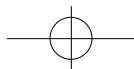
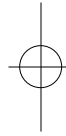
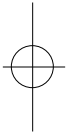
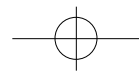
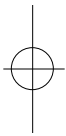


# Making North Carolina Literate





# Making North Carolina Literate

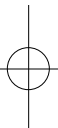
*The University of North Carolina at Greensboro,  
from Normal School to Metropolitan University*

Allen W. Trelease


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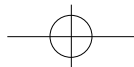
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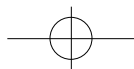
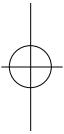
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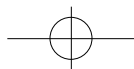
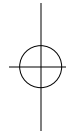
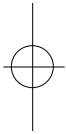


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*To the Shade of  
Charles Duncan McIver*





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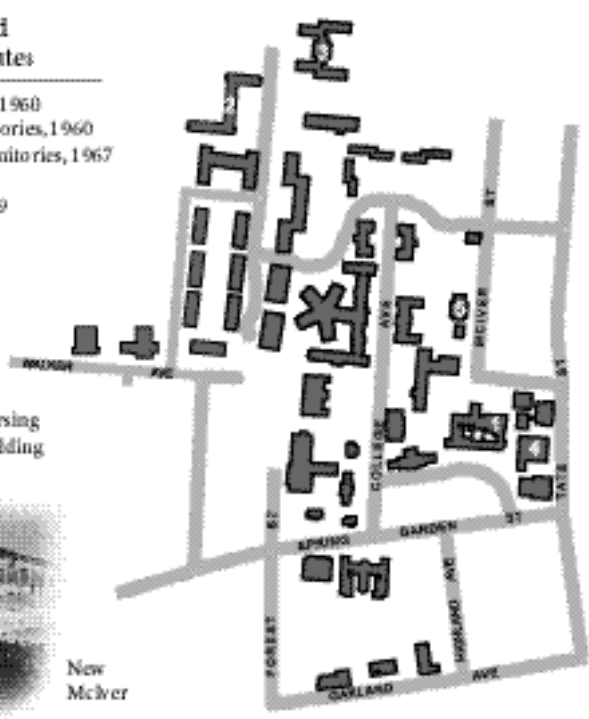
Jackson Library




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Nursing Building





New McIver

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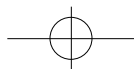
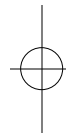
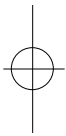
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Jackson Library Tower

Cartography and Design by Jason Teaster



## Preface

Founded in 1892 as North Carolina's first state college for women, the State Normal and Industrial School quickly transcended its name and, arguably, its original mission. From the beginning, founder and first President Charles Duncan McIver and his colleagues strove to attain the status of a full-fledged college centering on the liberal arts. In 1897 it became a College in name and by 1919 in reality, taking the new title North Carolina College for Women (NCCW). Two years after that, with accreditation, it established its own college of arts and sciences and the beginnings of a graduate program. Under McIver's successor Julius I. Foust, it set out to become the women's university of North Carolina, as nearly parallel as possible to the male university at Chapel Hill.

That dream evaporated in 1931 when as a Depression measure the legislature united the Greensboro and Chapel Hill campuses under a common board of trustees along with the state agricultural and mechanical college at Raleigh. Most graduate programs were concentrated at the Chapel Hill campus. The institution now became the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina (or familiarly, WC). So it remained until 1963, when all three campuses became fully coeducational. Thereafter it would be the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Starting with three campuses in the '30s, the University of North Carolina (UNC) system has come since 1972 to embrace sixteen campuses.

As one of the original three, UNCG nourished early hopes of achieving parity with Chapel Hill and Raleigh. But these hopes quickly faded as UNCG continued to occupy an uneasy third place in the hierarchy, with campuses at Charlotte and elsewhere nipping at its heels. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University in Raleigh are officially designated research universities; UNCG is a doctoral university—a research university in waiting. Their funding is determined accordingly.

