavily populated African American locations. Because the school was accessible, many students came from the nearby countryside for their education. Their education, however, consisted of more than

theology. Biddle also received money from the Freedmen's Bureau to fund teacher training, as well as offered industrial and agricultural courses, with a farm connected with the school and worked by the students. The goal, in line with the rise of industrially focused education for African Americans, was to train students in areas that had practical application.¹⁷

The school's first president, appointed by the Presbytery of Catawba, was the Reverend S.C. Alexander who was tasked with establishing a theological class. Many of the young men served as catechists while still at Biddle, and it was the paternalistic hope of the Presbytery that they would go on to "enlighten the dark corners of Africa" upon receiving their credentials.¹⁸ In 1891, Presbyterian minister Daniel J. Sanders became president of Biddle, making him the first Black president of a four-year college in the South.

The school remained named for Biddle until 1923, when the name was changed to Johnson C. Smith in honor of Pittsburgh businessman and Presbyterian Johnson Crayne Smith whose widow donated money for the construction of nine buildings and the establishment of a permanent



endowment. The 1920s also brought financial support from other white philanthropists, notably James B. Duke, who established the Duke Endowment. While his namesake school, Duke University, was its primary benefactor, Johnson C. Smith was the only HBCU to receive Duke funds.¹⁹

In 1932, Johnson C. Smith became a co-educational institution with the admission of women. The same year it also became the first African American college in North Carolina to receive regional accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In 1944, JCSU became a founding member of the United Negro College Fund. In the 21st century the school continues to grow, and has been the beneficiary of funds from the Duke

¹⁶ Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875 – 1975*, 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020) 134 – 136. ¹⁷ Oliver S. Heckman, "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in Southern Reconstruction, 1860-1880," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 219 – 237. ¹⁸ *Ibid.* ¹⁹ <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/johnson-c-smith-university-1867/>

BARBER-SCOTIA COLLEGE

At the time of its founding, Johnson C. Smith was an all-male institution. Barber-Scotia College (originally Scotia Seminary) was also established in 1867 in nearby Concord, North Carolina, as the corresponding women's school. Rather than providing rigorous theological training, its mission was to prepare young, Black women for careers as teachers and social workers. Also founded by the Presbyterian Church, it was the first historically Black female institute of higher education established after the Civil War.

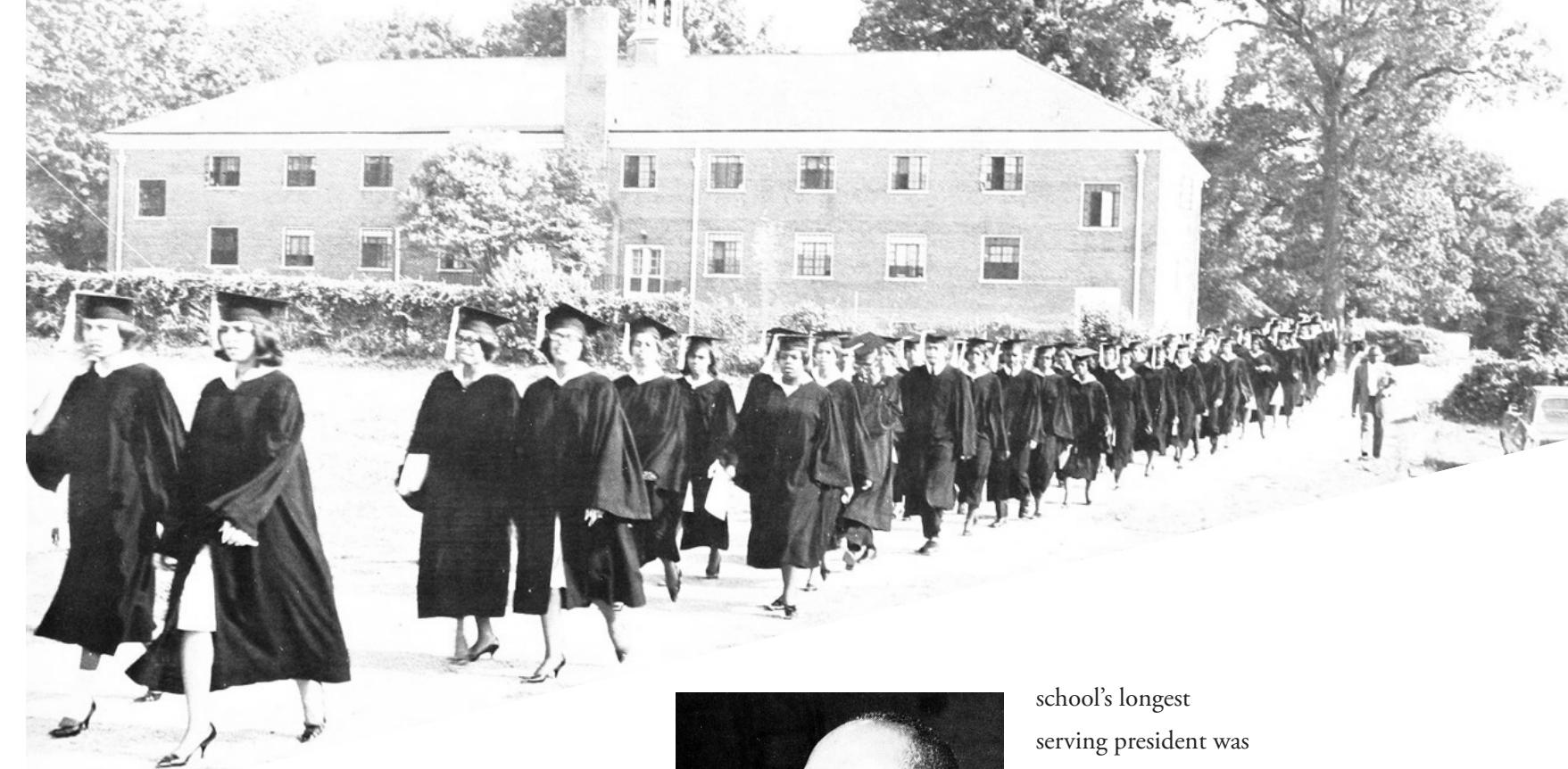
Its most famous alumna, Mary McLeod Bethune, graduated in 1894 and went on to become a pioneer in education, establishing what became Bethune-Cookman University in 1904. The school kept close ties with Johnson C. Smith, and in 1932 the school inaugurated its first black president, Leland Stanford Cozart, who was a graduate of JCSU. Barber-Scotia became coeducational in 1954. More recently, the school has struggled to maintain its accreditation and is not currently an accredited college or university.[^] Yet the alums of Barber Scotia continue to have an important impact on Black education. One alum being the current President of St. Augustine's University, Dr. Christine Johnson-McPhail.

Endowment. In 2009, Duke funds enabled the creation of the Center for Applied Leadership and Community Development and the Metropolitan College, which offers adult degree programs. In 2012, a 62,000 square foot Science Center was built to house innovative STEM programs.²⁰

ST. AUGUSTINE'S UNIVERSITY (1867)

S t. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute was also established in 1867 as a joint effort between the Episcopal Church's Diocese of North Carolina and the U.S. Freedmen's Bureau. Chartered on July 19, 1867, the school was established in Raleigh as a school for the formerly enslaved. Offering courses from primary to high school, its mission was to train teachers and young men for the ministry. Its first president, the Reverend J. Brinck Smith, held classes in his home until the school received \$6,000 from General O.O. Howard to establish a campus. In 1868, the first classes were held in Howard Hall with forty-three students. Named for Saint Augustine of Hippo, as the school grew it became St. Augustine's School in 1893, St. Augustine's Junior College in 1919, and St. Augustine's College in 1928 after it became a four-year school the prior year.²¹

One of St. Augustine's notable alums is Anna Julia Cooper, who began her formal education at St. Augustine's in 1868, at the age of ten, when the school's course offerings included primary and high school courses. After fourteen years at St. Augustine's, Cooper received her Bachelor's Degree from Oberlin College in Ohio. She briefly returned to St. Augustine's in 1885 before moving to Washington, D.C. in 1887. Cooper went on to co-found the Colored Women's League in 1894, became the fourth Black woman in the country to earn a Ph.D., and became president of



Commencement at St. Augustine's University. c. 1966. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center

Frelinghuysen University, whose mission was to provide educational services to working-class, Black adults.²²

In 1896 the school opened the first nursing school for African Americans in North Carolina, and established St. Agnes Hospital which throughout its existence, was one of the few places African Americans could go for quality health care. As a 100-bed unit, 75% of its work consisted of charity cases, making the school and hospital indispensable in the community. St. Agnes closed in 1961 when Wake Memorial Hospital integrated.²³

After being accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1931, St. Augustine's first African-American president came from another North Carolina HBCU. Harold L. Trigg was appointed in 1947 after serving as president of Elizabeth City State Teachers College. The



President Prezell R. Robinson

school's longest serving president was Prezell R. Robinson, who returned to his alma mater in 1956 as a sociology professor, and ten years later became the eighth president of the college. While serving as president he also led the United Negro College Fund, served as a Public

Ambassador to the United Nations (appointed by Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton), and received the Star of Africa Order for distinguished service to the Republic of Liberia in aiding in the establishment of Cuttington University.²⁴

In 2012, St. Augustine's went through its final name change and

²⁰ Veronica G. Thomas & Janine A. Jackson, "The Education of African American Girls and Women: Past to Present," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (Summer 2007): 357 – 372.

