

## HISTORICAL

**H**OWARD UNIVERSITY, like most of the renowned institutions of higher learning, had its beginning in a project for religious education. Following the decision of the members of the First Congregational Church of Washington, D. C., assembled on November 19, 1866, for a prayer meeting, the Reverend Charles B. Boyton, the Reverend Benjamin F. Morris, Danforth B. Nichols and Henry Brewster began the task of founding a theological school for Negroes. General Oliver Otis Howard, for whom the school was finally named, a member of this congregation, allied himself with this enterprise and for a suitable location for the school, purchased one hundred acres from the farm of John Smith, located on a high elevation on Georgia Road. Within three years much of the land thus secured had been sold, yielding sufficient profit to supplement funds obtained from the Freedman's Bureau and begin the erection of buildings.

During this time, the curriculum had developed extensively. Within the first three months of the school's existence, its name had been changed to meet progressing phases of its activities. From "The Theological Institute" as was first proposed, the name was converted into "The Theological and Normal Institute" as a result of the adoption of the suggestion of Senator Pomeroy of Kansas that provision be included for the training of Negro teachers. Finally, on the 8th of June, 1867, it was decided that this educational project be broadened sufficiently to merit the name "Howard University."

The first faculty of the school consisted of the Reverend E. W. Robinson (Chair of Evidence in Biblical Interpretation), the Reverend D. B. Nichols (Chair of Biblical History and Geography), and Dr. Silas Loom (Chair of Anatomy and Physiology). This latter chair came from the realization of the Freedman's Bureau that even in a theological school, students needed health instruction. From this health instruction the step to a medical school was natural. Howard University has grown to encompass academic departments, graduate and undergraduate, with Colleges of Liberal Arts, Education, Applied Science, Music, and professional schools; the Schools of Religion and of Law, and the Colleges of Medicine, of Dentistry and of Pharmacy.

It is significant to note here that in the Normal and Preparatory Department opened in 1867, four of the five students were white and one was colored. Although the "open door" policy still remains, the university is primarily concerned with the education of Negro youth.

The first Negro vice-president of the university was Professor John M. Langston of the Howard Law School, who acted as president during the leave of absence granted to General Howard, the first president of the university. The successor to General Howard was the Reverend Jeremiah E. Rankin, who served from 1889 to 1903, and for whom our chapel is named. The other presidents have been Dr. John Gordon, a Presbyterian minister; Dr. Wilbur P. Thirkield, a Methodist bishop, to whom the Science Building is dedicated; Dr. Stephen Newman, and Dr. J. Stanley Durkee who served until he was succeeded by the first Negro to head the university—Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson.

The administration, the faculty, and the student body of Howard are bi-racial. The administrative authority is vested in the president, who is elected by a Board of Trustees and is responsible to it. Of the twenty-four active members of the Board of Trustees, eleven are colored and thirteen white. The financial support of the university is received from appropriations from the Federal Government, and from philanthropic organizations, from private endowments, and from student fees. The United States Bureau of Education in a recent survey of Negro colleges and universities reported in Bulletin Number 7, 1928, speaks of Howard University as the only institution of higher learning in the United States for the education of the Negro race which maintains a complete university organization including undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools.

