

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF J. T. WILLIAMS

For the twenty three years that Dr. John T. Williams was president of Maryland State College, the institution in Princess Anne experienced changes touching every aspect of the school's life. (Dr. Williams ably guided Maryland State from a struggling, four year college beset with academic, financial, and political problems to that of being an integral part of the University of Maryland.) Dr. Williams' tenure as president was marked by a leap in enrollments, a great building boom on campus, an increase in faculty, and academic recognition for the school at Princess Anne. The combination of a dynamic president with the change in educational philosophy after the Brown vs. the Board of Education Supreme Court decision in 1954, and the expansion of higher education in general in the 1960's, formed the backdrop for the emergence of Maryland State College as a viable institution.

J. T. Williams came to Princess Anne as its first and only president in 1947. Born in Minden, Louisiana, in 1904, Dr. Williams received a Bachelor of Science degree from Langston University in 1928 and a Master of Arts degree

from the University of Cincinnati in 1932. He completed the doctorate of education in school administration and educational psychology at Indiana University in one year, 1935-1936, and worked at Kentucky State College in various capacities as professor, football and basketball coach, dean, and registrar before he was appointed by the Board of Regents of the University of Maryland.¹

When Dr. Williams arrived at Princess Anne, he found the institution in sad shape. Maryland State College was poorly equipped, had low enrollments, an understaffed faculty, and a minute budget. It was J. T. Williams' job to reorganize the school completely. The school was streamlined and set up under four divisions--Agriculture, Home Economics, Mechanic Arts, and Arts and Sciences, with those students meeting the requirements for graduation at Maryland State College receiving their Bachelors degrees from the University of Maryland.

Williams' first success was the dramatic increase in enrollments at the college. For the academic year 1947-1948, students numbered 163. By the next year the student population nearly doubled increasing 98% to 323. In addition, Dr. Williams reported that 147 applicants were denied admission due to the lack of dormitory space. "In the dormitories for both men and women, from four to six persons are sleeping in rooms designed to accommodate two students."²

¹Baltimore Sun, July 14, 1971.

²Biennial Report Issue, 1946-1948. University of Maryland and State Board of Agriculture, II, No. 5, (October 1949), pp. 136-137.

the beginning of the 1947 academic year, there were only eleven instructors on the faculty. J. T. Williams increased the faculty to twenty four by the end of the spring semester, and by the next year there were thirty three ^{full time} and three part time teachers. Furthermore, his staff had nine doctorates and twenty one Masters' degrees. Those faculty members with only bachelor's degrees taught building construction and machine shop. As a result of the growth of the staff, their ranks were reassigned. Maryland State College now had nine professors, six associate professors, and seventeen with the rank of instructor.³

By far J. T. Williams' biggest complaint and dilemma was "the important fact...that the reorganized program of Maryland State College is beginning almost from scratch." Throughout the entire school there were few buildings, little equipment, "limited facilities for laboratory and practice work," and a lack of classroom space. To sum up, J. T. Williams' challenge with Maryland State was "a heroic effort to do something under circumstances and with facilities which are woefully inadequate."⁴

In order to understand the problems confronting the new president of the college, an examination of the prevailing conditions at Maryland State in 1948-1949 is necessary. Despite the optimistic rhetoric of Curly Byrd

³Ibid., p. 137.

⁴Ibid., p. 138.

concerning the improvement of Princess Anne College, College Park remained indifferent to its "stepchild" on the Eastern Shore. Although community and educational leaders were in frequent disagreement over the future of Princess Anne College, they nevertheless were united in their condemnation of College Park's shabby treatment of the Eastern Shore institution. From 1938 through 1947, College Park received over six million dollars in federal funds. Of this amount, Princess Anne College received on the average a mere \$15,000 annually. Specifically, while College Park's federal funding was \$672,943, Princess Anne's share amounted to \$15,161. Yet the rural population was 82.1% white and 17.9% colored. Princess Anne should have received nearly one-fifth of the total amount of funding distributed.⁵ These expenditures met the minimum requirement of the second Morrill Land Grant Act. Ironically, the vast bulk of federal funds was spent on teaching and research at College Park from which blacks were excluded. Even such militant critics of Princess Anne College as Judge Morris A. Soper of Baltimore, a member of the Board of Trustees of Morgan State College, were incredulous over the fact that College Park had controlled Princess Anne from 1937 to 1947 without having bothered to install a president.⁶ College Park was equally inattentive, critics pointed out, to enrollment problems at

⁵Baltimore Afro-American, October 28, 1947.

⁶Morris A. Soper. Commission to Study the Question of Negro Higher Education in Maryland. December 6, 1949. American Call, p. 10. Agers, Office of Education Mss, National

Princess Anne College. In order to attract students, the Eastern Shore land grant college advertised in out-of-state newspapers. At this time more than 50% of the student body came from out-of-state. This was the college that Dr. Byrd was going to establish as a graduate school equal to that of College Park.⁷ Yet according to an article in the Baltimore Sun, the institution on the Eastern Shore of Maryland was one in which no student had ever flunked out. The college was characterized as having simple requirements "low enough for all to hurdle."⁸

The result of all this criticism levelled against College Park and its branch campus was that the Senate of Maryland commissioned another statewide study on higher education for Negroes. Claiming that it was "financially impossible for the State to maintain two colleges for Negroes," and difficult enough to maintain even one school, Senator Ellison of Baltimore called for the study to come up with a definite policy of appropriating money for Negro education.⁹ Once again Morgan State College in Baltimore was pitted against its enemy on the Eastern Shore, Maryland State.