²¹ https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/johnson-c-smith-university-1867/; https://www.jcsu.edu/about/our-university/history/. ²² Arthur Ben Chitty, "St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, North Carolina," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 1966), 207 – 220; Mark S. Giles, "Special Focus: Dr. Anna Julia Cooper, 1858 – 1964: Teacher, Scholar, and Timeless Womanist," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Fall, 2006), 621 – 634. ²³ Arthur Ben Chitty, "St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, North Carolina," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 1966), 207 – 220. ²⁴ https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/people-african-american-history/prezell-russell-robinson-1920/. Accessed June 28, 2021.

became St. Augustine's University. The school has maintained its strong Episcopalian ties and today it is one of two historically black Episcopalian colleges in the country. Over one-third of the Black Episcopalian priests in the country are St. Augustine's alums, including three Black bishops.

"The Miracle on Oakwood Avenue," as the school has been known, continues to pride itself on delivering holistic experiences to its students.

BENNETT COLLEGE (1873)

The origins of what became Bennett College started in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1873 when Albion Tourgee, a Union soldier and civil rights activist, started a normal school for freedpersons in the basement of Warnersville Methodist Episcopal Church (now St. Matthews United Methodist). The next year the Freedmen's Aid Society took over and by 1878, a group of formerly enslaved community members purchased the land where the school

now sits, adding college-level courses and permanent facilities. Lyman Bennett, a New York businessman and philanthropist, donated \$10,000 to help build a permanent campus, and Bennett Seminary was born. Initially a coeducational institute, in 1926 the Women's Home Missionary Society, along with the North Carolina Board of Education, made Bennett an all-women's school, which it has remained since.

Upon becoming an all-female institute, David Dallas Jones was installed as president. Under Jones's leadership, the school grew, becoming known as the "Vassar of the South." According to Bennett historian Linda Beatrice Brown, "As the school built its strength and reputation, and changed to a liberal arts college for women, this impulse toward freedom and justice did not wane...the core of Bennett as we know it today had its beginnings in the leadership of Dr. David Jones, who became president in 1926 and was a courageous example of race leadership in the thirties and forties."²⁵ After Jones, Dr. Willa Player became president in 1956, making her the first Black woman to lead a four-year, fully accredited liberal arts college or university. Dr. Player led Bennett through the years of the civil rights movement and supported the "Bennett Belles" in their activism.

Bennett was instrumental in planning the sit-ins that started on February 1, 1960. At the height of the sit-in movement in Greensboro, up to 40% of the Bennett Belles were incarcerated. Students filled the jails to the point that arrested students were held in the old polio hospital in town.



12

a normal school for freedpersons in the basement of Warnersville Methodist Episcopal Church (now St. Matthews United Methodist). The next year the Freedmen's Aid Society took over and by 1878, a group of formerly enslaved community members purchased the land where the school



Members of the Barge Hall House Council at Bennett College. c. 1963. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center

Dr. Player herself would take assignments to the students in jail so they would not fall behind in their studies.

Today Bennett College remains affiliated with the United Methodist Church, and it is one of two all-female HBCUs in the country. In December 2018, Bennett's accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), attempted to remove accreditation from Bennett over financial concerns, after the school was placed on probation in 2016. Bennett embarked on an ambitious fundraising campaign to raise \$5 million. The "Stand With Bennett" campaign raised over \$9 million, yet its accreditation issues remained after the SACSCOC rejected its appeal. In December 2020, Bennett announced that it had received accreditation candidacy with Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools.²⁶ In response to growing challenges, Bennett is spearheading

the concept of the "micro-college," limiting their enrollment to around two hundred students while focusing on a holistic education to meet student needs in and out of the classroom.

LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE (1879)

Six years after the establishment of Bennett, and thirteen years after the establishment of Scotia Seminary in Concord, a group of A.M.E. Zion ministers founded the Zion Wesley Institute, also in Concord, in 1879. The purpose of Zion was to train ministers, but the Institute closed soon after its inception. In 1881, Dr. Joseph

²⁵ Linda Beatrice Brown, *Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina* (Greensboro: Women and Wisdom Press, 2013), 2.

²⁶ <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/24/697556372/after-losing-appeal-bennett-college-seeks-alternate-accreditation>; <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2020/12/03/bennett-receives-new-accreditation-candidacy>; https://greensboro.com/news/local/education/an-exciting-moment-bennett-college-finds-a-new-accreditor-after-two-years/article_467e4d1e-34ae-11eb-9552-1f5eb4c218d9.html. Accessed August 2, 2021.



TOP Livingstone College students in the Natural Science Club. c. 1942. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center. **BOTTOM** Student posing outside the entrance to Livingstone College. c. 1942. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center.

Zion Wesley.

While Livingstone faced many of the same challenges of early HBCUs, such as funding, small enrollments, and lack of facilities and teachers, it prided itself on receiving no funding

Charles Price and former assistant superintendent of the State Bureau of Education, Bishop James Walker Hood, started a fundraising campaign to re-establish the school. The town of Salisbury, twenty miles north of Concord, donated \$1000 and extended an invitation to Price and Hood to move their school there. Zion Wesley Institute reopened in 1882 in Salisbury with Dr. Price as president.²⁷ In 1887, Dr. Price suggested the name of the school be changed to Livingstone, to honor explorer Dr. David Livingstone, who had previously donated \$10,000 to

from white religious organizations. Maintaining its affiliation with the A.M.E. Zion Church, "it was not the free Northern Blacks of the church who came South after the war that started Livingstone College. It was started by Blacks that were already in the South." Because of this, Livingstone continually deemphasized industrial and vocational training, which was becoming increasingly emphasized at schools for Black students, and instead focused on classical, liberal arts education.²⁸

The Reverend J.C. Price, founder and first president, received part of

his education at Shaw University before deciding to become a minister in the A.M.E. Zion church and transferred to Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. As a minister, he became a well-known orator, touring Europe speaking about the plight of Black education in the U.S. South. During that tour he raised \$10,000 for the school and was dubbed by the London press as "The World's Orator." He remained president of Livingstone until his death in 1893. He is buried on Livingstone's campus.

Theological studies were an important aspect of Livingstone's founding. Dr. James Emmanuel Kwesigir Aggrey came from Ghana to Salisbury in 1898 to attend Livingstone and train as a missionary. Aggrey learned about the school from A.M.E. Zion missionaries in Africa. In 1902, he graduated from Livingstone and in 1912 Hood Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity degree. After attending graduate school at Columbia University, he returned to Livingstone where he held numerous positions ranging from registrar to professor of Christian sociology.²⁹

Livingstone College also made sports history on December 27, 1892 when it played in the first intercollegiate football game between two Black colleges. Livingstone played Biddle (now Johnson C. Smith) in Salisbury, but lost 5-0 when the game was called after snow covered the field.

As the college grew, Hood Theological Seminary, named for Bishop James Walker Hood, remained part of the Livingstone College campus until 2001. It is now a fully accredited seminary, also located in Salisbury, offering graduate degrees in divinity and theological studies. It also remains affiliated with the A.M.E. Zion Church and is an approved graduate theological seminary in the United Methodist Church.

Reconstruction in North Carolina brought many educational opportunities for African Americans, in no small part due to the work of James Walker Hood, an A.M.E. Zion minister who became the state's assistant superintendent in the Bureau of Education in 1868. The North Carolina legislature appointed Hood after the 1868 North Carolina Constitutional Convention, in which 15 of the 120 delegates were African American, providing an opportunity to prioritize education for the formerly enslaved. Hood's primary duty was to

²⁷ <https://livingstone.edu/about/>. Accessed June 29, 2021.

²⁸ Lenwood G. Davis, "Livingstone College: The Epitome of Black Self-Help in Black Higher Education," *Negro History Bulletin*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (April-May-June, 1980), 34 – 36. ²⁹ Sylvia M. Jacobs, "James Emman Kwesigir Aggrey: An African Intellectual in the United States," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 81, No. 1/4 (Winter - Autumn 1996), 47 - 61.

KITTRELL NORMAL AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL

establish and supervise schools for Black students. While Hood believed that racially segregated schools would lead to discrimination in favor of white schools, he also felt Black children would be treated better by Black teachers. In 1869, Hood reported that North Carolina had 257 schools for Black students with a combined enrollment of 15,657 students. By 1871, the last year of Hood's tenure, school attendance by Black students had increased to 49,000.³⁰

Today, Livingstone College is a National Historic District with sixteen buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Recently the school was re-accredited - with zero sanctions - by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Colleges until 2031, giving the school the greenlight to expand their course offerings. There are currently plans to add pre-law and

The African Methodist Episcopal Church established Kittrell Normal and Industrial School in 1886. Just south of Henderson, North Carolina in Vance County, Kittrell was an all-male, two-year institution, which became Kittrell College in 1901. Continually plagued by financial woes, several of the buildings on campus were dismantled at Trinity College as it became Duke University, moved to Kittrell, and rebuilt. The Duke family, also Methodists, donated several hundred thousand dollars to the school over several decades. The school maintained close ties to Durham, counting among its alums Dr. Stanford Lee Warren, co-founder of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, established in Durham and was one of the largest black-owned businesses in the country. The Duke money was not enough, however, as Kittrell shut down several times before ultimately closing in 1975. Today the campus is used as a Federal Job Corps Center.

