



DR. ROBERT ELLIOTT

## Professor Of The Month

On November 7, 1915, Robert N. Elliott was born in the Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. Today, still an active Presbyterian, he is known as Dr. Bob, professor of history at Gardner-Webb College.

Dr. Bob graduated from Sharon High School, Charlotte, in 1933, and from Appalachian State Teachers College in 1938. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of North Carolina. While at Appalachian, Dr. Bob played the trumpet in the band, was business manager of the annual, and associate editor of the dramatic magazine, the Playbill.

In 1942 Dr. Bob entered the United States Air Force, where he achieved the rating of corporal. While in the Air Force, he worked in photography as a motion picture cameraman at Hal Roach Studios in Hollywood, Calif. Dr. Bob worked with Alan Ladd, who was also in the Air Force at that time, in making orientation, propaganda, and publicity pictures. After his release from the Air Force in 1946, Dr. Bob worked as Studio Manager of Dunbar Studios in Charlotte. In 1946, he was married to Elizabeth Harris of McCormick, S. C. Mrs. Elliott is a graduate of Erskine College, where she majored in French and education.

Dr. Bob's list of past occupations includes work as a short order cook in Boone, driving a bus on scenic mountain trips in 1939, and tutoring athletes for \$2 an hour at the University of North Carolina. At one time, Dr. Bob played the

trumpet with "Freddie Moore and his Caro-lone," a band which traveled and played at hotels and other resorts. At the beginning of each performance the listeners had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Bob do the trumpet solo introduction to the tune, "Stardust."

Writing, reading, and teaching are Dr. Bob's hobbies. The first of these is evidently a serious one, because a book, *Robbie Register*, with Dr. Robert N. Elliott as its author, comes off the University of North Carolina Press this spring. The book treats the history of the Raleigh Register, ante bellum, before the war.

Dr. and Mrs. Elliott reside on Greene Street in Bolling Springs, and attend the Shelby Presbyterian Church where Dr. Bob is a deacon. Because of his campus-wide popularity, his position as personal friend of the students, and his ever present and pleasant personality, Dr. Bob has been chosen by the Pilot staff as Professor of the Month.

## DRAMATIC PLAY SUCCESS

(Continued from page 2)

awakened, and realizing Romeo's error, kills herself with his dagger. At the tomb, over these sacrifices of their emity, Montague and Capulet clash hands and are at last reconciled. Thus the play ends. Congratulations, cast, on your performance in this great drama.

## 1954 Declared Best Year For Baptist Colleges

(From the Fall Semester Bulletin to Baptist College Personnel)

The activities in the work of the seven Baptist colleges are very numerous and varied, and it is evident that this school year is one of the best the colleges have had. The present enrollment figures indicate on the whole an increase of 10% over that of one year ago. This percentage is expected to rise considerably in the second semester of this year, for already the colleges are beginning to feel the effect of that rising tide of youth who will continue to knock at their doors for many years to come. At this particular time the height of this rising rolls through the elementary schools and is approaching the high schools. Its full force will not reach the colleges for some few years yet.

The costs for operating these colleges are too numerous to list, and reduction of the costs is not anticipated in the near future, for the ever increasing enrollments the potential deficit in operations rises accordingly. The day cannot be expected to come when the students can provide the total cost of their education. In fact, it is incumbent upon the college, if possible to assume a greater share of this educational cost in the future than it has in the past.

Chiefly, the seven Baptist colleges have three sources of operating income—students, endowment, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Certainly students continue to present courage and determination as they carry a greater part of this financial burden. It is becoming increasingly difficult to secure adequate endowment, and in the family of seven Baptist colleges only Wake Forest has endowment support of any consequence.

The Nine-Year Financial Program of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina continues to be the hope not only for the ever-increasing needs of the colleges but for every department, institution and agency of the total Convention program. Surely it is the one great unifying challenge and should be protected and cherished as the backbone of the financial undertakings in the Kingdom work.

The goal through the Cooperative Program for 1955 is \$2,840,000. Of this amount a little more than one-half would be retained for work within the state, the balance going for South-wide objects. The amount remaining in North Carolina, the seven colleges will receive \$440,000. This is a record for almost \$700,000 for capital outlay. The amount for operation is reasonably assured and economic claims upon our Cooperative Program funds, with any shortage coming in capital funds.