Morgan State officials naturally urged that Morgan be designated as the state land grant college and that the programs in agriculture and mechanic arts be shifted from Maryland State to Morgan and out of the administration of the

⁷Ibid., p. 27.

⁸Baltimore Sun, February 27, 1949.

⁹Ibid., April 2, 1949.

University of Maryland. Judge Soper "denounced the pretense that colored students at Maryland State receive an education equivalent to that available for whites at College Park."¹⁰ Senator Ellison pointed out that past surveys and commissions recommended that the institution at Princess Anne could be maintained as a school but as either a junior college or a vocational school, not a full four year college.¹¹

Howard E. Murphey, Chairman of the Maryland Commission for Equal Educational Opportunities, attacked the University of Maryland and the state's system of awarding out-of-state scholarships to colored students. He called for abolishing the scholarships and making use of the white state-supported institutions for study. Murphey commented that the current system "places a stigma on Negro students and says to them you are not fit to attend the University of Maryland."¹² The State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Thomas G. Pullen, advocated the complete separation of white and colored students on the undergraduate level, and urged that all of the schools be operated as parts of the University of Maryland.¹³

President Byrd of the University of Maryland had his say, too. He naturally favored placing all the state facilities for Negro education under the aegis of the University of Maryland.¹⁴ He also argued that it would be an

¹⁰Norfolk Sun and Gazette, April 2, 1949.

¹¹Baltimore Sun, April 2, 1949.

¹²Norfolk Sun and Gazette, op. cit.

¹³Baltimore Afro-American, October 29, 1949.

¹⁴Philadelphia Tribune, November 22, 1949.

extravagance to transfer the land grant program to Morgan because "it would cost probably \$1,500,000 to duplicate the plant at Princess Anne."¹⁵ The president of Morgan College, Dr. Martin D. Jenkins, opposed Byrd's view and recommended that his institution be operated as the state land grant college.¹⁶ And Ambrose Caliver, a specialist in Negro higher education, said that one undergraduate institution, Morgan, could serve the Negroes of Maryland. To build up the school at Princess Anne would be a "waste of money," Caliver declared.¹⁷

Finally, the Report and Recommendations of the Commission to Study the Question of Negro Higher Education to the Governor and Legislative Council and the General Assembly of Maryland became public. As usual the institution at Princess Anne fared badly in comparison with Morgan, especially since the commission relied heavily on the data and recommendations of the Marbury Report of 1947.

In describing Maryland State College, the current commission noted that despite the recent building program at the school, "the physical plant at Princess Anne was woefully inadequate." For example, one men's dormitory with a capacity of ninety two houses 176. The girl's dormitory houses twice its normal capacity of fifty six. Also, the library with "its 6,000 volumes (4,000 of which

¹⁵Baltimore Sun, March 10, 1950.

¹⁶Baltimore Afro-American, October 25, 1949.

¹⁷Baltimore Sun, April 7, 1950.

were obtained within the past two years) are crammed into one room." The chemistry building is a converted Army barracks. And, most of the shop equipment is inadequate.¹⁸

The report reviewed how poorly Princess Anne fared under the administrations of Morgan and the University of Maryland, and questioned whether or not the school "is to continue with additional capital outlay to make up for its deficiencies, whether it should be continued without additional expenditure of money, or whether it should be discontinued and abandoned as an educational center."¹⁹

President Byrd had embarked on a program to build up his weak link at Princess Anne after the Marbury Report appeared. State appropriations for Princess Anne rose from \$116,367 in 1948-1949 to \$429,768 for the following year.²⁰ In addition, Princess Anne benefited from a \$3,450,000 building program to rectify a great many needs of the physical plant.²¹ (The Report and Recommendations pointed out the fact that before all the money was spent on the school, "there was little doubt in the minds of many but that the College should be abandoned." Now with all the money being spent on

¹⁸Report and Recommendations of the Commission to Study the Question of Negro Higher Education to the Governor and Legislative Council and the General Assembly of Maryland, (Annapolis, June 30, 1950), pp. 22-23.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 25.

²⁰Baltimore Sun, June 21, 1949.

²¹Minutes of the University of Maryland, Board of Regents, July 10, 1948, p. 1347.

the school, the fate of Maryland State College was becoming a "source of political issue and resentment." President Byrd's astute spending policy for the University's Eastern Branch at least dulled some of the major criticism of neglect. The argument to immediately abandon Princess Anne was somewhat softened.²²

Maryland State College received further criticisms at the hands of the commission. Unfortunately, when a few of the state institutions were compared for money spent per full time student, Princess Anne's appropriation of \$1,051 was the highest. Morgan's per student appropriation only amounted to \$397. (It was argued that Maryland State had both the highest cost per student in the state and the highest percentage of out-of-state students. This was "a situation which can hardly be called practical or economical."²³)

Furthermore, the commission questioned the need for a Negro land grant college in the state. They reported on the growing "trend away from agricultural pursuits on the part of the Negro student." Out of a student body of 409 at Maryland State, only twenty eight were taking courses in the agricultural curriculum. Since the College received \$15,000 in land grant money, there would not be a great loss if the land grant curricula were eliminated.²⁴

²²Report and Recommendations, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

²³Ibid., p. 24.

²⁴Ibid., p. 25.