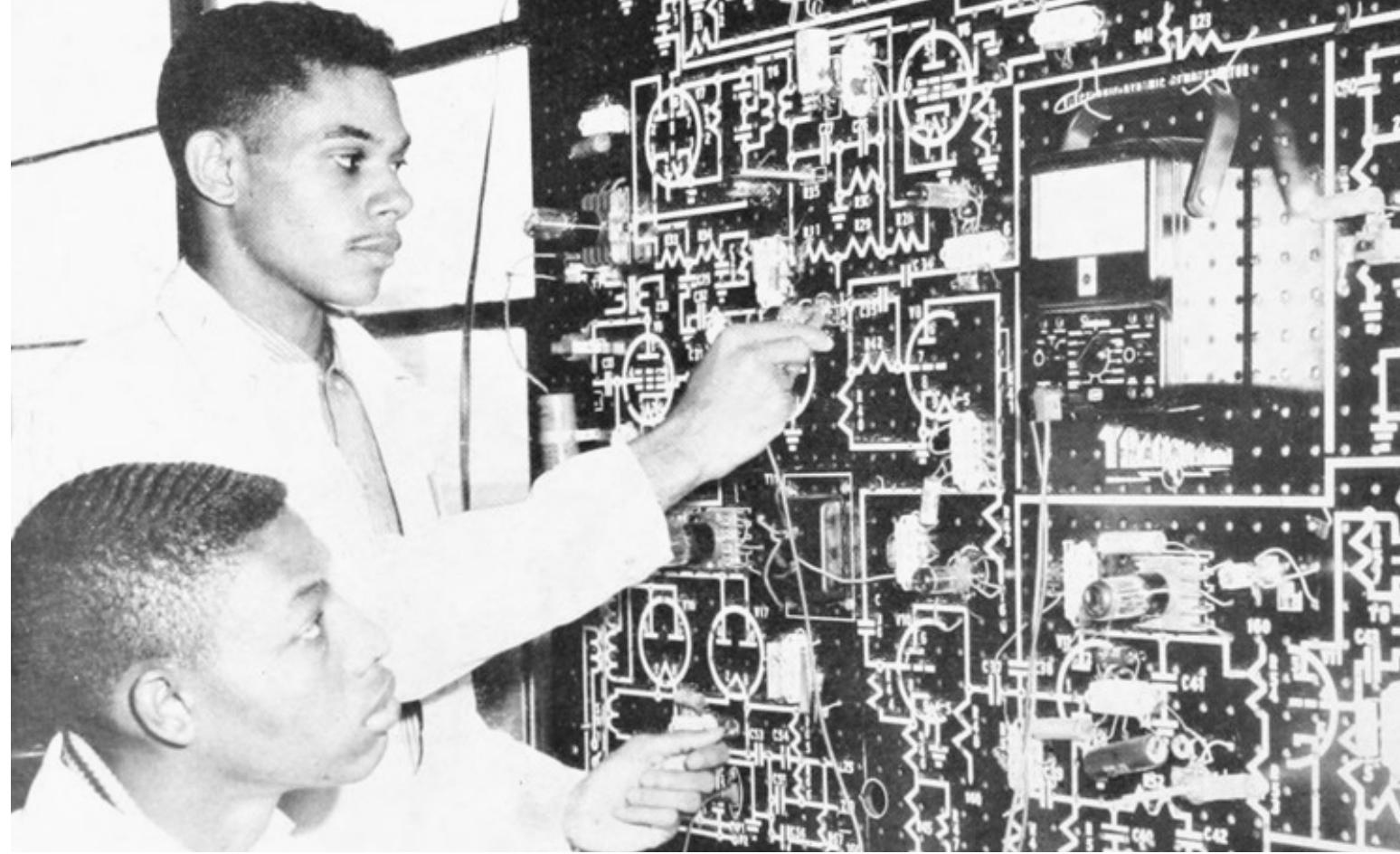
of which were taken from indigenous tribes through treaty or seizure. In North Carolina this led to the creation of North Carolina College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts in Raleigh in 1887 (now North Carolina State University). In

pre-med majors, as well as a Masters of Business Administration Program, which would be the school's first graduate-level offering.

NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY (1891)

From the 1870s through the 1890s the nature of Black education in the South began to change. While schools educating the formerly enslaved and their descendants still taught multiple generations, more schools offering college-level courses were established for Black students in the South. In 1862, the first Morrill Act was passed by the U.S. Congress, establishing land-grant colleges to focus on the agricultural and mechanical arts. These schools were established

using federal lands, many



Students in the School of Engineering at North Carolina A&T State University. c.1961. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center

1890, a second Morrill Act was passed aimed at the states of the former Confederacy. The act provided each state with \$15,000 a year for institutions focusing on agriculture, mechanical arts, math, and sciences. The act also stipulated that the money should not go towards a college where race was a factor in the admission of students. Separate colleges for black and white students, however, were in compliance as long as the funds were equally distributed between the black and white schools. Because of the second Morrill Act, nine federal Black land-grant colleges were established in the South between 1870 and 1890. In 1891, the North Carolina State legislature created A&M College for the Colored Race.³¹

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University was originally founded as an annex to Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1890. The racial stipulation in the second Morrill Act allowed A&M for the Colored Race to become the second state-supported Black college in North Carolina.

On March 3, 1892, the board voted to relocate the college to Greensboro, and the school began to expand to include courses in the humanities, fine arts, business, and education. In 1915, the school was renamed the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina.³²

While A&T has been a public school from its inception, the school's early founders were already steeped in the tradition of HBCUs in North Carolina. The school's first president, John O. Crosby, received his education from Biddle University (Johnson C. Smith) and Shaw University. James B. Dudley, the second president, also

³⁰ Sarah Carolinian Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal: African American Struggles for Schools and Citizenship in North Carolina, 1919 - 1965*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013) 5-6; <https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/hood/bio.html>; <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/learning/educators/timelines/nineteenth-century-north-carolina-timeline>

³¹ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 238. ³² Warmoth T. Gibbs, *History of The North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College* (Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown Book Company, 1966), 2-5. North Carolina A&M in Raleigh is now North Carolina State University; North Carolina A&T State University, "History and Mission," 2016, <http://www.ncat.edu/about/history-mission.html>.

graduated from Shaw before receiving a M.A. from Livingstone College. While initially an all-male school, A&T became co-ed in 1928. In 1967, the school went through its final name change, becoming North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

Nationally, North Carolina A&T became known for the events of February 1, 1960, when four A&T students sat down at the white-only lunch counter of the downtown Greensboro Woolworth's, sparking a movement. In addition to the sit-ins, however, NC A&T students have long been at the forefront of social protest. North Carolina Governor Luther Hodges, who held the office from 1954 - 1961, credited the success of Black education in North Carolina to the "devoted friendship and assistance of white citizens" and was staunchly against school integration.³³ When Hodges spoke at A&T's Founders Day ceremony in the fall of 1955, after praising the school's leaders, attacking the NAACP, and slipping into using the word "Nigra," students began to scrape



Students in the School of Nursing at NC A&T State University. c. 1961. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center.

With an ever-expanding array of graduate course offerings, A&T hopes to someday become the first R1 (Research 1 - meeting specific levels of research activity and expenditures) HBCU.³⁶

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY (1891)

With the success of the normal school in Fayetteville, four other normal schools in New Bern, Plymouth, Franklinton, and Salisbury were founded in 1881. While they all eventually closed, the school that became Elizabeth City State University was founded in 1891 and remains strong today.³⁷

their feet on the floor and cough, angering the governor.³⁴ Almost fourteen years later, in May 1969, the National Guard took over A&T's campus after students demonstrated in support of Dudley High School student Claude Barnes, who was elected student body president but not allowed to serve because of his association with Black-separatist organizations. The situation escalated, resulting in the death