## John Charles McNeill, Poet, Reporter, Humorist

By F. B. DEDMOND

John Charles McNeill, the Scotsman from Liverton, North Carolina, spent the last three years of his life as a special writer for the Charlotte Observer. McNeill was proud (and who isn't), and he clipped many of the laudatory notices he received during those years with the *Observer* and pasted them—along with several letters he treasured—in a folio volume now in the Dover Memorial Library of Gardner-Webb College.

McNeill, so the first clipping in the volume reports, was to begin his association with the *Observer* in August 1904, "and after the last of September will be regularly attached to the staff." Already McNeill was regarded as "one of the brightest literary lights in North Carolina," and the *Observer* was glad to have him. It is interesting, by the fact, another paper reported.

Perhaps McNeill saw what H. E. C. (Red Buck) Bryant, then city editor of the *Observer*, had written and was convinced: "He is making the mistake of his life by wasting the days of vigorous youth trifling with law when fame and fortune await him in a work that has been made for him." Anyway, whatever the case may have been, McNeill abandoned politics (he had served in the state legislature) and became the *Observer's* poet, special writer, and humorist.

McNeill's newspaper column "Squaw Talk and Ginger" and his poems elicited praise—or at least comment—from many quarters. The *Gaffney*, South Carolina, *Ledger*, while admitting that he didn't look it—called him a poet of rare ability. The *Warrenton*, Oregon, called him "one of the most brilliant literary men in the State." Even poems to him made him begin appearing in such newspapers as the *Gastonia Gazette* and the *Charlotte Chronicle*, no doubt to the amusement of McNeill. So much was he praised that the *Lumberton Argus* reported that it feared for his head, and the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* declared that the *Observer* had been "cheered" ever since it found a man who could really write poetry."

But how about this "Squaw Talk and Ginger"? Editor Marshall of the *Gastonia Gazette*, McNeill reported, said that "Squaw Talk and Ginger" was not "a nice name" and anybody's column in a good newspaper. And McNeill admitted it. "The name has looked," McNeill wrote, "more and more boring every

day that it has appeared, even to its inventor. "Squaw Talk" in itself is a healthy, sound-undone expression, and somewhat striking and unusual. But the combination, "Squaw Talk and Ginger," is too smart; there is too much of the Merry Andrew in it; too much of the sophomoric that dries his nose on a two dollar bill." And so he buried the column.

It seems as if McNeill could write "however he pleased." He was sent by the *Observer* to cover the inauguration of President Theodore Roosevelt. The President's daughter Alice, McNeill wrote, was "as pretty as a peach," but Theodore, Jr., looked like "a tiny raggeder on broncho-buster, with ragged hair, tremendous mouth and cloddish appearance." And get this: At last President Roosevelt and Chief Justice Fuller howe in sight, harbingered by a deal of clapping and whooping.

Through it all McNeill continued to write poetry for the papers and the magazines, especially the *Century Magazine*, and his fame didn't wane. In 1905, he was awarded the William Houston Person Memorial cup, which was given to the resident of North Carolina who "displayed, either in prose or poetry without regard to its length, the greatest excellence and the highest literary skill and genius." It just so happened that President Theodore Roosevelt was to visit North Carolina and someone got the happy idea of having him present the gold trophy to McNeill. The ceremony occurred R. B. Glenn on October 13, 1905, wrote McNeill asking him to see the Governor in person on the 18th and 19th of October. After breakfast with the President on the morning of the 19th, McNeill and others went to the North Carolina Senate chamber, where he stood amid some clapping and maybe even a bit of whooping—the President presented McNeill with the Patterson Memorial Cup. McNeill's acceptance speech written in pencil in his own hand and preserved in the clipping book now in the possession of the Dover Memorial Library.

McNeill was the darling of the *Observer*. Even when he hit down on the wrong end of a match and it went off in his mouth, that made the paper. The publication of his volume of poems, *Songs, Merry and Sad*, in 1908—a volume of poems, having "the delicious Southern flavor" and the tender touches of the old plantation life—and the publication of *Livres from Cotton Land*, in 1907 further enhanced his poetic reputation and fame. And one can only wonder, had he lived past his thirty-third year, if he could have extended the bounds of his fame and could have written poetry which lived beyond his day and established him as a major American poet.

He died on October 17, 1907, in "Castle Thunder," his large upstairs room in the McNeill home in Scotland County.

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