After praising Maryland State's "will to succeed" and some "very good faculty members" and noting "the great pride for that institution in the hearts of Maryland citizens on the Eastern Shore," the commission nonetheless recommended that "no further capital outlay for the construction of new buildings or for additions to present buildings be expended." One week earlier the Board of Regents of the University of Maryland voted to request \$2,475,000 in additional appropriations for Maryland State. And, the commission stated that another advisory commission be formed to study the "ultimate disposition of... (Maryland State College) for educational or other state or local purposes..." with the school being separated from the University of Maryland.²⁵

The irony of the whole situation was that the commission commented that "the failure of any constructive action following the completion of... the Marbury Report is somewhat surprising in view of its many fine observations and recommendations."²⁶ Yet this commission's recommendations met the same fate. The power of President Byrd and the University of Maryland guaranteed the survival of its Eastern Branch.

President Byrd's policies with regard to Princess Anne received widespread criticism in the Baltimore area. The Baltimore Sun flatly accused the University of Maryland

²⁵Ibid., p/ 26.

²⁶Ibid., p. XI.

of inhibiting the development of Negro higher education in the state. By opposing the development of Morgan State College and by insisting on spending large sums at Princess Anne, College Park had diffused the state's outlays so as to make it difficult to create equal facilities for Negroes anywhere.²⁷ The Baltimore Afro-American saw the Morgan-Princess Anne debate as an issue that threatened "to obscure the more pressing problem of where the advanced colored student can presently obtain graduate and professional education within the state as the courts have ruled."²⁸

In the intensely competitive scene of Negro higher education, Morgan State College was highly favored by the Baltimore community and its politicians. Morgan supporters placed pressure on Governor McKeldin to delay any further construction projects at Princess Anne until the school's future was decided.²⁹ Pro-Morgan newspapers, like the Philadelphia Courier accused President Byrd of trying to maintain Jim Crow education by undermining both Morgan and Maryland State.³⁰

While the controversy raged in Maryland over Morgan and Maryland State, the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges labored mightily to defend its jeopardized member institutions. According to Mr. Will Alexander,

²⁷Baltimore Sun, February 1, 1951.

²⁸Baltimore Afro-American, December 23, 1950.

²⁹Baltimore Evening Sun, February 2, 1951.

³⁰Philadelphia Courier, February 17, 1951.

a ranking conference official, the predicament at Maryland State and other 1890 schools had resulted from their being "catch-alls for Negro education." More seriously, their dilemma resulted from their failure to uphold their land grant mission. Work in agriculture was "generally inadequate" at these schools. Agricultural work at these institutions in 1951 was "as archaic as the poor black sharecropper behind his mule." The destiny of the Negro in the future, he argued, would be determined by science and mechanization. Yet the 1890 schools had failed to prepare for the social changes affecting the southern Negro. Specifically, Alexander called for increased emphasis on the production of black school teachers.³¹ The following year the Conference deplored the lack of concern at Maryland State and several other institutions with the crucial matters of agriculture, economics, human relations, applied science-- "fields which are presenting us with the most pressing problems."³² The widely esteemed President of Kentucky State College, Dr. Rufus B. Atwood, cautioned Negro educators against facile solutions to problems of Negro land grant education. The Negro land grant college, he pointed out, came into existence for just one reason--segregation. With the integration of higher education on its way to becoming an accomplished fact in Maryland and other areas of the South,

³¹Will Alexander, "The Present Challenge to the Negro Land Grant Colleges," Proceedings of the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges, October, 1951, pp. 77-81.

³²Proceedings, October, 1952, p. 73.

questions about the justification of a land grant college for Negroes were sure to be raised. The 1890 schools' future would be determined, Atwood noted, by the "searching examination of the land grant college program itself...."³³

(No one was more aware of Maryland State's problems than J. T. Williams.) Possessed with a shrewd grasp of the politics involving Negro education, Williams embarked on a successful and often fascinating campaign to protect the school from its enemies. Williams' strategy involved three main tactics--the development of a successful agricultural program, the establishment of a federal ROTC program on campus, and the creation of winning athletic teams. These endeavors, Williams hoped, would attract students, federal monies, community support, and statewide recognition. Only then would quality instruction become a reality at Maryland State College. For Williams, the survival of Maryland State was an obsession, and he demanded the complete loyalty of his faculty and staff. Only one voice prevailed at Maryland State, and Williams' stern reminder of "my way or the highway" would become part of the campus vernacular. During this period Williams recruited highly qualified faculty members in agriculture and called upon a fellow Oklahoman, Vernon "Skip" McCain, to build an athletic program. Within a short time the continued survival of the college would cease to be an issue.

³³Rufus B. Atwood, "Address to the Conference," Proceedings, October 1952, p. 70.

To begin with, enrollments stabilized at Maryland State in the early 1950's. According to the admissions office, there were 409 students in 1949, 384 in 1950, 377 in 1951, 431 in 1952, 425 in 1953, and 440 in 1954.³⁴ The first class to be graduated under the reorganized administration received degrees in 1951. Of the sixty freshmen who enrolled in 1947, fifty of them (fourteen women and thirty six men), were granted diplomas.³⁵ On September 10, 1951, the United States Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps began instruction at the College. Maryland State College had the distinct honor of being the smallest college in the United States to have the ROTC program. Enrollments in ROTC was required of all freshmen and sophomores who spent three hours in class and two hours on the drill field every week.³⁶

In the sports arena, Skip McCain's football team, the Hawks, received popular acclaim. From 1948 through October, 1951, the Hawks had a twenty five game winning streak. The coach and a player, Sylvester Polk, were recognized by the Pigskin Club of Washington, D. C.³⁷

The Division of Agriculture also underwent major growth and improvement. In 1948, Maryland State owned seven

³⁴Violet J. Wood, Report on Admissions, University of Maryland Archives, University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, September 29, 1955.

