

# The Story Of N. C. College, Its Founder

**Congressional Record,  
May 12, 1947**

By Extension of Remarks by  
the Honorable Carl T.  
Durham

(By Tom MacCaughelty)

In a country where even Negroes are divided into two camps over techniques of raising the status of America's minorities, the North Carolina College at Durham stands as a living monument to a Negro who preaches and practices the philosophy that the minority group should emphasize its duties more than its rights.

This is not to say that Dr. James E. Shepard, founder and president of the college, is fully satisfied with the attainment of his race in North Carolina, nor that he has closed his eyes to the claims of discriminations against his people. It is to say that Dr. Shepard puts little faith in the efficacy of racial feuds in courts or elsewhere and much faith in the friendlier processes of democracy, which he describes as "that audacious belief of our people that in the most ordinary men there are resident the more extraordinary possibilities, and that if we keep the doors of opportunity open to them, they will amaze us with their achievements."

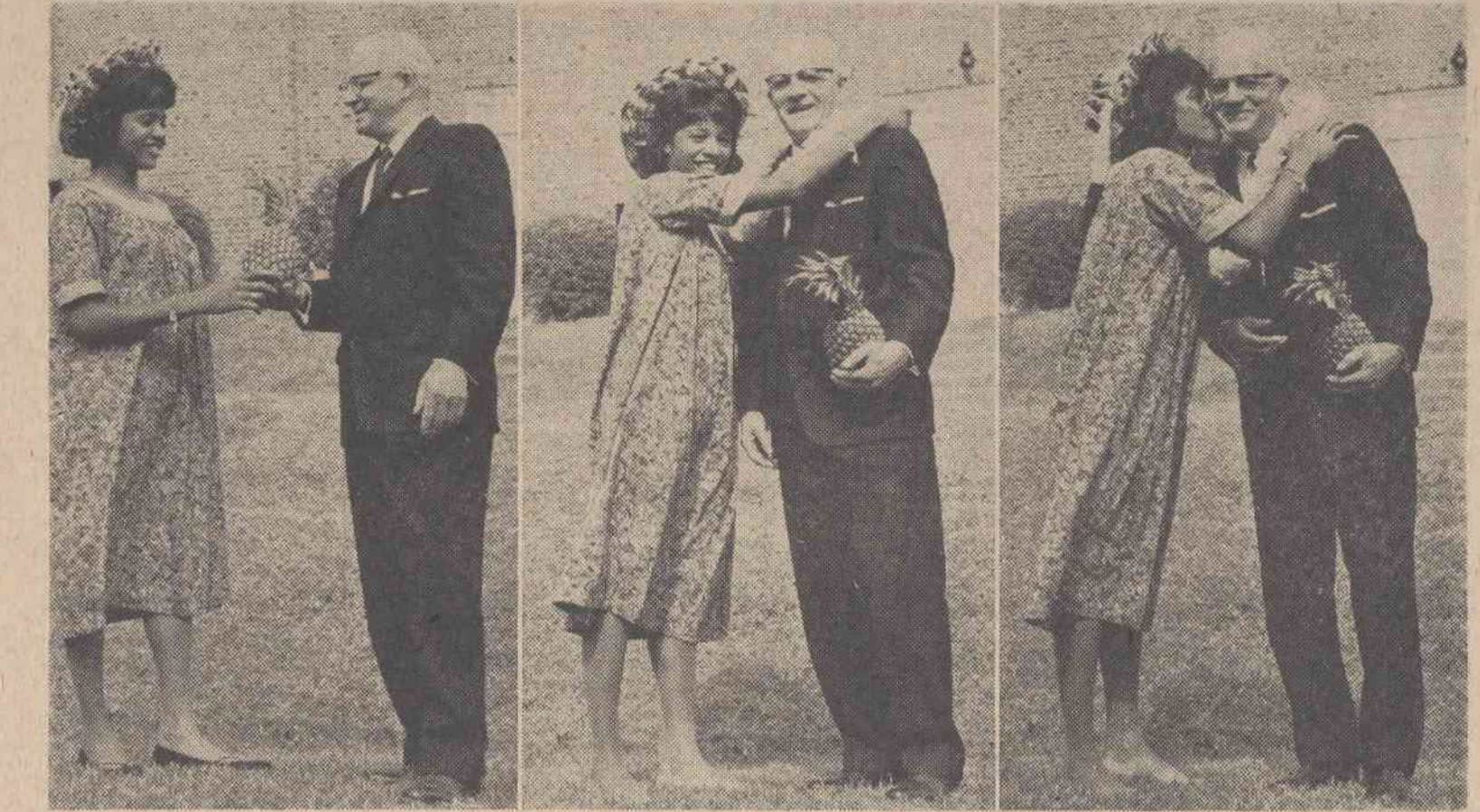
Symbolic of that definition of democracy, the college has become an open door to opportunity for countless Negroes, and both a producer of and a working place for men of achievement, as the following facts show: (1) Together with great numbers of needed but less outstanding workers in a wide variety of pursuits, the college has produced such men as A. T. Spaulding, the only Negro insurance actuary in the country; H. M. Michaux, head of the Union Insurance and Realty Co. of Durham; R. L. McDougald, vice-president of the Mechanics and Farmers Bank, and J. L. Tilley, president of the Florida Normal and Industrial School; (2) out of its 43 faculty members teaching in the undergraduate school, 12 hold Ph.D. degrees; (3) the college is one of only four Negro colleges in the country that is approved by the Association of American Universities.