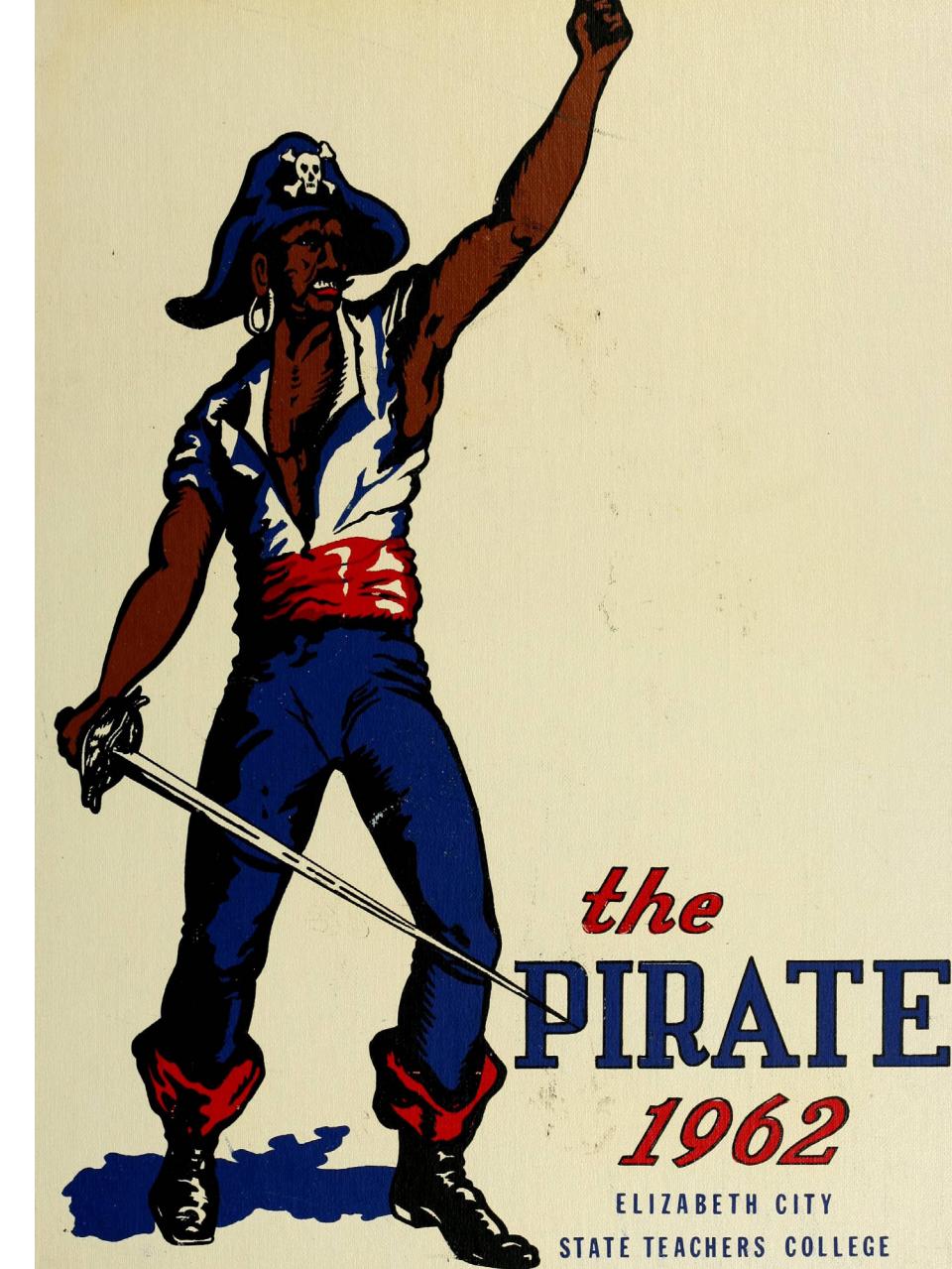
of A&T sophomore Willie Grimes, and the Guardsmen storming Scott Hall.³⁵

Today North Carolina A&T is the largest HBCU in the United States. The school boasts alumni such as the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Dr. Ronald E. McNair, an astronaut who died in the 1986 Challenger explosion. It is known for its research, especially in the area of engineering.

The origins began in 1891 when Hugh Cale, a formerly enslaved Black representative from Pasquotank County to the North Carolina General Assembly, sponsored House Bill 383, proposing the creation of a normal school to train Black teachers. Cale was familiar with the educational needs of Black students in North Carolina, having served as a trustee of Zion Wesley Institute (Livingstone) and the North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race (NC A&T). House Bill 323 passed, establishing the State Normal Colored School at Elizabeth City. The NC General Assembly appropriated \$900 to start the school, and Peter Weddick Moore, a graduate of Shaw, was the first Principal, then President. Dr. Moore's first duty was to establish a location for the school in Elizabeth City; he was able to obtain a building on what was then Brody Road Street. The school officially opened on January 4, 1892, with sixty students. Dr. Moore stayed at Elizabeth City until 1928, at which time the school boasted 355 students, fifteen faculty members, and several buildings at the school's current location.³⁸

In 1937, the State Normal Colored School at Elizabeth City went from a two-year to a four-year teacher's college, and in 1939 became Elizabeth City State Teacher's College. That year the school awarded the first twenty-seven graduates baccalaureate degrees in elementary education. In 1963, after receiving accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, it became Elizabeth City State University.

Elizabeth City State has expanded far beyond its normal school beginnings. In 1962, the school awarded



Cover of Elizabeth City State University Yearbook with original pirate mascot. c. 1962. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center.

degrees in General Science, Business Education, and Social Sciences – the first degrees awarded outside of elementary education. In 2008, the first pharmacy students and first students to receive Master's degrees in School Administration graduated. Today ECSU boasts the only four-year degree in aviation science in North Carolina.³⁹ ►

³³ William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 51. ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61. ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 185 - 202. ³⁶ John Newsom, "The Syllabus: Could N.C. A&T Become an R1 University?" *Greensboro News & Record*, November 20, 2020, https://greensboro.com/blogs/the-syllabus/could-n-c-a-t-become-an-r1-university/article_4dae1f3a-25e8-11eb-bb29-e7a2a88d296e.html. Accessed August 17, 2021. ³⁷ Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal*, 279 n.7.

³⁸ <https://underbothflags.ncdcr.gov/1860characters/hugh-cale.html>; <https://www.ecsu.edu/about/history/index.html>; "Five Negro Educators". ³⁹ <https://www.ecsu.edu/aviation/>

INDUSTRIAL VS. LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

In the 1890s, the state of race relations in North Carolina rapidly deteriorated. The expansion of voting rights to Black men and the state's Fusion government, formed by Populists and Black Republicans, led to Black government representation on state and federal levels. In an attempt to restore their power and a system of white supremacy, the "Redeemer" conservative Democrats embarked on a campaign to bring white Populist voters back into the Democratic fold. They were highly successful, and the campaign culminated with the 1898 coup d'état in Wilmington and the 1900 election of Charles B. Aycock as the governor of North Carolina. Aycock, known as the "Education Governor" promoted the education of African Americans in the state, but so long as that education was delivered by whites and prepared African Americans for specific, subservient roles.

Aycock's vision for Black education in North Carolina reflected broader debates over what should be included in Black curriculum. As stated by historian Roberta Sue Alexander, "Most whites were not opposed to educating former slaves, so long as the curriculum was in line with what most southern whites thought should be their 'proper' place in society. That meant an industrial education geared towards labor and vocation taught by southerners, rather than a classical education taught and funded

by northern missionary societies."⁴⁰ Black educators also debated the ideological conflict between industrial training and classical education.

The model of industrial training for former slaves was spearheaded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong who established Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia in 1868. The ideological purpose of Hampton was to teach former slaves the "dignity of labor," emphasizing "steady work habits, practical knowledge, and Christian morals" so they could assume the role of dependable, free laborer in postbellum southern society.⁴¹ One of Armstrong's star pupils, Booker T. Washington, continued to carry the torch of industrial education. Washington's views are encapsulated in his 1895 "Atlanta Compromise" speech in which he stated "No race can prosper...till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem." To assuage white fears he promised that Black workers would be "the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen."⁴² With the establishment of the Tuskegee Institute, the concept of industrial education became known as the Hampton-Tuskegee model of education.

The Hampton-Tuskegee model received significant pushback from Black educators, particularly Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois felt education for African Americans should focus on producing Black teachers, but also leaders who would promote social and political equality and "egalitarian social critics." In 1905, Du Bois and other like-minded Black leaders formed the Niagara Movement, demanding equal civil rights including suffrage and higher education. He felt that Black higher education needed to go beyond just industrial training to include civics, philosophy, and a well-rounded liberal arts curriculum. While Washington had been able to secure the donations of northern philanthropists and gain the support of southern educational leaders, many northern liberals and particularly African Americans themselves looking for educational opportunities, became critical of the Hampton-Tuskegee model.⁴³

WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY (1892)

In North Carolina, each school had different missions depending upon its founders. But the Washington-DuBois debate can be seen in the creation of the last two HBCUs established in the state: Winston-Salem State and North Carolina Central. Winston-Salem State was initially founded as the Slater Industrial Academy in 1892 and three years later, in 1895 it became the Slater Industrial and State Normal School when it was recognized by the North Carolina General Assembly and became a public school.

Slater's President, Simon G. Atkins, was a graduate of St. Augustine's and a former faculty member at Livingstone. He initially came to the town of Winston as the principal of Depot Street Colored Graded School where he came to believe that the primary issues facing Black education was not the curriculum (industrial versus classical - any education was better than no education), but rather lack of funding that allowed Black students to receive more years of education.⁴⁴

After forming Slater, Atkins adopted Booker T. Washington's Hampton-Tuskegee model. Even the name of his school - *Slater Industrial* - signaled to potential donors the time of education students would receive. Money poured in from northern philanthropists and local business leaders such as tobacco magnate R.J. Reynolds.⁴⁵ Young men learned skills such as blacksmithing and shoe making, while young women were taught cooking and household economics. Atkins also established the Columbia Heights neighborhood, where Slater was located. He envisioned

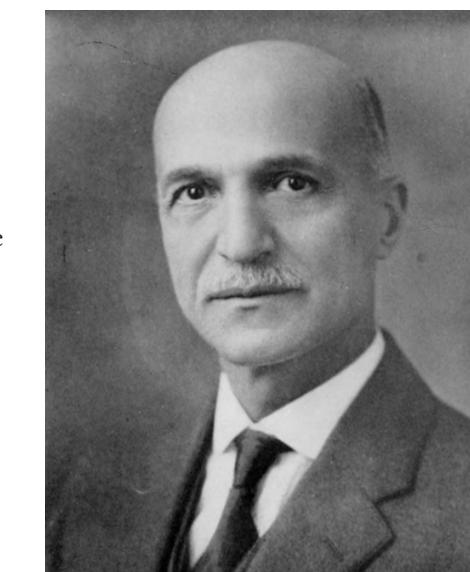
Columbia Heights as a neighborhood of middle-class Black families, headed by doctors, lawyers, ministers, and teachers who owned their homes.⁴⁶

Yet Atkin's commitment to industrial education did not extend far beyond its appeal to white funders. Slater's curriculum never actually reflected the emphasis on industrial coursework as did that of Tuskegee or

Hampton, and Atkins rejected the idea that Black students should receive an education different from that of white students.⁴⁷ Yet his plan, to take advantage of the prejudices of white funders who felt they knew what type of education would

be best for Black students, paid off handsomely as the school grew.