³⁵The Maroon and Gray, I, No. 1, (Maryland State College, March 1951).

³⁶Ibid., II, No. 1, (October 21, 1951).

³⁷Ibid.

milking cows, two heifers, and an "improvised," outmoded barn. By 1951, the new dean of the Division of Agriculture, Alfred W. Shute, was in charge of a new dairy with twenty three cows, nine heifers, two pedigreed bulls, and four milking machines. Milk from the dairy was used in the college's dining hall. Over \$30,000 was spent for farm machinery and equipment for the campus farm acreage. The poultry plant, under John V. Strickland, also made gains and increased profits for the school. The campus poultry house, with a capacity for 1,200-1,400 layers, helped to expand the "production and marketing of poultry products." About eight hundred eggs were gathered daily for use on campus as well as for distribution to a wholesale market in Philadelphia.³⁸

Maryland State College was also host for numerous conferences, meetings, and workshops, a tradition that the school maintained from the past. The school held an annual High School Day attended by graduating high school seniors to acquaint them with the opportunities for higher education and let them observe a college in action. In addition, the school's Vocational Opportunities Conference provided principals and guidance counselors with information on the expanding labor market. There were various home economics demonstrations, too.³⁹ Maryland State sponsored the Farmers and Homemakers Conference, the New Farmers of America, Ministers School, and 4-H Club activities.⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid., II, No. 2, January 11, 1952.

³⁹Maryland State College News, I, No. 1, (March 1953); I, No. 2, (April 10, 1953).

⁴⁰Annual Report of the President, University of Mary-

President Williams was most proud of his school's accomplishments in academics and athletics in 1954. (For the first time in its history, Maryland State College won separate recognition and accreditation from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.) According to President Williams, Maryland State would still be a part of the University of Maryland, but the separate accreditation would mean academic listing and individual recognition of the college. Middle States approval would be "recognition in our own right and for public relations purposes."⁴¹ Indeed, an editorial in the Salisbury Daily Times on Maryland State's accomplishment, commented that "it is pioneering and experimenting intelligently."⁴² And, in athletics, the school was admitted into the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association. Maryland's teams could now officially compete for standings. And this they did admirably.⁴³

At the commencement exercises, graduates and their families, the faculty and staff, and guests saw and heard many distinguished speakers. At the 1954 graduation, over 2,000 people filled Kiah gymnasium when Eleanor Roosevelt gave the commencement address. That graduation marked the first time that two men were commissioned 2nd Lieutenants in the Air Force Reserve.⁴⁴ Other prominent commencement

⁴¹Salisbury Daily Times, December 21, 1953.

⁴²Ibid., January 1, 1955.

⁴³Maryland State College News, II, No. 3, (March 10, 1954).

⁴⁴Salisbury Daily Times, June 2, 1954.

speakers were Adam Clayton Powell (1956), Thurgood Marshall (1957), Martin Luther King (1959), Charles Hatcher (1962), Whitney Young (1965), and Jackie Robinson (1968).

Most remarkable was the fact the J. T. Williams' successes for Maryland State were accomplished on a very tight budget increasingly shrinking budget. It is interesting to note that as the general budget of the University of Maryland increased, the proportionate percentage for Maryland State decreased. This trend is illustrated by the following table:

TABLE 3.--Comparitive University Appropriations, 1952-1958

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>MARYLAND STATE COLLEGE</u>	<u>UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND</u>
1952-1953	\$714,703.64 4 %	\$18,900,000 (approx.)
1953-1954	749,822.92 3.7	20,000,000
1955-1956	815,626.26 3.2	25,900,000
1956-1957	852,952.13 2.7	31,033,941
1957-1958	892,531.77 2.6	34,881,222 ⁴⁵

Not only was J. T. Williams a good administrator, scholar, and athlete, but he also was a specialist in barbecue. The president loved to entertain after a Maryland State football game and barbecue "anything that will hold still." J. T. Williams' recipe for barbecue sauce was "1 quart vinegar; 1 quart tomato catsup; juice of 2 lemons; 1½ tablespoons dry mustard; 2 tablespoons of Worcestershire sauce; 3 tablespoons red pepper; 4 tablespoons black pepper; 3 tablespoons salt." Good for a twelve pound roast.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Annual Report of the President, 1957-1958, op. cit.

⁴⁶Baltimore Afro-American, September 29, 1959.

(President Williams made Maryland State College a relatively self-contained black community. Often complaining that the school was imprisoned by "an invisible wall of racism," Williams sought to make life for his students and faculty as pleasant as possible.) Social activities, academic exercises, and commemorative occasions tended to be a black reproduction of those activities that took place at College Park and white campuses in general. However, while organizations on white campuses like fraternities, sororities, and glee clubs tended towards the frivolous side, social life at Maryland State was pursued with great earnestness. Here in the encapsulated black community, Negroes could experiment, create, and occasionally fail without the supervision or censure of the white community.