The college's history and growth offer one of the best arguments for its founder's philosophy of race relationships. And since one man, Dr. Shepard, is largely responsible for its inception, success, and prestige, the story of the college begins properly with him.

### Son of Minister

He was born the son of a minister on November 3, 1875. He attended Shaw University in Raleigh, receiving a Ph.D. from the department of pharmacy in 1894. That same year he opened a drug store in Durham. In 1898, he became comparer of deeds in the recorder's office, Washington, D. C., and from 1899 and 1905 was deputy collector of United States internal revenue in Raleigh. Between 1899 and 1905 he traveled the country as field superintendent for the international Sunday School Association.

While working in this capacity he became convinced of the need for trained Negro ministers to set as leaders for the race, and soon afterwards set about raising money to establish a training school. (In 1907, he was the only Negro speaker at the World's Sunday School Conven-



In the above sequence, Cynthia Parker, North Carolina College's first student from the 50th State (Hawaii) presents NCC president, Dr. Alfonso Elder, with a pine apple, native fruit of the island. She then decorates him with a lei, in true Hawaiian fashion,

and finally plants an "anniversary buss" on the cheek of the startled but obviously pleased NCC chief executive. Cynthia is student number 50 in the 50th anniversary class at North Carolina College at Durham.



DR. JAMES E. SHEPARD

tion in Rome).

The school, known as the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua, was established in 1910 on a 25-acre tract, forming part of the present site. The land was a gift largely of the white people of Durham. By 1912, 10 buildings had been erected, two of which, Avery Auditorium and Chidley Hall, still stand on the campus.

Those early years were characterized by a wealth of enthusiasm but a dearth of money. Private donations and student fees were the institution's only support, and the latter had to be kept at a minimum. Board and room cost \$7 per month; tuition \$1 for the same period. A teacher or professor earned \$500 to \$1,000 a year.

Designed as a college, it was found necessary to include a high-school course; so the institution, at first combined a high school, 4-year college, training school for country ministers, commercial school, and home economics school. What was to become, after 37 years and four changes of name, the North Carolina College at Durham, with approximately 1,100 students and over 100 staff members, began with a staff of 21 persons and 109 students.

### Added More Degrees

Dr. Shepard struggled to raise necessary funds and at the same time added more degrees to his name — D.D., Muskingum College, Ohio, 1912; A.M., Selma

University, Ala., 1913. Nonetheless, in 1915 the financial difficulties became so great that the school had to be sold and reorganized. In this second stage of its development, the institution was known as the National Training School. Mrs. Russell Sage, of New York, came to the rescue by giving enough money for the property to be bought back.

The school had begun to attract the attention of observers throughout the South, when the First World War dumped it into another financial depression. To insure the survival of the school, two plans were considered. One was to turn over the control of the school to one of the several interested denominational boards. The other plan, which was adopted, was to give the property to the State as a public institution. Accordingly, in 1923, the National Training School became the Durham State Normal School.

In 1925 the school experienced two important events. A fire destroyed three important buildings — the administration building, the classroom building, and men's dormitory. These were immediately replaced; but of more importance that same year, Dr. Shepard, with a brand new D. Lit. from Howard University, and others were successful in a legislative campaign to make of the school the first State-supported Negro liberal arts college. The school became the North Carolina College for Negroes.

Then came the expansion of the plant, with B. N. Duke contributing \$42,000, the citizens of Durham \$8,000, and the State \$100,000.

But a new crisis arose in 1929, when the legislature considered the consolidation of the North Carolina College for Negroes with A&T College at Greensboro. Protests from citizens of Durham resulted in the appointment by Governor Max Gardner of a factfinding commission, whose unanimous recommendation that the college be continued at Durham was adopted.

### New Buildings Added

The world-wide depression in (continued on page 7)

*Greetings and Congratulations to North Carolina College at Durham on the occasion of your Fiftieth Anniversary! We are proud of the fact that your founder, Dr. James E. Shepard, was an illustrious son of Shaw University. May the friendly relationship which exists between our two institutions continue.*

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