

THE TRIBUNAL AID

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**A VIABLE, VALID REQUIREMENT
RESPONDING TO
BLACK NORTH CAROLINA**

The 1976 Editions of THE TRIBUNAL AID will be dedicated to America's bicentennial Celebration, with emphasis on contributions our Race has made in the making of America, from birth to the present.

In 1976 there should not be a need to lift these contributions from isolated sources. Our past

should be interwoven into the fabric of our civilization, because we are, except for the Indian, America's oldest ethnic minority.

We have helped make America what it was, and what it is, since the founding of Virginia. We have been a factor in many major issues in our history. There have been many misdeeds

against us, yet we have been able to live through them and fight back. This is living proof of our history.

Our role in the making of America is neither well known or correctly known. Many positive contributions have escaped historians and have not found their way into the pages of many history books.

We will strive to give readers, Black and white, many little-known facts about our past and it is hoped that a proper perspective of our history will be of value to persons who may believe that as Black people we have an unworthy past; and hence, no strong claims to all rights of other Americans.

Faye Ashe, Black History Editor

FORMER HIGH POINT RESIDENT

RHYMES FROM THE DELTA

PART ONE

A few years ago I found a book entitled *RHYMES FROM THE DELTA*. The cover of the book was worn and I had no idea at the moment the author of the book. When I turned to the title page I discovered that the author was a High Pointer and a member of my church.

RHYMES FROM THE DELTA is a collection of Narratives and Poems by Mr. George W. McCorkle. In the words of Mr. McCorkle, I would like to share with you some of his recollections about the schools he attended, his first compositions written and first poem published.

I am sure some of the recollections given here and names mentioned will bring back memories to many people in the City of High Point and other states and cities visited by Mr. McCorkle.

Many of his poems are dedicated to people of this city, many of whom we have known.

FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDED

The first public school I attended was in the country near Pineville, North Carolina. The name of the school was "Boatright School." I do not know how it chanced to get such a name. My teacher there was Miss Mary Johnson from Charlotte, North Carolina. There in that little, one-room schoolhouse, as a child, I had some rich experiences which helped me to discover my love for verse, and especially rhyme. Every Friday afternoon during the school term, I had an opportunity to speak myself, or the joy of hearing others speak. In most cases the teacher would not know the title of the next performer's speech. I believe many of the students did not know themselves what they were going to say until they were on the floor. It seemed that many of the speeches were made up on the spur of the moment. As I recall, most of the speeches were humorous, and many of them ridiculous, but because of my love for verse and humor, I listened, as it were, with abated breath, and always enjoyed those programs to the very last.

SECOND COUNTRY SCHOOL ATTENDED

The second country school I attended was near the little village of Lowesville, North Carolina. The name of the school was Granite's Knob. Again I am telling you that I do not know the origin of this name. We lived in this section quite some time, and since they changed teachers almost every year out there, I am unable to recall their names, but I do remember the name of one teacher who made a great impression on me as an ambitious boy. The name of the teacher was Prof. J.A. Rhyne. I did not like Professor Rhyne too well, because I thought he was too strict on me in my studies. I endeavored to do my best, but my best was seldom satisfactory to him. Something happened at the closing of that country school one year that I shall never forget: In that day, the closing of country schools was known as "Exhibitions." I was the star in that Exhibition. To this exhibition everybody was invited and came from miles from every countryside. The choir of the church which Prof. Rhyne was a member, Gold Hill Baptist Church, was invited to sing for the occasion. It was a custom, in those days, for every family to bring a basket of food for such occasions to make a big spread at the close of the day's exercise.

All the participants on the program that afternoon, except myself, had been given one selection to memorize. Prof. Rhyne saw fit to give me two selections to memorize and besides, placed me last on the program. When I rose to speak, Prof. Rhyne was at my back, and when I finished the two poems, the good professor asked me to remain standing. And with his hand on my shoulder, that man who I almost hated, began to tell the audience of my ability as a boy, and predicted for me a great future. I then better understood Prof. Rhyne's past attitude toward me.

FIRST COMPOSITION

I do not remember the verses, but it was in a classroom at The High Point Normal and Industrial School, High Point, North Carolina, where I

discovered that I possessed some talent for writing verse. Miss Halsey, the music teacher, had a class composing verses, describing a group of children skating on an icy pond. In this exercise, I found myself able to compose two or three verses before most of them could write even one verse. But not even at that time did it dawn upon me that I would aspire to become a writer of verse.