Ironically this tightly knit black community would find itself transformed and profoundly influenced by the civil rights struggles of the late 1950's and early 1960's. The 1954 landmark decision of Brown vs. the Board of Education as well as subsequent litigation, would strike down segregated education and ultimately bring into question the need for a segregated system of higher education in the south. At first racial segregation in Somerset County went publically unchallenged. County residents prided themselves on the fact that Negroes "knew their place" in Princess Anne. Although black teachers were not harassed by the white community, Maryland State faculty members disliked

local merchants who habitually referred to them by their first name instead of their rank and surname. Also faculty members avoided Princess Anne on ~~Fri~~Friday and Saturday nights when local police were likely to arrest any black for being drunk and disorderly.⁴⁷

In 1964 the civil rights movement on campus marked the beginning of direct conflict between Maryland State and the town of Princess Anne. The difficulties arose over the white restaurants and the refusal of some of their owners to serve the black students from the College.

The previous summer eight out of nine restaurants in town agreed to serve blacks on an equal basis as whites. This was in response to the June 1963 racial disturbances in Cambridge, Maryland, fifty miles away. By the next February, however, the restaurant owners in Princess Anne "backslided" on their agreement to lower the racial barriers.⁴⁸ Under the leadership of John Wilson and the Student Appeal for Equality (SAFE), a group affiliated with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the students were determined to test the restaurants for service and organize protest marches. The basis for the students' actions was the failure of Somerset County to have a public accommodations law forbidding discrimination in hotels, motels, and restaurants.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Interview with Richard Thomas, June 1, 1976.

⁴⁸Washington Post, February 26, 1964.

⁴⁹Baltimore Evening Sun, February 24, 1964.

At the outset both students and ~~the~~ people sought to avoid violence. With troopers on hand, the students marched peacefully down Somerset Avenue to five restaurants. Three of the restaurants refused to serve them. The next day there were clashes, injuries, and arrests as two hundred demonstrators marched up to Tull's restaurant. A white man inside pushed his way out and the fight began. The upshot was that the white man got lost in the confusion and four demonstrators were arrested.⁵⁰

The next day a cross was burned on the Maryland State College's football practice field, and the home of John Wilson's uncle in Princess Anne was bombed.⁵¹ While all of the explosive actions were occurring, blacks and whites were trying to negotiate through Somerset County's Biracial Commission to end the demonstrations and integrate the restaurants. The students agreed to postpone their demonstrations and give the Biracial Commission time to get the restaurant owners to lower the racial bars. Many students were eager to get even after the bombing and cross-burning, but they heeded the advice of their student leaders to use restraint.⁵² At a midnight speech, President Williams reiterated the need to listen to those counseling peace and restraint. Although not activists in the local campaign to

⁵⁰Salisbury Daily Times, February 22, 1964. Baltimore Evening Sun, February 23, 1964.

⁵¹Baltimore Evening Sun, February 25, 1964. Washington Post, February 26, 1964.

⁵²Washington Post, February 25 and 26, 1964. Salisbury Daily Times, February 25, 1964.

desegregate public accommodations in Princess Anne, many Maryland State faculty members belonged to the local NAACP and worked in the local civil rights unit, "Men for Progress of Somerset County."⁵³

When negotiations broke down between SAFE and the Biracial Commission because the restaurant owners refused to budge, the moratorium on demonstrations by the students was lifted.⁵⁴ Alexander Jones, chairman of the commission decried the lack of cooperation the commission received from "County Commissioners, our delegates to the General Assembly, our state senator...."⁵⁵ As a result race relations in Princess Anne deteriorated to more violent confrontations. Princess Anne officials wired Governor Tawes to send the National Guard because they feared "a danger of widespread violence." Over three hundred marchers demonstrated anew in Princess Anne. This time the students sat down in the middle of Somerset Avenue (then Route 13) and the trouble began when approximately one hundred State troopers attempted to remove them from the highway.⁵⁶ Bricks, bottles, clubs, and acid were flying. State troopers used K-9 dogs and fire hoses to disperse the crowds. Many were cut, bruised, doused, and bitten by the dogs. In the words of the trooper who directed police activity, "there is nothing nonviolent about

⁵³Interview with Richard Thomas, June 1, 1976.

⁵⁴Washington Post, February 27, 1964.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Baltimore Evening Sun, February 26, 1964. New York Times, February 27, 1964.

this operation." Students retreated to the campus, and police moved up the dogs and fire hoses to confine them near the school. Over sixty youths were treated at the college infirmary and twenty seven were arrested.⁵⁷ Maryland State College was not shut down throughout all of the conflict. President Williams had his faculty meet their classes, although there were not many students attending. Princess Anne officials announced a curfew for the town for those under 21 to be off the streets between 9:15 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. Further demonstrations were then halted on the part of the students.⁵⁸

John Wilson led a group of thirty eight students from Maryland State College up to Annapolis to meet with Governor Tawes. The results of this meeting were that the Governor would use "all the powers of his office" to get all the state included in the Maryland public accommodation law and that police dogs would not be used unless actions degenerated into the riot stage.⁵⁹ Racial tension between Princess Anne and Maryland State College subsided after the February confrontations and college activities turned towards academic and athletic endeavors.

A new proposal was put forth for Maryland State to offer graduate work towards a masters degree in elementary

⁵⁷Washington Post, February 27, 1964. Baltimore Evening Sun, February 27, 1964. Salisbury Daily Times, March 2, 1964.

⁵⁸Baltimore Evening Sun, February 28, 1964. Salisbury Daily Times, February 28, 1964.