UNCG occupies another, unofficial category: along with NC State and UNC-Charlotte it is a metropolitan university. That designation is relatively new yet widely recognized around the country; there is in fact a national organization to which UNCG belongs. Many of its members aspired to be research universities, and traditionalists in search of that standing have sometimes found it demeaning. Yet metropolitan universities and their mission are both honorable

and essential. They have been called the land-grant universities of the twenty-first century, occupying the second line of modern higher education, after the community colleges. They commonly accept students from around the world and offer graduate and undergraduate programs of national if not international reputation. They are defined, however, by their urban locale and the fact that they draw most of their students from the surrounding region. They provide specialized programs of regional interest but also highly competitive programs in the professions as well as the arts and sciences. That is the niche that UNCG came to occupy after 1963.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

This book arose, as so many university histories do, from the centennial observance of 1991 and 1992. The author assembled at that time a pictorial history of the university entitled *Changing Assignments*. Although that title has enough felicity that I have wished I could use it again, the term is not fully accurate. Despite the institution's many name changes, it has experienced only two real changes of mission. The first of these, from normal school to liberal arts college for women, represented a mission creep that took almost thirty years to accomplish. The second change, from woman's college to coeducational university in the early '60s, was far more abrupt.

It had not occurred to me before taking up this assignment that the institution's history fell logically into periods of about fifteen years. They form the primary divisions of this book. They reflect the two mission changes, to be sure, but for the most part they follow changes of administration. This produces a top-down organization that is not altogether fashionable in an era of bottom-up social history. But top-down governance is the law in the UNC system. Power proceeds from the legislature and governor to the UNC trustees (or board of governors since 1972) to the president and general administration in Chapel Hill to the trustees, chancellors, and other administrators on each campus. The structure was analogous to this on each campus prior to the consolidations that began in the '30s. Chancellors are not absolute on their campuses but they have great power to set policy and priorities. They determine in large measure who is hired or fired and how the available moneys are spent. Academic and student affairs are at a farther remove, but even they reflect the imprint of the chancellor in office. Within each division of the book, then, separate chapters deal with administration and the campus or physical plant, with academic affairs, and with student and alumni affairs.

\* \* \*

One of the recurrent themes in the book is that of underfunding; it appeared most seriously in physical maintenance—of buildings, grounds, and equipment. Every college or university feels budgetary pain, and the degree is very difficult to measure objectively from one to another; different missions or curricula vary widely in cost. North Carolina outdid itself in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, establishing more institutions of higher education—segregated for whites, blacks, and Indians—than it could readily support. Only gradually have a growing population and the increasing proportion of people who attend college raised enrollments sufficiently to justify all these institutions. All of them were underfunded in some measure. At the Normal/NCCW/WC/UNCG, a feeling of financial neglect was ingrained from the earliest days and shaped a recurrent perception of itself as a “redheaded stepchild.” That term dated from Woman’s College days, but the identity problem it reflected was magnified after 1963 as the new university failed to attain the greater funding and status that its supporters felt it deserved. In the 1980s UNCG launched a systematic study of other institutions around the country having similar missions, and so clearly documented its case that the legislature provided compensatory funding. That helped if it did not end the problem.

Of the other themes or topics dealt with in these pages—among them changing patterns of administration, faculty organization and status, curriculum, student identity and activity, and alumni relations—nearly all are variants of higher education patterns across the United States (and the South) since the 1890s.

With only one serious exception—in the 1950s—the institution was led by a succession of able and dedicated presidents or chancellors—none of whom escaped controversy. Most served longer than a decade; Julius I. Foust presided for twenty-eight years and would have welcomed a twenty-ninth.

