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THE BENNETT BANNER ARCHIVES

Bennett College
Greensboro, N. C.

"Believing that an informed campus is a Key to Democracy"

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1972

BENNETT COLLEGE, GREENSBORO, N. C.

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THIS IS BENNETT . . .



HISTORY OF BENNETT COLLEGE PRIOR TO 1926 PART 2

The original aim of the school was to educate teachers. Bennett sought only those who had already obtained the rudiments and who could read the Third Reader at the time of entrance.

During the first commencement exercises held on May 19-20, 1875, the public was able to witness first-hand the accomplishments of the students who were most serious about this opportunity to gain an education. During the exercises which were held at the Church, students participated in selected readings, recitations, dialogues, and songs.

Even though whites publicly admitted their approval of the institution, little or no aid was given to the development of Bennett. The blacks of the area supported the seminary with encouragement and what money could be raised. A "collection for land" in May of 1875 from the blacks of the Methodist Church netted \$105. A Society agent made the following report:

This amount was made up of small contributions, the Sabbath-school children bringing their pennies, which at the suggestion of their parents and pastor, they have been saving for this purpose. One little fellow, who had received a Sabbath-school prize of a dollar, brought it and placed it on the altar.

The next principal was Rev. Edward O. Thayer, a graduate of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn. He arrived in Greensboro on his 23rd birthday right after his college graduation in 1875. Upon his arrival on December 4, he described the college thus:

"The seminary was a day school, held in the unfinished basement of Warnersville Church. I taught with the help of one colored assistant, classes from the first reader to theology. The only property was twenty acres in the outskirts of Greensboro."

During Rev. Thayer's five and one-half years, seven acres of land were added to the property. A \$10,000 gift from Lyman Bennett made

possible the construction of the first building which was completed in 1878.

The trademark of the college, the bell, was acquired in 1878, as a gift made possible by Lyman Bennett and his contacts in Troy, N. Y. The 250 pound bronze bell bears the inscription: 'Bennett Seminary. From Friends in Troy, N. Y. To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.' Isaiah LXI:1."

In the same year an organ and a collection of several hundred books were housed in the new building.

Financial support was rendered by other citizens of North Carolina. The North Carolina Conference gave some money for the erection of the first building. However, the total collections to the Freedmen's Aid Society in 1878 amounted to only eighteen dollars. Substantial amounts were received each year from student fees: June, 1876, \$74.45 in rent and tuition; May 1877, \$133.17 in tuition and donations; 1879, \$201 in tuition; and 1880, \$183.50 in tuition. In order to be independent and self-supporting, the seminary tried to collect as much as possible through tuition. Due to the competition of rival schools in the area, Bennett was not able to demand complete fees, about \$25.00 a year from all the students. At the same time the Freedman's Aid Society realized that few students could save enough from their wages to pay the entire costs of education.

Bennett Seminary sought to train ministers and teachers for effective work among their own race. Thayer reported that all students were not coming with these ideas in mind. He mentioned that some came only because their parents sent them, or because of the respectability gained from an education.

Thayer's first faculty consisted of himself and one assistant; however, by 1878 the faculty was enlarged and Thayer, himself, received his Master of Arts degree from Wesleyan University.

Bennett Affair Well Received

The Bennett Chapel rocked with "pure down home soul" as the Bennett College Music Department paid tribute to Mahalia Jackson in a two-hour presentation of black gospel music rendered by members of the college community, North Carolina A&T State University, and the general community, on October 15.

Narrated by Bennett's own, Miss Black North Carolina, Sylvia Freeman, the program consisted of various forms of black expression with stress on black gospels. Miss Freeman '73 cited excerpts from Mahalia Jackson: A Portrait. Later during the course of the show she rendered a selection, "Precious Lord," which was well-received by the largely-attended event.

The spirit of enjoyment began with a rocking edition of "Give Me a Clean Heart" by the A. & T. Gospel Choir. The group succeeded in livening up the at first silent audience.

Dance interpretations were presented by Kristen Dennard '76 and Lucia Davis '75. Lucia's presentation was accompanied by a beautiful solo by Bonita Chavis '75.