Slater was a favorite school of N.C. Newbold, who was the director of The Division of Negro Education in North Carolina from 1913 to 1950. Newbold was a proponent of the Hampton-Tuskegee method of industrial



President Simon G. Atkins. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center.

⁴⁰ Roberta Sue Alexander, "Hostility and Hope: Black Education in North Carolina during Presidential Reconstruction, 1865 – 1867," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (April, 1976): 113 – 132. ⁴¹ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 33 – 35. ⁴² Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 73. ⁴³ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 104-108.

⁴⁴ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 181. ⁴⁵ Ibid., 182. ⁴⁶ Elizabeth A. Herbin-Triant, *Threatening Property: Race, Class, and Campaigns to Legislate Jim Crow Neighborhoods* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019) 180 – 182. ⁴⁷ Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own*, 183. ⁴⁸ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 138.

education and spread that philosophy throughout the state, saying that it is his job to help make “better workers, and better citizens of the negroes of North Carolina.”⁴⁸ With Newbold’s urging, in 1925 the school’s curriculum was extended beyond the normal school level, becoming Winston-Salem Teachers College and the first Black institution in the nation to grant



Winston-Salem State University Marching Band. c. 1955. From North Carolina Yearbooks Collection, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center.

elementary teacher education degrees.⁴⁹ A nursing school was established in 1953, and in 1963 the name of the school changed again to Winston-Salem State College to reflect its more diversified curriculum. Finally, in 1972 when the school became a part of the University of North Carolina System, it became Winston-Salem State University (WSSU).

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY (1910)

The creation of North Carolina Central, on the other hand, was created with a more Du Boisian philosophy in mind. By 1905, North Carolina stood out among other southern states for having a Black land-grant college and three Black, state-supported schools. But the state funding was paltry and the schools still offered limited courses, primarily high-school courses. Determined to address the racial inequality in education, Shaw graduate and businessman James E. Shepard aspired to create a school that would

cultivate Black leadership. After a career in politics Shepard established the national Religious Training School and Chautauqua in Durham in 1910. As the “Capital of the Black Middle Class,” Durham had a thriving Black community – and several philanthropic whites who helped with the initial funding of the school. To appease those white funders Shepard promised to emphasize moral instruction, but by the mid-1910s the school, now named the National Training School, had become a liberal arts college.⁵⁰

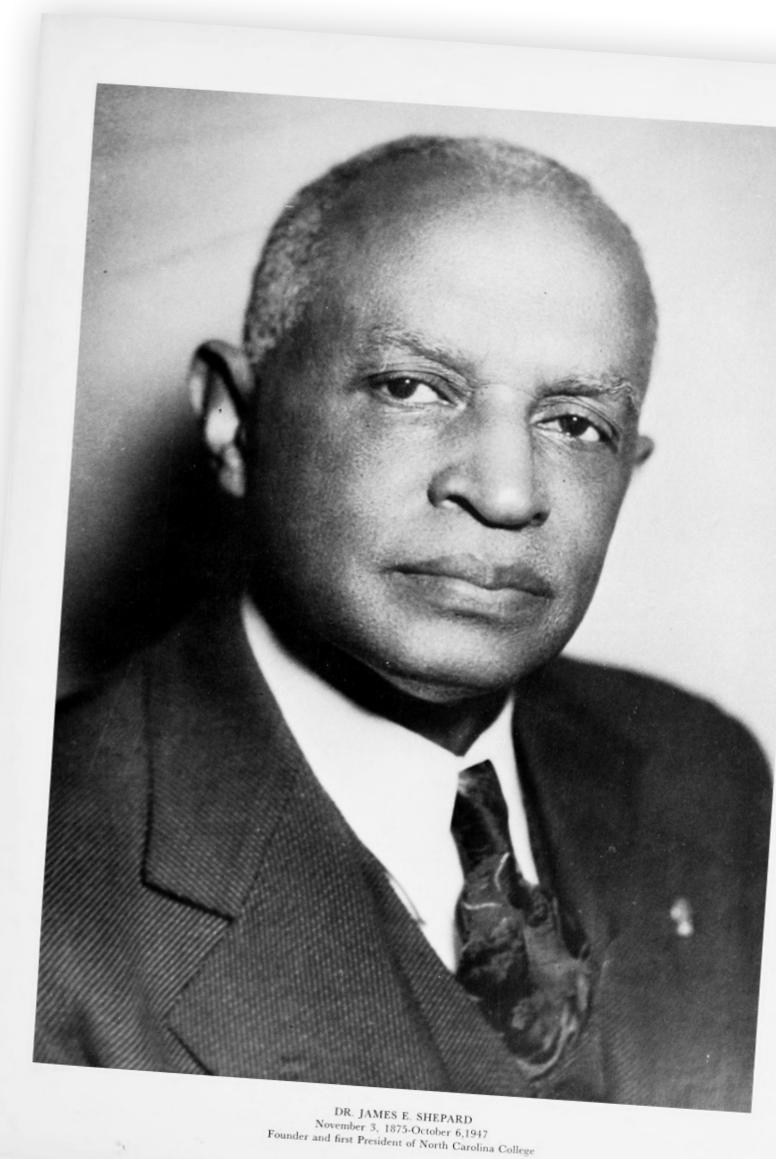
By the early 1920s, however, Shepard’s school was deeply in debt and was taken over by the State of North Carolina in 1923 and renamed the Durham State Normal School. Two years later the school was renamed the North Carolina College for Negroes, with the mission fulfill the “growing desire among negroes for a liberal arts education.” Shepard fought to remain in control of the school and maintain its focus on cultural advancement, which put him in direct conflict with N.C. Newbold. According to historian Sarah Thuesen, Newbold’s disdain for Shepard was not “so much by seeking a liberal arts college but by violating

the rules of black deference.” When the school became a four-year college in 1929, the local Black newspaper declared Durham had “the distinction of being the home of the only state-owned Negro college of liberal arts.”⁵¹ Graduate-level studies in the liberal arts were established in 1939, and the next year the School of Law opened, making it the only law school for African Americans in North Carolina since the closure of Shaw’s Law School seventeen years earlier.⁵² The growth of the school prompted the North Carolina General Assembly to rename the school to North Carolina College at Durham, and in 1969 it became North Carolina Central University.

Forty-five years after the Civil War, the schools that would become the North Carolina Ten were in place. While a tremendous amount had been accomplished in less than half a century, HBCUs would continue to face challenges in the 20th century. Journalist Adam Harris writes that “higher education is organized so the institutions with the fewest minority students have the most money, the best services for students, and the highest prestige....That is not by coincidence, but by design.”⁵³ North Carolina is no different.

According to historian Sarah Thuesen, by 1920 out of the 1,675 students at the Black normal schools, only 496 took coursework above a seventh grade level. A&T, which was only open to men until 1926, only offered two years of college courses.⁵⁴

While the focus of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) was not higher education, it nonetheless had a significant impact on HBCUs. Further court rulings that deemed the admission of students based solely on race unconstitutional, forced the integration of predominantly white colleges and universities in the 1950s and 1960s. As higher educational opportunities expanded for Black students, a decline in



DR. JAMES E. SHEPARD
November 3, 1873–October 6, 1947
Founder and first President of North Carolina College

President James E. Shepard

enrollment that left many HBCUs struggling. Because many HBCUs relied on tuition and received less public support from state and local governments than PWIs, the decrease in enrollment hit hard. Many HBCUs, such as Kittrell, did not survive.⁵⁵ ■

⁴⁸ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 138. ⁴⁹ <https://www.wssu.edu/about/points-of-pride/our-history.html>. ⁵⁰ Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal*, 92.

⁵¹ Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal*, 104–108. ⁵² <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-central-university>; <https://law.nccu.edu/about/statement-of-equal-education-opportunity-2/>. ⁵³ Adam Harris, *The State Must Provide: Why America's Colleges Have Always Been Unequal - And How To Set Them Right* (New York: Ecco, 2021) 5. ⁵⁴ Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal*, 96–97.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

AND HBCUS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Students, especially those from HBCUs, played an important role in the civil rights movement in North Carolina. Because they faced fewer repercussions than their parents who depended largely on white employers, students from HBCUs in North Carolina fomented grassroots campaigns that changed the national civil rights movement. As early as 1937, women from Bennett College protested

segregated movie theaters in downtown Greensboro. Bennett also hosted national civil rights leaders, notably Dr. Martin Luther King in 1958, when other venues in Greensboro refused. The most famous civil rights event in North Carolina are the sit-ins that started in Greensboro by students from North Carolina A&T, who planned an event along with Bennett College. On February 1, 1960, the school became forever etched in civil rights history when four of its young students, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair (Jibreel Khazan), David Richmond, and Joseph McNeil walked from campus to the Woolworth's Lunch Counter in downtown Greensboro and sat at the counter until closing. February 1 marked the

beginning of the sit-in movement, which spread to other HBCUs in North Carolina and across the South.