\* \* \*

The school was built in 1892 on a cornfield at the outskirts of Greensboro, a town of little over 3,000 people. Both entities grew—the school/college/university to 12,000 and the city to 200,000 by the early 1990s. The campus soon found itself surrounded and landlocked. Although the city of Greensboro remained supportive over the years, neighborhood relations grew testy in the 1960s as enrollments mushroomed and the new university pushed for additional space. It was needed as much for parking lots as for buildings because the great majority of new students were commuters whose cars filled the streets and blocked driveways.

\* \* \*

Woman's College admitted its first black students in 1956. As elsewhere in the desegregating South, the transition caused greater palpitations among administrators and the surrounding community than among the faculty and students involved. Black students were at first segregated in the dormitories but that soon disappeared by popular demand. They had other grievances and were not shy in voicing them; some were vocal participants in the protest movements of the '60s and early '70s.

Students of both races took part. They picketed neighboring businesses that did not admit black students as customers; they participated in downtown sit-ins and protest marches; and they staged campus rallies in behalf of black cafeteria workers and the black students' organization. They demonstrated against the Vietnam war. Most of this activity created anxiety in high places but none of it was violent owing to generally good judgment on the part of student leaders and administrators alike.

In the Normal/NCCW/WC years, the college enjoyed a healthy and quite typical women's student culture. Some of that disappeared with increasing enrollment and most of it succumbed to the demolition derby that came with coeducation and student protest in the '60s and early '70s. Even the early student generations won incremental progress in pushing back parietal regulations on and off campus, until by the 1980s hardly any were left.

University status after 1963 brought not only male students but the much larger and more consequential influx of commuter students. Among these were adults, many of whom could attend class only at night. While they were welcomed, campus administrators of the 1980s and '90s believed it essential to attract more young males and to recapitulate so far as possible the traditional undergraduate environment seen at, say, Chapel Hill. To that end they introduced fraternities and sororities and—over no little faculty and alumni opposition—athletic scholarships and membership in the NCAA's Division I. These policies were executed in exemplary fashion, yet they failed to produce the desired results; the campus remained two-thirds female and more than two-thirds commuter.

Woman's College alumnae, like those at many another institution, developed a fierce loyalty to their Alma Mater. They did not joyfully embrace coeducation and university status, but for the most part their loyalty survived the transition. There had always been an ambivalence in the relationship between the alumni association and the college or university. Most at issue were the allocation of alumni financial contributions, control of alumni publications and the campus Alumni House, and the dual allegiance of the woman who served at once as campus alumni director and the association's executive secretary. These issues were forced to a crisis in the late '80s, resulting in the temporary alienation of many alumni and the creation of a rather more self-sufficient Alumni Association.



\* \* \*

Over a century the curriculum evolved in keeping with the nation and region. Well before the college achieved university status, it developed nationally recognized programs in education, home economics, music, theater, physical education for women, and some of the liberal arts. The English department, for instance, offered a writing program of some renown and attracted a faculty equally renowned. All these survived the university revolution of the '60s. And thereafter as academic fields multiplied and the students grew more diverse, the curriculum gained equally in complexity. Doctoral programs emerged in English, psychology, and a variety of professional fields ranging from music to what used to be called home economics and physical education.

\* \* \*

For decades after 1892, faculty and students at the Normal/NCCW/WC interacted socially as well as academically. They each formed communities of their own but also a larger one together. This gradually broke down by the 1960s as enrollments grew, as students rebelled against the old tradition of *in loco parentis*, and as faculty members were pushed more and more toward research and publication as a condition of appointment, promotion, tenure, and salary. In an increasingly competitive national environment, that pressure had its rationale: no matter how sparkling one's classroom performance, committee service, or out-of-class student relations, they brought little outside recognition. Research and publication, on the other hand, did command attention, enhancing the reputation of both the individual and the university. By this calculus good researchers came to be more valuable than good teachers and they were rewarded accordingly—especially as good scholarship was said to bespeak an active mind that produced good teaching as well. In fact, there was little real evidence that classroom teaching suffered in this process. Younger faculty members, fresh from graduate school, were already imbued with the new ethic and found it confirmed on their arrival. Older members, however, were less mobile, had been hired with different expectations, and faced greater difficulty adapting to the new order; their professional status and income suffered accordingly.