⁵⁹Baltimore Evening Sun, March 4, 1964. Salisbury Daily Times, March 5, 1964.

and secondary education with all course work "approved by the University of Maryland Graduate School Council." The Maryland State College campus would serve as the center for graduate study for the lower Eastern Shore counties. The program was initiated in September, 1965, when nine graduate courses were given.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, plans for continuing the program were shelved after a few years, and graduate course work was eliminated.

Maryland State again became a political issue when State Senator Verda Welcome of Baltimore's 4th District introduced a bill to change the name of the College to "Eastern Branch of the University of Maryland" and make it an integral part of the University. President Wilson Elkins of the University objected and opposed the Senator's bill on the grounds that it would jeopardize the accreditation of the entire university. He argued that approximately 50-60% of the students at Maryland State could not meet the entrance requirements of the University and if Maryland State failed to meet the accreditation standards, the whole university would lose its accreditation.⁶¹ Upon receiving a letter from the executive secretary of Middle States assuring that the name change would not jeopardize the accreditation of the University, President Elkins changed his stand. Nothing, however, came of the bill at this time.⁶²

⁶⁰Salisbury Daily Times, May 17, 1965, July 14, 1965. Maryland State College News, XXVII, No. 2, (March 1966).

⁶¹Salisbury Daily Times, February 28, 1966.

⁶²Ibid.

Before the fall term of 1966, President Williams complained about the "invisible walls" separating the college from the town of Princess Anne. He commented that since the school's beginning the residents of Princess Anne had isolated themselves from activities going on at the college. As one example, he noted that the Baltimore Symphony came down annually to perform and "not half a dozen white people from Princess Anne" came to the concerts.⁶³ Faculty from the college were forced to reside on campus, build their own homes, or live only in substandard housing that was available in Princess Anne. In addition, he lamented that the state college at Salisbury, twelve miles north of Princess Anne, was as invisible to Eastern Shore Negroes as Maryland State College was to white shore residents. It was indeed a pity that the lines of communication and interaction between the races were not fully developed.⁶⁴ J. T. Williams was particularly irked by the policy of the local movie house that confined blacks to the balcony while white sat in the orchestra. After failing to get a satisfactory response from the local theater owner, President Williams asked the students to boycott the movies. Shortly thereafter, campus movies were incorporated into the college schedule.⁶⁵

⁶³Baltimore Sun, August 10, 1966.

⁶⁴Baltimore Evening Sun, August 15, 1966. Salisbury Daily Times, September 7, 1966.

⁶⁵Interview with Richard Thomas, June 1, 1976.

In the next few months President Williams continued his attack on the constant neglect experienced by the college. This came as a result of the school's problems with the Board of Regents of the University of Maryland. President Williams was "under fire" from the Regents because a five year master plan requested by Middle States for the development of Maryland State was late in preparation and lacking in definite goals. The Board complained that President Williams dwelled too much on past problems and not enough on the future. Dr. Louis Kaplan, a board member, wanted to know, "What are the dreams of the college?"⁶⁶ Also the school had been without a full time dean for almost a year. The plan drawn up by President Williams was handed back for revision because it "lacked an over-all statement as to where the school fits into the total State program of higher education." The Regents also complained that Maryland States' standards were embarrassing to the University, and the school should either raise the standards to make it a branch of the University or abandon the school altogether. Other alternatives would be to relinquish control of the school to the State Board of Trustees of the State Colleges, make it a community college, or change it to a technical institute for job training.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Minutes of the University of Maryland, Board of Regents, March 17, 1967.

⁶⁷Baltimore Evening Sun, March 17 and 18, 1967.

Senator Verda Welcome came to the school's defense in Annapolis. She charged that the Regents "have allowed it to rot on the vine. They have channelled millions (dollars) to their other branches and programs at home and abroad...but only crumbs to Princess Anne." In addition, said Senator Welcome, the Regents treated Maryland State worse than a "stepchild."⁶⁸ (J. T. Williams added that every year the school suffered the fate of receiving less appropriations than any state institution.⁶⁹)

Students at the college became most upset and hints of striking circulated on campus. Meetings between President Williams and students clarified questions of the school's fate and things remained quiet.

In Annapolis, the Senate passed a resolution suggesting that Maryland State College become a branch of the University of Maryland and merge with Salisbury State College. The Legislative Council, the between session study arm of the General Assembly, was to report back on its findings. It was hoped that a merger of the two institutions would advance the educational system of the state. The two "schools would then have the advantage of concerted direction and control and could have expanded and outstanding educational facilities for the people on the Eastern Shore...."⁷⁰

⁶⁸Baltimore Afro-American, March 21, 1967.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Salisbury Daily Times, March 22, 1967. Baltimore Eveing Sun, March 22, 1967.

(In May, 1967, the Legislative Council came out with its decision that in the interests of higher education, it would be better "to retain the present relationship between the University of Maryland and Maryland State College and for Salisbury State College to continue as a component of the State College system.") Now that the Board of Regents and the administration at College Park were aware of the problems existing at Maryland State, they were "planning increased emphasis towards improvement of the facilities and the scholastic program there."⁷¹ In President Elkins' annual report on the "state" of the University of Maryland, he commented that "the plan, developed by a combined committee of faculty, administrators, and students recommends that a strong compensatory program be developed along with conventional baccalaureate curricula."⁷² For once it seemed as if the picture looked bright for Maryland State College. With President Elkins declaring that he wanted to make his branch on the Eastern Shore an integral part of the university system, President Williams hoped that Maryland State would no longer be regarded as a "stepchild."