A week later, on February 8 in Winston-Salem, Winston-Salem Teacher's College graduate Carl Matthews sat-in at the local Kress store, followed in later weeks by students from Winston-Salem Teacher's College and nearby Wake Forest University.⁵⁶ In Raleigh, students from Shaw University and St. Augustine's College staged their first sit-in on February 10, 1960. Approximately 150 students from the two schools demonstrated at seven stores in downtown Raleigh and in Cameron Village. The students from these HBCUs viewed their participation in protest activities as part of their education. Upon graduation, because of segregation, these students saw their opportunities to be unequal with their level of education. While they received quality education, economic opportunities for Black college graduates were far less than for white college graduates. In addition to seeking desegregation, students also sought broader social and economic opportunity because of their protest.⁵⁷ Inspired by the grassroots student movement, Shaw University alumna Ella Baker returned to her alma mater to host the Youth Leadership Conference from April 15-17, 1960. The conference brought together student activists from across the South. From that meeting, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was established.

In October 2021, Fayetteville residents started the beginning stages of a historical marker program to commemorate the activism of Fayetteville State students in the 1963 civil rights protests to desegregate downtown businesses. After several weeks of protests, the Mayor of Fayetteville, Wilber Clark, formed a bi-racial committee for integration and in July 1963 they came to an agreement with the local NAACP. By the time President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Fayetteville State students

were already able to patronize formerly segregated spaces downtown.⁵⁸

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

The relationship between The North Carolina Ten and the University of North Carolina system has been historically fraught. For its first one hundred sixty-six years UNC excluded African American students from its ranks. By the 1920s, the legacy of Governor Charles Aycock "created what became the most extensive Jim Crow higher education system in the South," in which HBCUs were underfunded and neglected while public monies were funneled into traditionally white institutions.⁵⁹

A handful of states, including North Carolina, sent Black students out of state rather than educate them at home. In 1939, the North Carolina legislature passed the Murphy Bill, stating that Black students who wished to pursue a graduate degree offered at UNC, but not North Carolina Central or North Carolina A&T, could apply for state scholarships to pursue those degrees in another state. There were limits, however, to the funding. Section 3 of the Murphy Bill stated that funding was available "in such an amount as may be deemed reasonably necessary,"

⁵⁶ Dalton, Mary M., and Susan L. Faust. *I'm Not My Brother's Keeper Leadership and Civil Rights in Winston-Salem, North Carolina*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: [Wake Forest University], 2001. Film. ⁵⁷ Brian Sutell, "Civil Rights Campus: Student Activism and the 1960 Youth Leadership Campus," *The Journal of the North Carolina Association of Historians*, Volume 25 (October 2017). ⁵⁸ Akira Kyles, "Here's why there's a push for Fayetteville State University to get a historical marker," *The Fayetteville Observer*, October 23, 2021, <https://www.fayobserver.com/story/news/2021/10/23/fayetteville-state-university-fsu-civil-rights-movement-historical-marker/8438925002/>, accessed October 28, 2021; Brian Sutell, *Countdown to Downtown: The Civil Rights Protest Movement in Downtown Fayetteville, North Carolina*, MA Thesis, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2007. ⁵⁹ William A. Link, *William Friday: Power, Purpose, and American Higher Education* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 249.

allowing the state to base funding off of schools with the cheapest tuition.⁶⁰

Cracks in the Jim Crow structure began to appear in 1955 with the case *Frasier v. Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina*, which ordered UNC to integrate. Yet for the next fifteen years, very few Black students attended UNC, North Carolina State, or Women's College (now UNCG). Over the next decade attempts were made by the State Board of Higher Education to upgrade the infrastructure and educational standards of the five public HBCUs in the state.

Yet these initiatives failed because of the historical and distrust of the white power structure on the part of Black higher education leadership. Meanwhile, the UNC trustees and the North Carolina General Assembly had shown little interest in the plight of HBCUs. While a 1968 report entitled *Planning for Higher Education in North Carolina*, stated that the state's HBCUs provided a vital service to the state and expanded educational opportunities to African Americans who would otherwise not attend college, they were still desperate for state support.⁶¹ This lack of state support came despite federal legislation aimed to reduce these disparities. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed by President Lyndon Johnson, Title VI

of the bill stated: "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

As with almost every other college in the United States, colleges and universities in North Carolina received federal funds and were therefore banned from discriminating against African Americans or other minority groups. A 1970 compliance review conducted by the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), however, determined that ten states, including North Carolina, openly kept their systems of higher education racially segregated.⁶²

When negotiations with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare still failed to achieve compliance with Title VI, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund filed suit in 1970. The case, *Adams v. Richardson*, made its way through the appeals process over the next two years before ultimately ruling that ten states openly ignored HEW's request for a desegregation plan, or submitted a plan that failed to sufficiently address the issue. It was also ruled that HEW continued to fund schools in said states despite their violation of Title VI. For North Carolina, the decision meant that UNC's 1973 desegregation plan, *A State Program to Enlarge Educational Opportunity in North Carolina*, was unacceptable as it did not contain specific quantitative goals to increase minority students and faculty at state-supported schools. A revised 1974 plan met significant opposition from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and from Julius Chambers, a North Carolina Central and UNC Law alum. That plan was also ultimately rejected because it lacked measurable milestones and a schedule for meeting desegregation requirements. Another revised plan submitted

later in 1974 was finally accepted, but the intentions of UNC administrators again came into question when North Carolina State University was selected over the state's other agricultural school, North Carolina A&T, for a veterinary program after UNC "promised not to institute any new program that would impede the progress of desegregation."⁶³ While the vet school ultimately stayed in Raleigh, the "charge of racial injustice fundamentally undermined UNC's claim to moral and educational leadership in North Carolina and the South."⁶⁴

In the midst of the desegregation turmoil, in 1972, under the direction of system president Dr. William Friday, five HBCUs in North Carolina joined the expanded University of North Carolina System: Fayetteville State, North Carolina A&T, Elizabeth City State, Winston-Salem State, and North Carolina Central. The expanded system created the need for a restructured system at all levels. In the initial legislation, no African Americans were guaranteed a spot on the Board of Governors of the expanded system. HBCUs also worried about being subsumed and lost in the new system and the focus on its flagship university, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Conversely, administrators at Chapel Hill worried that the incorporation of HBCUs would reduce the amount of state funding it received.⁶⁵

Throughout the 1970s, the UNC system went back and forth with HEW over acceptable desegregation plans. In another 1974 plan, the *Revised North Carolina State Plan... Phase II*, argued that public university enrollments did not reflect de jure segregation, but rather a "racial consciousness" where Black students were attracted to HBCUs.⁶⁶ This plan was also rejected as HEW officials cited unnecessary program duplication and "inappropriate as well as insufficient" funding of the five public HBCUs. As the battle went on into the 1980s, President William Friday and the UNC system

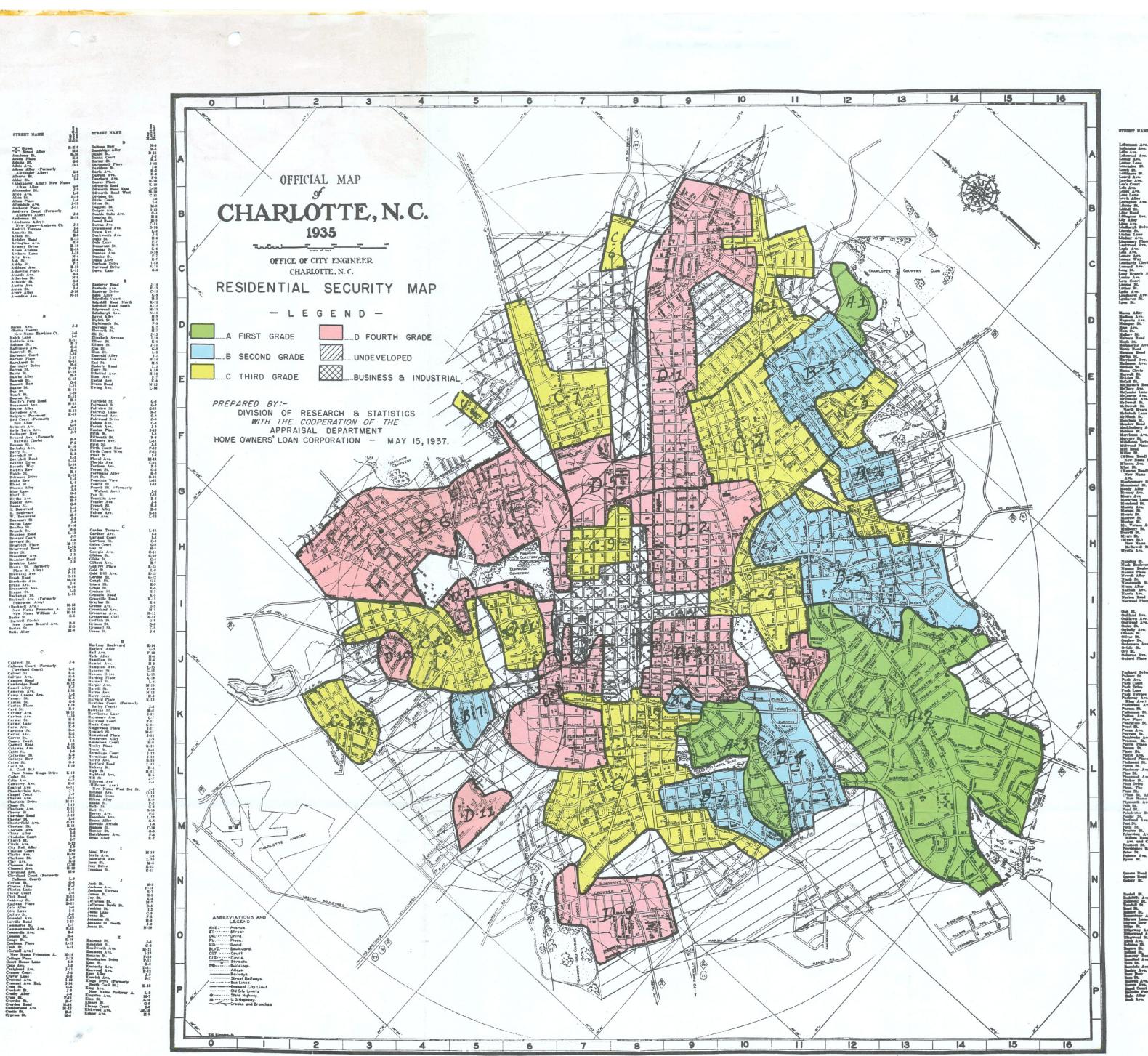
ultimately won the battle in court, while the vestiges of racial segregation remained and HBCUs remained underfunded.

