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Elizabeth City State University*

Harold Leonard Trigg
(1893-1978)
Papers, 1939-1945

Volume: 1 Linear Foot

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Biographical Note: HAROLD LEONARD TRIGG Third President
(1939 - 1945)

From *Educational Architects* by Leonard Ballou



President Trigg's administration, which some may call transitional, was thus far the shortest in the institution's history. It was also significant. It was Dr. Trigg, elected President by the Trustees in November, 1939, who kept the school alive during a turbulent period for the nation at large. He was successful in continuing National Youth Administration (NYA) programs begun during Dr. Bias's administration; weathered the weary years of World War II; and sought, often with success to reinforce faculty and curricular matters and to the extent then possible, planned for or sought to implement capital and equipment improvements along with other facets institutional upgrading. If town and gown did not always meet in philosophy, President Trigg's unwavering focal point was the institution.

He viewed the institution's Fiftieth Anniversary, reflected upon its development and future and possibly felt some burden in not being collateral descendent of his executive forbears. For certainty, like all his predecessors and successors, he felt the frustrations stemming from race prejudice which assaulted Black institutions and their presidents alike.

The times were in flux. Then, as before and since, it was not easy to discern the choicest route to implementing aspirations but his forceful personality had its merits in aiding institutional goals even if some may have felt he had the aura of an old school" chief executive. Through all of it, Dr. Trigg, with a background of military and state educational experiences earnestly sought continuance and upgrading of a concept but recently named "Elizabeth City State Teachers College."



Among other methods of doing so and like his predecessors, his humane concerns were often illustrated: following a flood in August, 1940, he offered help from the institution; if a student did not return, he invited the person to do so and offered assistance; his 1941 Commencement gave special salute to those in military service.

President Trigg culminated his labors at this school upon his resignation, December, 1945. He later became a member of the State Board of Education; President of St. Augustine's College (Raleigh, North Carolina); associated with the Southern Regional Education Board; and in advanced years is a member of the State Commission on Higher Education Facilities and has been a professor at Livingstone College (Salisbury, North Carolina). He has returned to ECSU at its momentous occasions (e.g., its 75th Anniversary) and lent to such events his salutary presence.

Born in Lynchburg, Virginia, 1893, Harold Leonard Trigg may be considered an

embodiment of carrying on through under adversity. His name and work are etched in the permanent memory of the institution, partial evidence of which was the dedication of the December, 1945 Newsletter to President Trigg upon his resignation, regretting the loss of his leadership and extolling his administration.

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Scope and Content Note: This one cubic foot collection contains a small number of public papers related to the programs Dr. Trigg created, including adult education and an extensive expansion of the physical plant. These materials include correspondence, memos, meeting agendas, and the president's report to the Board of Trustees. A folder of certification requirements of the State of North Carolina for the Primary A certification includes correspondence with Mary Alice Terrell, state Supervisor of Certification regarding college admission for non-high school graduates during the wartime emergency and the Emergency A rating.

Personal papers include President Trigg's professional credentials and correspondence to Drs. Ridley and Thorpe, his inaugural program and his obituary and memorial resolution.

Timeline:

- 1893 Born in Lynchburg, Virginia to Frank and Ellen Preston Taylor Trigg on December 15
- 1913 Received B.A. from Morgan College in Baltimore, Maryland
- 1918 Received M.A. from Syracuse University
- 1918 Served in U.S. Army
- 1919 Discharged from U.S. Army as sergeant major
- 1920 Married Geraldine L. Nelson of Savannah, Georgia on September 16th and became the father of three children: Harold, Melva Currier and Leota Trigg.
- 1921 Moved to North Carolina from New Orleans to teach mathematics at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina
- 1922 Taught at Slater Normal School in Winston Salem, North Carolina
- 1923 Principal, Berry O'Kelly Training School at Method, North Carolina
- 1926 Principal, Atkins High School in Winston Salem, North Carolina [Columbian Heights Schools]
- 1928 Appointed North Carolina State Inspector of high schools
North Carolina Teachers Association

- 1937 Begins leave of absence from State of North Carolina to become federal education administrator with U.S. Department of Education's National Survey of Vocational Education and Guidance of Negroes under Director Ambrose Caliver.
- 1940 Receives Honorary Ed.D. from Morgan College, his alma mater
- 1940 Inaugurated as third CEO of Elizabeth City State Teachers College on October 15 in Moore Auditorium
- 1945 Resigns the presidency of Elizabeth City State Teachers College on September 25th
- 1946 Becomes Associate Executive Director of the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta, Georgia
- 1947 Appointed by Governor Kerr Scott to the State Board of Education, where he served until 1973 as the first African American member of the State Board of Education
- 1947 Appointed as first African American president of St. Augustine's College
- 1955 Resigns as head of St. Augustine's on January 6th.
- 1955 Accepts a position as Lecturer at Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina and remains until 1975
- 1958 Appointed Coordinator of Negro Activities for the State Prison System in Raleigh, North Carolina.
- 1978 Dies on August 29th in New York City after a brief illness.

Sources: *Encyclopedia of North Carolina Biography*. Powell, William Stevens Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Educational Architects: Sketches of the Founders and Chief Executives of Elizabeth City State University. Ballou, Leonard R. Carolina Printing Company: Elizabeth City, NC, 1980.

Collection Inventory:

Box One

box	Folder Title	Series	Notes
1	Inaugural	Public Papers	Xerox copy of Trigg inaugural program
1	Meeting Agendas and Reports	Public Papers	Integrating Community Life in Pasquotank County
1	Memos and Correspondence	Public Papers	Clippings of budget requests; memos to staff
1	President's Report	Speeches	State of the College report

1	Student statistics	Public Papers	Various handwritten reports on racial makeup of students, counties
1	Curriculum	Public Papers	Revisions per Integrating Council 9(see above)
1	Correspondence	Public Papers	student matters
1	Correspondence	Correspondence	re: Mary Newkirk and Needham M. Brown
1	Personal Correspondence	Correspondence	includes post-retirement correspondence
1	Adult Education	Public Papers	North Carolina Negro Adult Education Council conference; regulation of kindergartens
1	Capital Improvements/Budget Hearings	Public Papers	clippings; requests
1	Biographical	Biography	Obituary; prints from publications; BOG resolution
1	Teacher Certification	Public Papers	Requirements for various certifications
1	Falcon Yearbook, 1950	Printed Material	St. Augustine's College Yearbook
1	Falcon Yearbook	Press Releases	St. Augustine's College Yearbook