Students, however, could complain that conditions on the campus were deteriorating. Their first objection was against the poor food preparation in the college cafeteria. In the spring term of 1968, they boycotted the cafeteria.

⁷¹Baltimore Evening Sun, May 24, 1967.

⁷²Report of the President, 1968-1969, op. cit.

Students also complained about the inadequate maintenance of school facilities. Dormitories were in a sad state of disrepair. They needed plastering, painting, fumigation, and other general maintenance. In addition, students felt that there were too many unnecessary school regulations. For example, those on campus objected to the 9:00 P.M. curfew for girls.⁷³ J. T. Williams agreed with the students that meals were not "outstanding."⁷⁴ Nothing could be done to remedy the situation because of the low board fee of the school. Maryland State charged \$445 for annual board, the third lowest in the nation, which amounted to a daily ration of \$1.33 per student. President Williams did, however, promise to employ a dietician for the school to enforce closer supervision of food preparation.⁷⁵ Also, he agreed to admit two students to the policy making Student Life Committee. The students were mollified for the time being.

Senator Welcome, at the request of the students, toured the campus to investigate their complaints. She was outraged about the "gross neglect" of Maryland State. She criticized the overall poor conditions of the physical plant and called for appropriations to construct a student union, dormitory, swimming pool, and to build bleacher seats.⁷⁶ Back in Annapolis, Senator Welcome tacked on an amendment for \$300,000 for constructing a swimming pool at

⁷³Baltimore Sun., February 23, 1968.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Baltimore Afro-American, March 16, 1968.

Princess Anne. The bill failed. A fellow senator who voted against the appropriation stated that "if they want to swim, they can use the Manokin River," which runs through Princess Anne.⁷⁷

At the end of the spring term, the students were again complaining about the poor physical plant conditions and discrimination in Princess Anne and Somerset County. This time they took their grievances to Governor Spiro Agnew. Students were justifiably upset about the lack of appropriations for a swimming pool. Indeed, Salisbury State College received planning funds for a pool "so it can attract more male students while Maryland State with a nationally recognized athletic program, has no pool."⁷⁸

Students also directed their grievances against the town of Princess Anne. Over five hundred students marched down the main street of Princess Anne. They rallied in front of the courthouse and then moved peacefully on without incident. State troopers were present. The demonstrators were protesting the hiring practices of the town's police and fire departments, a bank and a supermarket.⁷⁹

Governor Agnew requested a meeting with student representatives in Annapolis in a move to "avert any violence." Previously, Governor Agnew refused to meet with predominantly black Bowie State protesters in March and April when they were

⁷⁷Washington Post, March 22, 1968.

⁷⁸Baltimore Evening Sun, May 18, 1968.

⁷⁹Washington Post, May 21, 1968.

demonstrating. After the session, the Governor announced that his staff would "contact members of the political and economic community in Princess Anne to work toward solutions to problems."⁸⁰ Student leaders responded by calling a halt to further demonstrations.

Another controversy that was peacefully resolved between the campus and the community was the problem of allowing students to register to vote in Somerset County. Election officials maintained that those who could legally register had to have a home in the county and live there for six months. Those who lived in the dormitory did not meet the legal residence requirements. The use of absentee ballots was suggested as an alternative. Eventually election officials agreed to let those students on campus over twenty one and residents of the county to register.⁸¹ A further proof that the college was removing racial barriers and ending its isolation from the community was the fact that the campus was chosen to host the Delmarva Chicken Festival for 1970, an annual event on the Eastern Shore.⁸²

Racial and academic pressures increased at Maryland State College in 1969 as the school came under the scrutiny of the state legislature and the federal government. HEW ordered the state to come up with a desegregation plan for its colleges. Federal officials declared that the University

⁸⁰Ibid., Salisbury Daily Times, May 21, 1968.

⁸¹Baltimore Sun, October 6, 1968.

⁸²Salisbury Daily Times, November 28, 1969.

of Maryland Regents were "operating racially segregated schools." Surprisingly, white enrollments at Maryland State were on the rise. Out of 727 students, 127 or 17.4% were white. The faculty was even more integrated. Thirty nine black and twenty five or 38.4% ^{white} was the racial breakdown.⁸³ The Board of Regents, fearful of losing federal monies, appointed a committee to "study the feasibility, cost, and consequences of developing Maryland State College as an integral part of the University." The appointed Committee consisted of thirty nine persons chosen from the faculty, administration, and student body of Maryland State College and the University of Maryland's campuses under Dr. Franklin L. Burdette, Director, Bureau of Governmental Research and Professor of Government and Politics. By bringing Maryland State into the university system, enrollments would increase and the school would no longer be considered a "Negro" college.⁸⁴ The Eastern Shore college would have an image of providing the community with an academically sound curriculum. The State Senate gave preliminary approval to change the name and status of Maryland State College to the University of Maryland, Princess Anne campus. The hoped for change "might prompt the State to provide additional funds for the...school."⁸⁵ President

⁸³ Washington Post, March 11, 1969. Salisbury Daily Times, March 16, 1969.

⁸⁴ Salisbury Daily Times, February 2, 1969, March 16, 1969.

⁸⁵ Washington Post, March 20, 1969.