Up until this time I had contented myself to read and entertain from the writings of other authors, and especially Paul Laurence Dunbar.

FIRST PUBLISHED POEM

I saw my first poem in print at Biddle University Charlotte, North Carolina, (Now Johnson C. Smith University), where I was a student. During that spring Biddle's baseball team had won every game played. This great victory so inspired me that I wrote a poem dedicated to Biddle's Baseball Team. The following are three of the verses:

BIDDLE'S BASEBALL TEAM

Once more the season has come around
To play the baseball game;
The boys of Biddle should be crowned,
For they have won great game.

On Easter Monday, at Latta Park
Was the first game of the season,
And from that Biddle has made a mark;
She's prepared: that's the reason.

Of all the many baseball teams
In schools beneath the sun,
It has been proven, and still it seems
That Biddle's the leading one.

I first showed my verse to Prof. Charles H. Shute who was a member of the Biddle University faculty. Prof. Shute spoke very encouragingly of my effort. The next person to look over the lines was my brother, E. A. McCorkle, who was also a student there at the time. After complimenting the writing of the verses, my brother advised me to take the poem to Mr. Whitfield, his classmate, who was editor of the college paper, "The Argus." Mr. Whitfield, after reading the verses, readily consented to publish it in the next issue of the college paper. That was to be a new day for me, for I had never seen any of my writings in print. It seemed that I could hardly wait for the appearance of the next issue of "The Argus." During the time of my waiting, days, seemed like weeks; sleep went from me, and I gave very little attention to my studies.

PAPER COMES FROM PRESS

Finally "The Argus" appeared with the poem dedicated to Biddle's Baseball Team by George W. McCorkle. That was one of the happiest days of my life. From the writing and publishing of those verses, I caught inspiration to go on to greater heights.

Mr. E. D. Downing who is now Dr. Downing of Roanoke, Virginia, and who was also a classmate of my brother, was secretary for the school paper. He informed me that because of the poem dedicated to Biddle's Baseball Team, more copies of the paper had been sold that month than of any previous issue. That was very encouraging to one in his first attempt at composition of verse.

SECOND POEM WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED

While still a student in Biddle University, Miss Annie B. Warner, daughter of the late Bishop A. J. Warner, died suddenly at her home in Charlotte. Miss Warner had taught for a number of years in my home town, Gastonia, North Carolina. I was a student in the school at the time she was a teacher there. So I conceived the idea of writing a poem to her memory. After writing the verses, I carried the poem early the next morning to the home of the deceased, explaining that I was a student in Biddle University, but had known Miss Warner at my home, Gastonia, where she had taught for a number of years, and asked that the poem be read at the funeral that afternoon, and I walked away, feeling that my task was finished.

FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO READ OWN POETIC COMPOSITION IN PUBLIC

While off the University campus, during the morning, a telephone message had come to the school inquiring for a Mr. McCorkle who had written a poem as a tribute to Miss Warner, and had asked that he would be present that afternoon to read the poem at the funeral. I was somewhat reluctant about going to the funeral to read a poem, but my brother insisted, stating that it might mean something to me in the future. So, I consented to go. When the time came for me to read the poem, I was introduced as representing Biddle University in a poem written as a tribute to the memory of the deceased. The following week, the poem was published in "The Star of Zion," official organ of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Charlotte, N.C. I quote the poem below:

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE MISS ANNIE B. WARNER

In haste to Bishop Warner's home
The monster, death, has sped,
And touched his daughter, Annie's heart,
Which caused us tears to shed.

Few days ago, she walked and talked
With friends in deepest love,
But now she has her great reward
In the glory world above.

In youth she was a lovely child,
And learned to trust her God;
Has ever since, with eager feet,
The path of goodness trod.

She went to school through sacrifice
To learn the lessons taught,
And pondered in her heart each day
How vic'ries could be wrought.

She entered upon her life's great work
With brave and earnest heart;
Though many things adverse to face,
She always did her part.

She trained the minds of many youth
Who now give her the praise;
Her works will be a monument
Through everlasting days.

