

We've Come A Long Way

February has been declared, "Black History Month," by the government of the United States.

Celebrating the declaration, the COMPASS staff along with Leonard R. Ballou, University Archivist, have prepared the following information about our first University President and our first University Chancellor.



President-Emeritus Moore

It fell to a young Shaw University alumnus with teaching experience at Plymouth (North Carolina) Normal School, to nurse to adulthood the new educational creature sired by Hugh Cale. Peter Weddick (also spelled "Wrederick" and "Wreddiah") Moore actually may not have been the original choice of State powers-that-were: a local newspaper (Summer, 1891) announced John Henry Manning Butler, like Moore a Negro, as head of Cale's

normal school for the "Colored Race." Nonetheless, Dr. Moore became chief executive; Mr. Butler, his assistant. On January 4, 1892, Messrs. Moore and Butler, constituting an administration and faculty of two persons, opened the brand-new institution.

Principal Moore had a nine-hundred dollar budget, legislatively sheared from budgets of other extant normal schools, including that of his former place of employment! Nineteen days after his school opened, he began the unending task of fund-raising--a task inherited by each one of his successors.

Initially, Dr. Moore and Mr. Butler had an enrollment of twenty-three and a "rented little frame structure on the campus of Roanoke Institute" (Elizabeth City), as the 1925 Yearbook put it some decades later. Next, he and his fledging school moved to an improved site in town, "the Old Normal Building." Quite probably, this was a structure which local Black citizens had erected nearly a quarter of a century earlier, under the prodding of their civic and educational consciences and that of Professor Thomas Cardozo (Negro) and a white physician--became newspaper publisher, Dr. Palemon John (who became Trustee Chairman for the new school, 1896-1898).

Principal Moore saw his school grow and could note memorable milestones as the decades passed. When he held his first Commencement in May 1892, enrollment had grown to 69 students (some

sources say 64). Thereafter, he witnessed his first graduates (1896)--six persons for the "Normal Department"; his first summer session (1899); organization of an alumni association (1903); the decision to retain and thus maintain the institution in Elizabeth City--acute turn-of-the-century "merger nerves"; his move in 1912 from the rented Elizabeth City quarters to a permanent site in Nixonton Township in Pasquotank County, complete with a permanent building (erected 1909).

He saw enlargement of institutional personnel, programs, resources and historicity, including the school's 25th Anniversary (1916) and what appear to be various "firsts" besides his 1892 Catalogue: formal athletic squad (1914); Yearbook, the "Normal Light," which was dedicated to him (1925); and student newspaper, the "Magnet" (1927). He also came to know the distinctions of laudatory press notices and being awarded honorary MA and LLD degrees.

When D. Moore retired in 1928, after 37 years of unrelenting toil, the Trustees reflected the sentiments of many people in formally recognizing that he had carried forward from an idea to an institution. As evidence, they conferred upon him the first title of President-Emeritus in a North Carolina state-supported institution of higher learning, according to existing reports. He was also given a home on campus (which building still exists) and from there he viewed

more growth of the school, until his death in 1934.

Many persons mourned his passing including mayor Jerome B. Flora, who asked local merchants to close their businesses at the time of Dr. Moore's funeral and former Trustee Chairman William O. Saunders.

The latter, as editor of the Elizabeth City "Independent," gave Dr. Moore an extensive eulogy which included calling the school "a silent monument to the quiet strength and influence of a gentle soul..."

Effective July 1, 1968, the Trustees elected the youngest chief executive since 1891--in fact, then one of the youngest in the nation. His name was not well known locally, but that situation was removed with atomic speed.

Marion Thorpe is a native of Durham, North Carolina (born 1932) and there completed per-collegiate education and his bachelor's and master's degrees, both of the latter with honors. President Thorpe became the first chief executive to arrive with his PhD and brought to the school both depth of education and breadth of experience, including military service. Interestingly enough, the major field for him and his predecessor was psychology.

Dr. Thorpe came from the vice-presidency of an Ohio institution, among many other professional experiences. One of the latter was his having been an assistant director of North Carolina's once extant Board of Higher Education and thus one of the highest ranking Black officials in the State's governmental complex. From that vantage point, he came to this school in 1966 for its 75th Anniversary to speak of its future. While on campus then, he communicated with Presidents Trigg, Williams and Ridley (the latter then incumbent). Those were portentous and historic meetings. Perhaps never before and perhaps not soon again will as many chief executives of the institution meet together.

Administratively, President Thorpe addressed "excellence" and "accountability"; the "community" concept; "change"; budget; and improvements needed, self-originated or in anticipation

President-Emeritus Moore (born in Duplin County, North Carolina, 1856), according to the recollection and assessment of many people, had wisdom far beyond many of his contemporaries.

He obviously learned thoroughly and practiced in superior fashion people-to-people relationships during his forty years of dealing from prominence with fellow human beings. Peter W. Moore could not be other than signally recognized by all as one of the institution's Founders.



Chancellor Marion D. Thorpe

of future exigencies.

Spectacular expansion and enrichment in all insitutional quadrants have resulted, from computerization, to added majors, to national athletic prominence--not to mention establishment of a Foundation in 1971 to help support the school nor to exclude the largest enrollment to date (including its interracial and international aspects) and largest employee total and diversification--from vice-chancellors and lab technicians to the school's first female property guard.

As another example, the school now has its largest federal/private support since inception as it has moved even more so from "state-supported" to "state-assisted."

Also, Dr. Thorpe has moved it even further into involvement with the local, state, regional and national educational complex not to exclude Congressional and White House interaction.

Further, ECSU became a "Bicentennial Campus" with official ceremonies in 1976, and in the same year designated the first professoremeritus in its history.

Voices Through The Years

"The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact that it shall be lawful for the State Board of Education to establish a normal and training school for the colored race in the town of Elizabeth City, County of Pasquotank in the State of North Carolina, for the purpose of training and teaching young men and women."-Hugh Cale, January 26, 1891

"The State of North Carolina and the cause of education, and the good will of mankind have greatly benefitted. The challenge is to continue the ideals of the school in order that the state and nation may continue to receive valuable service."-John H. Bias, August, 1934.

"Subject matter is subordinated to the ends to be served; not learning for its own sake, but learning that leads to better living, to self-improvement and to greater social and personal competence. This, in reality, is the meaning of functional education."-Sidney D. Williams, June 18, 1950.

"The institution itself now seems to have begun to grow into the main structure of its future...and there now emerges something of the shape of things to come. This is not to say that there is perfection or completeness...We must continue to strengthen if we would reach our goals."-Walter N. Ridley, June 29, 1965.

"We must be determined to continue to find the correct way in a world of conflicting ideologies, economic strife, and social controversy. This is the river that flows from to Hugh Cale, bringing with it past thoughts and deeds of other great people on whose shoulders we stand, gaining the fortitude wo weather these times and to enter a new era."-Marion D. Thorpe, March 3, 1978.

It is our hopes that through the efforts of past, present and future administrators, faculty and students, our school will continue to move in the right direction.

The COMPASS staff would also like to thank Leonard R. Ballou for his assistance in this edition.