The old faculty community also faded. As one's allegiance passed imperceptibly from the institution to one's own discipline, and from campus teaching and service to research, people reapportioned their time and energies. It became harder to staff committees and to assemble a respectable quorum in faculty meetings. Even the campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors expired in the 1990s, a victim of the new professional imperative.

A further reason for community breakdown lay in a growing recourse to temporary and part-time teachers. Some of these were highly experienced professionals who came to campus to teach specialized courses in their fields as a sideline, but the majority were relatively young people—mostly women—with master's degrees or even Ph.D.s who could not find full-time, tenure-track teaching jobs. Some were tied to the Greensboro area by marriage or other obligations. Most of them taught freshman and sophomore classes where they may well have interacted better and taught more effectively than their tenured elders. But like their counterparts around the country, they suffered low pay and second-class status.

\* \* \*

In sum, the Normal/NCCW/WC/UNCG has become a different place. This is attributable partly to its own name and mission changes, to be sure, but also to the sea changes that American higher education has experienced since 1892.

## Acknowledgments

Although the university approached me to undertake this work at the time of the 1992 centennial, it has played no part in the execution beyond answering my questions and affording me full access to the records not still in use. There has been no suggestion of censorship or any pressure beyond gently worded queries as to my progress over the years. I happily acknowledge the university's gift of a semester's research leave and its support of publication costs.

The vast majority of my research took place in the UNCG archives, located in the special collections department of Jackson Library. They are also the source of all photographs used in the book. The archives are a priceless resource, embracing among other things the manuscript records of every president or chancellor since the 1890s; the Alumni Association records; complete files of the *Alumni News* and the student newspaper, the *Carolinian*; and transcripts of the nearly 200 Centennial Oral History interviews. Records of some subordinate offices are incomplete but those of the president or chancellor provide by far the most valuable information concerning the institution as a whole. So far as institutional guidance is concerned, little of consequence transpired without crossing the president or chancellor's desk. The only records truly conspicuous by their absence are President Foust's papers for the year 1930 and the last years' records of the chancellor's advisory committee in the 1950s. We no longer have any clue as to what happened to the former; we suspect that the latter occupy some uncharted corner of the Greensboro landfill.

Given the archives' importance, my greatest debt is of course to those associated with them during the past decade: Emilie Mills and her successor William Finley as heads of the special collections department, and above all chief archivist Betty Carter and her staff at different times: Ella Ross, Janis Holder, Carolyn Shankle, Linda Jacobson, and Hermann Trojanowski. I am also obligated to my graduate research assistants Kelly Harden and Cheryl Junk, and to Jason Teaster who prepared the campus maps.

A substantial number of people have read parts of the manuscript or provided information on request, saving me from gaffes great and small. They include Richard Bardolph, Robert M. Calhoon, Betty Carter, Joseph E. Johnson,

William A. Link, Ernest A. Lumsden, Roland Nelson, Donald J. Reichard, Ann P. Saab, Terry G. Seaks, David H. Shelton, Kendon Smith, James H. Thompson, and H. Herbert Wells.

Many university historians refrain from treating recent events, partly to avoid the controversy that is certain to ensue. Casting aside such wholesome discretion, I made the decision to continue to the most recent stopping point available to me consistent with my overall organization—the resignation of Chancellor William Moran in 1994. I think this decision is readily defensible, given the university’s growth and maturation during his fifteen years at the helm. But I have necessarily treated a host of subjects that generate controversy, personal and substantive, to this day. The line between history and journalism can be thin. A few of my informants preferred an anonymity that I gladly promised in return for information that was otherwise unobtainable. I hope they will recognize here my gratitude for that help.

Allen W. Trelease  
*Greensboro, N.C.*  
*May, 2003*