REDLINING

Historic issues of redlining have had historical and contemporary impacts on North Carolina's HBCUs. The Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration to make home ownership attainable for working and middle-class families. It offered amortized, low-interest mortgages on homes previously faced with imminent foreclosure. To assess risk, the HOLC hired local real estate agents to make appraisals. The agents were required to maintain segregation, so risk also took into consideration the racial make-up of the neighborhood. Color-coded maps of cities, called Residential Security Maps, were created with green neighborhoods being the "best," blue being "still desirable," yellow being "definitely declining," and red being "hazardous." Even if it was a solid middle-class neighborhood of single-family homes, the area was often marked red if it was a predominantly African American neighborhood. The maps "put the federal government on record as judging

⁶⁰ Oliver C. Cox, "Provisions for Graduate Education Among Negroes, and the Prospects of a New System," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (January, 1940), 22-31; Harris, *The State Must Provide*, 88; Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal*, 115. ⁶¹ Link, *William Friday*, 249 - 251. ⁶² Harris, *The State Must Provide*, 169 - 170.

⁶³ Link, *William Friday*, 263. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 276. ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 195-198. ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 296, 299.



Original Charlotte residential security map. c.1935.

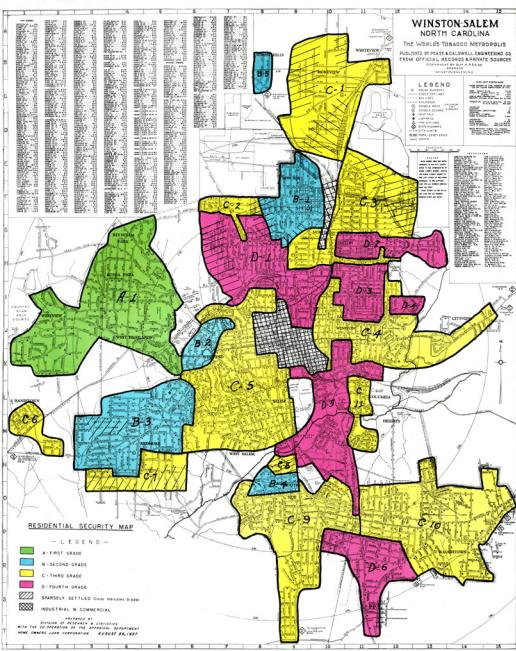
that African Americans, simply because of their race, were poor risk.” When the Federal Housing Administration was created in 1934 and completed their own appraisals, racial segregation was a requirement of the federal mortgage insurance program, essentially codifying red areas and significantly hindering any financial investment in these area for decades.⁶⁷

According to the Residential Security Maps produced by the HOLC between 1935 and 1937 in four North Carolina cities (Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Durham), five HBCUs (Johnson C. Smith, Bennett, NC A&T, Winston-Salem State, North Carolina Central) were all located in areas within or directly adjacent to yellow and red neighborhoods.⁶⁸

The redlined neighborhood surrounding half of Bennett College was described as “a typical southern negro section composed mostly of laborers and domestics of all types.”

The Biddleville neighborhood of Charlotte where Johnson C. Smith is located was described as having “many better grade negro properties occupied by negro professors teaching in the negro college... but interspersed with these better grade properties are many lower grade properties.” It was also a redlined neighborhood.

Now these same areas are affected by increasing gentrification, but often at the expense of stalwart community residents and businesses. In a 2021 op-ed, NC A&T Executive Director for Community Engagement, Dr. Lonnie Cockerham,



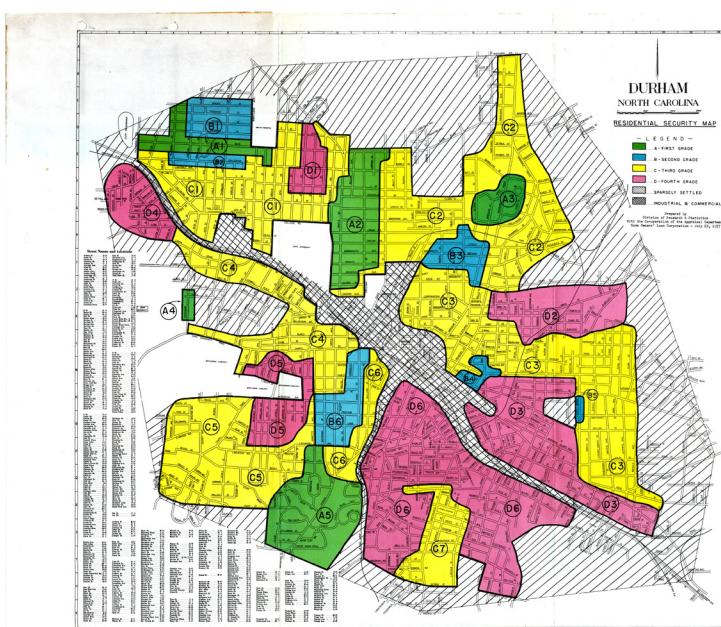
Original Winston-Salem residential security map. c. 1937

addressed gentrification in East Greensboro, which is also the location of Bennett College:

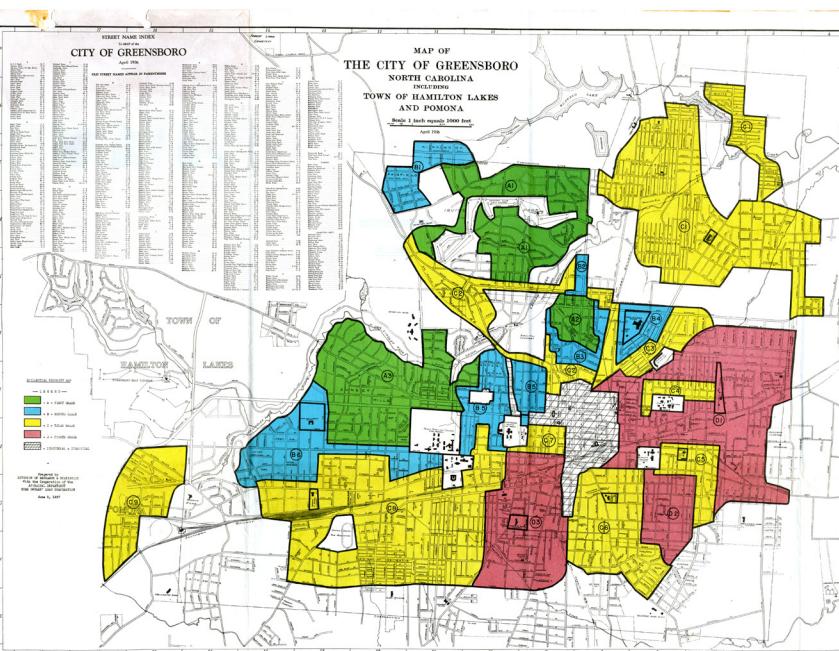
 *new economic development projects raise questions about the creep of gentrification and its potential impact on the displacement of people and culture.... In 1998, the East Market Street Corridor Development Plan revealed that a 1960s “urban renewal” project promised “better” jobs, streetscapes and housing, but actually led to busier streets and little commerce — all while destroying 80 African American owned retail stores and forcing 1,000 families to relocate.”⁶⁹*

Neighborhoods are important to the culture and atmosphere of HBCUs. For Johnson C. Smith, the Biddleville

⁶⁷ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017) 63 - 65. ⁶⁸ Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58>. ⁶⁹ Lonnie Cockerham, “What East Greensboro needs to thrive,” *Greensboro News & Record*, June 20, 2021, https://greensboro.com/opinion/columnists/lonnie-cockerham-what-east-greensboro-needs-to-thrive/article_71104fe4-cf79-11eb-a6c0-67ea957148a9.html, Accessed September 28, 2021.



Original Durham residential security map. c. 1937.



Original Greensboro residential security map. c. 1937.

