

Florida A. and M. Tops List of State-Supported Schools

Over 4 Million Dollars Given for New Buildings

Institution Held Together by J. R. E. Lee
Progressing Under Dr. Gray; 1400 Enrolled

By OLLIE STEWART

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—What has happened here at Florida A. and M. College during the past three years couldn't have happened to a better school.

From a position low in the scale, as compared to other State-supported schools, A. and M. has jumped to the top of the list, when it comes to funds received for operating expenses and for a tremendous building program.

State appropriations for general operating expenses have increased from \$204,484 in 1944-45 to \$933,000 appropriated by the State for the current fiscal year.

Will Be Most Valuable

The building program now under way will, when completed, give this college the most valuable plant of all the State-supported schools for colored in the country. A. and M. will be worth \$4,360,511.

About 15 months ago, the physical plant was valued at a million and a half dollars. Since that time approximately two and a half million dollars have been placed on the campus—and the 1947 legislature has approved buildings to cost \$1,696,000 more.

The new modern library is almost finished and will be in use next fall. The veterans' housing units are complete and a temporary classroom for vets and a college inn are now in use.

A new wing on McGuinn Hall, to house senior women, will be ready in the fall. The new dormitory for women and an addition to the dining hall are well under way, plus a host of other buildings and improvements, such as roads and sidewalks.

Credit Given New President

A lot of credit for this tremendous and significant change at the college is due to the energetic approach of Dr. William H. Gray, who took office on July 3, 1944, as the fifth president of the school.

Dr. Gray is a young man, with a beautiful wife and two children. He was president of Florida Normal and Industrial College at St. Augustine. Previously he worked at Southern University, and even before that once did a stint for the AFRO in the field of sports.

Many things have happened since he took over the reins here. Teachers' salaries have been raised. Financial aid for out-of-State graduate work has been obtained. The nursing program has been expanded and advanced study for faculty members has been encouraged and subsidized.

Nearly 1500 Enrollment

The total enrollment for the 1946-47 school year was 1408—including 752 men and 656 women. The summer session has enrolled 1456 students, of whom were 578 male and 878 female.

550. Five of these were women.

Florida sent about 55,000 colored men into the armed forces during the last war, and a large percentage of them are now back in the State.

Attempting to Assist Vets

Their big needs are employment, education, job training. Some 4,200 veterans are now enrolled for on-the-farm training in the State, but the program was slow in getting under way here when compared to Georgia and Alabama.

However, Florida A. and M. does have an advisory bureau for veterans. Housing units for those in school have been completed and the school program has been adjusted to meet their special needs, as far as possible.

Institution 60 Years Old

Florida A. and M. College, originally called the Colored Normal School, was established in 1887 and opened in the fall of that year with 15 students. T. D. Tucker was principal, and T. V. Gibbs was assistant.

In 1891, the school was moved to its present site on the outskirts of Tallahassee, and the curriculum expanded to include manual training, agriculture and music.

Five students were graduated at the first commencement in 1892.

Nathan Young was elected president in 1901, and served through 1923. The name was changed to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes, and W. H. A. Howard became president in July of 1923 and served for one year.

Lee Served Well 20 Years

J. R. E. Lee took over in 1924 at a crucial period in the school's history. He worked hard and kept the institution together, and through his efforts most of the frame buildings, and some of the brick, were erected here, and the campus took on its permanent shape.

He will be remembered forever here because Lee Memorial Hall is named after him. He died in 1944, and Vice-President J. B. Bragg took charge and acted until September, when Dr. Gray was appointed president.

Affectionately Called FAMCE

FAMCE, as the school is affectionately called, now stands well up with the leaders of Land Grant colleges.

In music, college work and with football teams of national reputation, the school has at last become recognized as an educational force in the South, and known throughout the country.

In natural beauty, FAMCE has few equals. It also has the only full four-year nursing school in the State. This year, 10 nurses



FAMCE FLOURISHES—Above is shown Lee Hall at Florida A. and M. College in Tallahassee, where 1456 students are enrolled in the current summer session. Now under the leadership of Dr. William H. Gray, who became fifth president of the institution three years ago, Florida A. and M. is approaching the top of the list of State-supported schools in funds received for operating expenses and buildings. When its present building program is completed, it will have a physical plant worth \$4,360,511. Construction in process includes a modern library, a new dormitory for women students and additions to the dining hall and the residence hall for senior women.