Other participants were Mrs. Thelma Spruill Robinson whose rendition of "Never Grow Old" effected both young and older members of the audience. Soloist Robert Taylor, who was accompanied by Mrs. Yvonne C. Johnson and Jacqueline Hemphill, sung several popular black spirituals. Three members of the Morton Temple Holiness



Pictured above are the principles of the recently held Annual Greensboro Alumnae Dinner-Dance which netted over \$1200 for the college scholarship fund. Shown here are Dr. and Mrs. Isaac H. Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Zack A. Browning, and Miss Gwendolyn Sneed and Oscar Lane. Mrs. Browning serves as the Director of Alumnae Affairs and Miss Sneed, an instructor of Clothing, is the president of the Greensboro Chapter.

Church also offered two selections.

Members of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and the pledges of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority sang selections. Miss Freeman represented the Swing Phi Swing Social Fellowship, along with Effie Jones.

The program ended with several new selections by the Bennett College Gospel Choir under the directorship of Loyce Harper '73. Clad in African costumes, the choir ended the evening with a really emotional piece. The lead singing was done by Johanna Lee '74 who left the audience clapping and stomping their feet to the beat.

Entertainment

The Co-Curricula office has suggested that classes and dormitories begin to plan social activities for themselves and the campus, instead of leaving all the planning to the office.

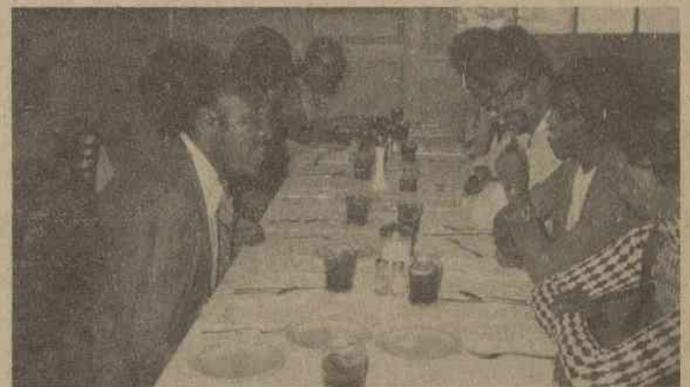
A few suggestions are: parties, and dances; dormitory open house and Sunday afternoon teas; and social hours or dinner parties. A different dorm or class could plan something each week. So far Barge Hall has planned a dance for Nov. 4th. For more information contact Mrs. Necia Boyers, director of Co-curricula activities.

2ND ANNUAL CAREER DAY HELD

On September 26, the Placement Office sponsored Career Day which featured representatives from business firms, graduate schools and various professions. Those who attended included: University of N. C. Chapel Hill School of Medicine; Greensboro National Bank; Greensboro Public Schools; Greensboro Daily News; N. C. Mutual Insurance Co.; Sears Roebuck and Co.; Board of Education, Burlington City Schools; Wachovia Bank & Trust; North Carolina National Bank; North Carolina Central University; Western Electric; Internal Revenue Service-Greensboro; U. S. Dept. of HUD; Burlington Industries; Eastman Kodak; Research Triangle; Employment Security Commission; and the Civil Service Commission.

Alumnae consultants were: Susan Tropez White, Darwin Prioleau, '71, Sylvia Potts, Mary Barber, '71, Maxine O'Kelly, Connie Shaw, '72, Janice Gwyn, '71, Betty Jones, '71, and Geraldine Williams, '72.

The keynote speaker was Miss Betty Jones, Assistant to Public Relations Greensboro Board of Education, Public School System. She cited statistics on changes in education and ways of adapting to varying conditions and



steps to getting where you want to be.

Co-operative Education, a tool for career development, was explained to recruiters and students. Co-op students cited their previous work experience. Participants were: Carolyn Floyd who worked at Langley Research Center Library of NASA and Evelyn Cohens who worked with O.E.O. as a staff assistant. Evelyn summed up her experience by saying, "I did learn to solve problems, even to cry a little. I learned who I am and what I am."

Maxine Haith O'Kelley class of '49 presented a stimulating account of her three careers. She received a degree in Biology at Bennett, a M.A. in Public Health Education in 1950. She taught in the

Winston-Salem school system for three years before working for Carolina Biology Supply Company in the field of Parasitology and human biology. After seven years she returned to teach courses in guidance at UNC-G. Presently Mrs. O'Kelley is counseling in the Burlington City Schools.

ATTENTION ALL SENIORS!!!!!!

The time has come to purchase your class rings, so be on the look out for samples in the Bennett College Bookstore. Get your MONEY together also!!!!!!

Senior Class
Ring Committee