A recent study found that HOLC-redlined areas schools receive less district-level per-pupil revenues and have worse educational outcomes in areas such as test scores, indicating that educational policy makers need to consider the history of localized inequality when designing program that particularly impact students of color.⁷¹

While redlining continues to negatively impact HBCU communities, Educational Redlining hurts the financial abilities of HBCU students. Some financial institutions add additional fees to student loans if the student attends a community college, HBCU, or minority serving institutions.⁷² In a report on educational redlining produced by the Student Borrower Protection Center, a hypothetical student attending Howard University is charged almost \$3,500 more over the life of a five-year loan as a similarly-situated New York University student. As the college debt crisis in the United States grows, minority students are disproportionately impacted by higher interest rates and fees when lenders use educational data in underwriting. Many Black students in the United States are impacted by systemic racism in every

aspect and stage of their educational careers as underfunding and discriminatory banking practices continue to negatively impact educational outcomes and attainment.⁷³

THE NORTH CAROLINA 10 TODAY

Iuring the 1939-40 school year, the average per capita appropriation for North Carolina's five public, Black schools was \$82.00. The same year, the average per capita appropriation for the six white schools was \$130.82.⁷⁴ Underfunding Black education in North Carolina was a

tradition - one that remains strong today.

There have been attempts within the North Carolina General Assembly to address the inequitable funding between HBCUs and other colleges and universities in the state. In 2019, members of the Legislative Black Caucus introduced Senate Bill 667 - The UNC HBCU Funding Parity Bill. The Bill called for \$50 million in recurring funds for all ten HBCUs in North Carolina to close funding disparities. Sponsored by Senator Erica Smith, the bill died in committee.⁷⁵

In 2021, Representatives Zack Hawkins, Ricky Hurtado, and James Gailliard introduced House Bill 966, which proposed an additional \$20 million in recurring funds to the state's five public HBCUs and Minority Serving Institute UNC-Pembroke for ten fiscal years, and add one HBCU and UNCP to the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. As of May 12, 2021, the bill was still in committee.

Attempts have also been made at the federal level to address inequitable funding between HBCUs and PWIs. Leading the charge is North Carolina Representative Alma Adams. Most recently Rep. Adams introduced the Ignite HBCU Excellence Act, which seeks funding to modernize HBCU campuses. The bill is currently in the House Committee on Education and Labor.

HBCUs nationally have found some respite in COVID relief money, particularly \$1.3 Billion in loan forgiveness through the CARES Act. For St. Augustine's University, the relief measure will eliminate \$20 million in debt. Shaw University will receive \$20 million, and students at Winston-Salem State and North Carolina A&T are receiving free textbooks this fall semester.⁷⁶ Additionally, Shaw, Elizabeth City State, North Carolina A&T, Fayetteville State, Johnson C. Smith, Livingstone, St. Augustine's, and North Carolina Central used the funds to erase student account balances,

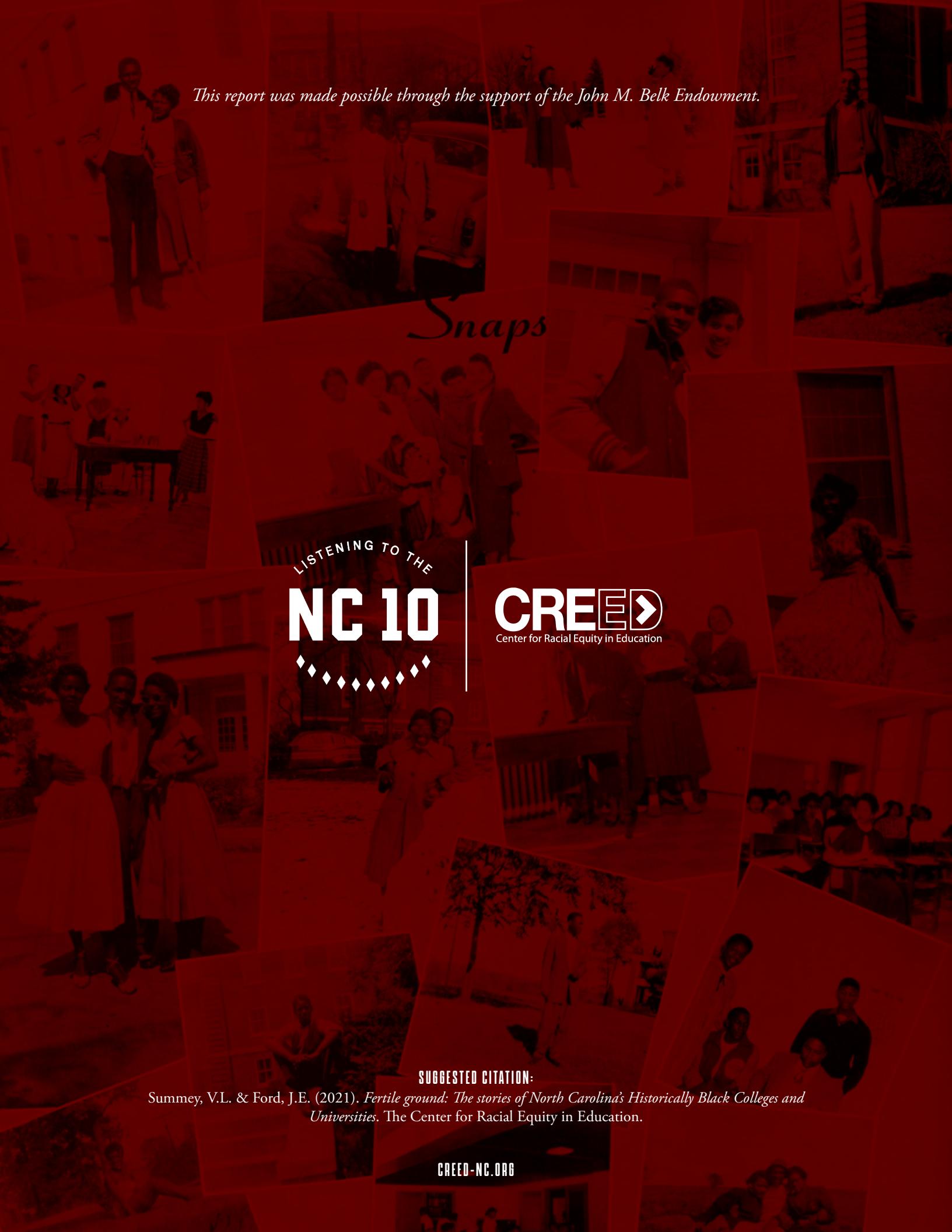
allowing students to register for classes and receive diplomas without the worry of delays in financial aid or funding.⁷⁷

North Carolina's HBCUs are an integral part of the state's educational history and a key component to securing continued economic growth and opportunity. Yet for decades the State of North Carolina has refused to fund its public HBCUs at the same level as its public PWIs. This does not even address the struggles of most private colleges and universities to maintain an endowment. During the NC10 Listening Tour in late spring 2021, the HBCUs repeatedly cited lack of funding and deferred maintenance as one of the major issues faced by administration. HBCUs have a \$1.7 billion economic impact in the State of North Carolina, according to the United Negro College Fund.⁷⁸ Funding is not just an issue of equity, but a proven investment in schools that have repeatedly

demonstrated their worth. The colleges and universities that make up the NC10 are not institutions that just serve their students and alums. They enrich their communities, providing deep histories, vital economic impacts, and bright futures. Increased investment and attention to these schools will benefit the State of North Carolina and every one of its citizens. ■

⁷⁰ Historic Charlotte Neighborhoods, <https://guides.library.uncc.edu/c.php?g=621704&p=4626873>, Accessed September 29, 2021. ⁷¹ Christopher Cleveland, Dylan Lukes, *The Lingering Legacy of Redlining on School Funding, Diversity, and Performance*, EdWorking Paper No. 21-363, Annenberg Brown University, March 3, 2021. ⁷² <https://protectborrowers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Education-Redlining-Report.pdf>, Accessed September 29, 2021. ⁷³ Student Borrower Protection Center, *Educational Redlining*, February 2020, www.protectborrowers.org. ⁷⁴ Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal*, 116.

⁷⁵ Dawn Baumgartner Vaughan, "North Carolina's HBCUs Should Get Equitable Funding, State Black Leaders Say," *Raleigh News & Observer*, May 16, 2019, <https://www.newsobserver.com/article230420979.html>, Accessed September 28, 2021. ⁷⁶ Emma Whitford, "Loan Forgiveness 'Transformative' for HBCUs," *Inside Higher Ed*, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/01/19/hbcus-receive-boost-capital-loan-forgiveness>, Accessed September 29, 2021; John Newsom, "A game-changer: WSSU Undergrads will get free textbooks this fall," *Winston-Salem Journal*, Accessed September 20, 2021. ⁷⁷ Mia Berry, "More than 20 HBCUs using federal CARES Act funding to erase students' debt," *The Undefeated*, September 29, 2021, <https://theundefeated.com/features/more-than-20-hbcus-using-federal-cares-act-funding-to-erase-students-debt/>, accessed November 1, 2021. ⁷⁸ https://cdn.uncf.org/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/fy_2018_budget_fact_sheets/HBCU_FactSh_NorthCarolina_5-17D.pdf, Accessed September 30, 2021.



This report was made possible through the support of the John M. Belk Endowment.

Snaps

LISTENING TO THE

NC 10

CREED

Center for Racial Equity in Education

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Summey, V.L. & Ford, J.E. (2021). *Fertile ground: The stories of North Carolina's Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. The Center for Racial Equity in Education.