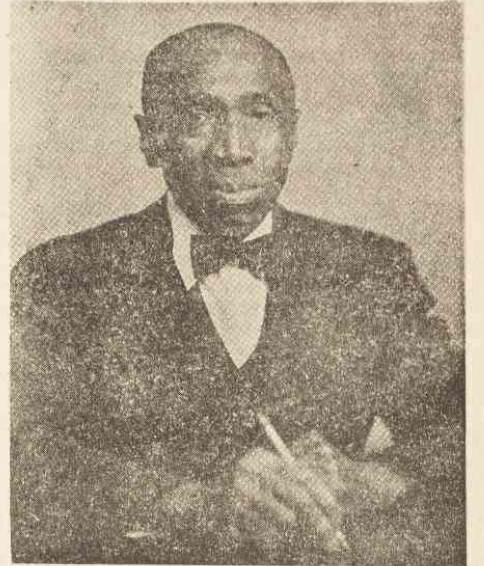
With aching hearts, we look upon
The place she ably filled;
We now break down in tears and cry,
"Alas, her voice is stilled."

We never more shall see her face
In this vain world of sin,
But meet her when our crowns are won,
As we go marching in.

ENTERS NATIONAL RELIGIOUS TRAINING SCHOOL Durham, North Carolina

After completing the normal course at Biddle University, I went to Durham, North Carolina, where I entered The National Religious Training School (Now North Carolina College) of which the late Dr. James E. Shepard was Founder and President. Dr. Shepard expressed and demonstrated much interest in my writing. He gave me many opportunities to get before the public. During the Summer School, he would often have me appear before the teachers, in the evening, at their programs with some of my poems.

At the death of his father, the late Dr. Augustus Shepard, who up until his death had been pastor of White Rock Baptist Church there in Durham, for a number of years, I wrote a poem and dedicated it to his memory. The deceased was well known throughout the State of North Carolina, for in former years he had served as a State Missionary of the Baptist Denomination. President Shepard sent copies of this poem to the churches throughout the state where his father had labored. Here in this school I had the pleasure of the friendship and encouragement of many others, among whom were Rev. John H. Moore, head of the Theological Department of the School, and also the late Miss Abbie Williams, head of the Music Department.



George W. McCorkle
IN THE CITY OF DURHAM

In the city of Durham, it was my pleasure to know the late Dr. A. M. Moore, who was then the Treasurer of the N. C. Mutual Life Insurance Company, and Mr. C. C. Spaulding who was Secretary of the company. Dr. Moore who was superintendent of the Sunday School of White Rock Baptist Church, gave me an opportunity to give a recital in the Sunday School room auditorium of that great church.

One morning I visited the office of Mr. Spaulding and inquired if he would be interested in my writing a poem for the company. He told me to go ahead and write it. In a day or two I was back in his office again with the poem. After reading my feeble effort, Mr. Spaulding asked me to give it another trial. When I returned the second time, Mr. Spaulding seemed to have been very much pleased with my second attempt. He told me that he didn't know what I was expecting, but he was going to give me five dollars. As a student, I needed the five dollars very badly, but the interest shown in my writing by Mr. Spaulding meant far more to me than the five dollars. I have kept in touch with this great character down through the years, and recently on the occasion of the celebration of his seventy-fourth birthday, I wrote a poem as a tribute to him which is part of this book.

ENTER HAMPTON INSTITUTE

During those years while seeking an education I could have been properly called "The Roving Poet," for I surely did keep moving. For many years I had heard of Hampton Institute and how Booker T. Washington had made his way there with bare feet from his birthplace in Virginia. And so, I got it in my mind that I wanted to attend this great educational center. I simply wrote the principal of the institute stating that I wanted to enter Hampton as a student, but was without finance. I also stated that I would arrive there in a few days. I didn't wait for a reply. When I did arrive on the campus, my feet were not bare, but my financial standing was just about the same as that of Booker T. Washington who had entered there many years before that time.

It was late in the afternoon when I arrived on the campus. I was ushered to the office of Major Robert R. Moton, who was then commandant. Major Moton talked with me long enough to find out that I was without finance, but full of ambition. He finally called the office of the vice-president, Dr. George P. Phoenix, who in later years became President of the institution. In talking with Dr. Phoenix, Major Moton stated that he had a young man in his office who had come to enter Hampton Institute, without means, but who seemed to be in earnest. At that statement, Dr. Phoenix said, "Send him over to my office." I also succeeded in convincing Dr. Phoenix that I was in earnest, for he told me that he would accept me as a student, and I was assigned to work in the bakery with the privilege of attending night classes.

Continued Next Week

1776 Honoring America's Bicentennial 1976