President Williams' chief criticism was the failure of the University and the State to provide adequate funds to operate and improve the Princess Anne campus.⁸⁶ Here was a branch campus with a president who had no control over the all-important budget. It was only recently that Maryland State really received any significant funding for improvement and expansion. J. T. Williams took a share of the blame when he stated that he should have protested more vigorously when his campus' budgets were slashed.⁸⁷

The 1969 "Maryland State College Study and Report" called for a general expansion of the college in terms of a growth in the physical plant, enrollments, and an upgrade and change in the curricula. The study was based on a projected student body of 3,000. Education requirements would be strengthened, but the college would not neglect its responsibility of providing compensatory education to the disadvantaged. More emphasis would be placed on mathematics, and computer science, social and behavioral sciences, and life and environmental sciences.⁸⁸

Conclusions reached by the "Feasibility Committee" were positive in integrating Maryland State into the university system for various reasons. The legal obligation

⁸⁶Diamondback, April 16, 1969.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸"Maryland State College, Study and Report: Committee to Study the Feasibility, Cost and Consequences of Developing Maryland State College as an Integral Part of the University." Mimeograph, 1969, p. 9.

was of utmost importance since Maryland State's status as a land grant institution was still in effect. The historical and honorable factor must be considered, too, since Maryland State had been a part of the university system for almost eighty years. Political reasons could not be overlooked. With Maryland State College counted as part of the university system, HEW could not complain about the racial state of the university.⁸⁹ And, altruistically, here would be a "golden opportunity" to perform an educational feat. The committee also determined that it would be economically feasible to accomplish the change since a minimum amount of resources, calculated at about 1% of state funds, would be all that was necessary. Practically, too, was considered. It is much easier to solve the racial imbalance by "diluting pure black with white, than trying to find enough blacks to dilute pure white." And, finally, Maryland gubernatorial and state politics looked with favor on higher education.⁹⁰

The plan was not without its critics. Most objections centered on the fact that the standards at Maryland State were too low for that of a university and the facilities and academic programs were too limited. The Board of Regents, however, voted "tentatively" to favor the recommendations. And in February of 1970, the Regents voted to accept Maryland State College as an equal branch

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 77.

⁹⁰Ibid.

campus provided that entrance requirements become the same as the other campuses.⁹¹ The university would increase its budget for Princess Anne and the state would provide more funding, too. The new branch would have a chancellor at the helm and a change in its academic thrust. This was to take effect as of July 1, 1970. The school at Princess Anne had come a long way since its humble beginnings over eighty years ago. The school and J. T. Williams, however, would face a final trauma before it became a university.⁹²

Student rights and the rites of spring once again brought turmoil to the campus. On April 7, 1970, a total of 178 students were arrested after staging demonstrations on campus protesting conditions at the school and demanding the resignation of President Williams.⁹³ Their main grievances were "inadequate facilities, including laboratories, equipment and building maintenance; the president's reported dismissal of at least two faculty members whom the students supported; an inflexible curriculum and the need for more diversified courses...and...an active black studies program."⁹⁴ Also on their list was the removal of vending machines and their replacement with a snack bar. At first the students occupied the main administration building, when President Williams and some of his staff had locked themselves in at the start of the sit-in. Police came on campus,

⁹¹Salisbury Daily Times, September 29 and 30, 1969, February 18, 1970.

⁹²Salisbury Daily Times, February 18, 1970.

⁹³Salisbury Daily Times, April 7, 1970.

⁹⁴Baltimore Evening Sun, April 8, 1970.

released the people, and arrested ninety six students on trespassing and disorderly conduct charges. A few hours later, police arrested eighty two additional students who had massed at J. T. Williams' home.⁹⁵ President Williams had agreed to meet with the Student Council but was verbally insulted as he approached the administration building, and he refused to speak with them after hearing such abusive language.

The demonstrations and arrests brought the issues before the public. Students drew up a report entitled, "Demands and Recommendations from the Maryland State College Student Body," to be submitted to the college Administrative Council listing their grievances in detail. After criticizing virtually every aspect of the college, the students attacked President Williams "because he no longer has the confidence of the students at the institution, nor any perception of the students' needs."⁹⁶ The report noted that while President Williams might have had the qualities in the past, he "lacks imagination, perceptiveness, and foresight to lead Maryland State College...to meet the demands of a majority of Black Students."⁹⁷ Students enlisted the aid of alumni, parents, and politicians in their call for removal of President Williams. State Senator Clarence Mitchell,

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶"Demands and Recommendations from the Maryland State College Student Body," Typescript copy, April 19, 1970, p. III.

⁹⁷Ibid.

(D-Baltimore City), supported the students and Secretary of State, Blair Lee, called President Williams "autocratic." Governor Mandel, Secretary Lee, students, alumni, and parents met in Annapolis to discuss the situation and to form a committee for the improvement of Maryland State. The Governor acknowledged that the college's problems were partially financial and partially a question of leadership. Governor Mandel "all but assured students that President Williams would not be named chancellor of the college when the new system was instituted."⁹⁸ Delegate Carlton Dize of Somerset County supported J. T. Williams and defended him against the Governor's committee. Delegate Dize praised President Williams' administration and noted that for his twenty three year tenure "in spite of an unenthusiastic Board of Regents and Maryland Legislature, he has fought for and guided the growth of the college to its present status...."⁹⁹

In May the issues were resolved. Fortunately for those students who were arrested, they were found not guilty and received no criminal records. And, John Taylor Williams announced his retirement as of August 1, 1970, claiming that he was past sixty five years of age.¹⁰⁰ Presiding over the most formative years of the school's history, J. T. Williams lived to see the school become an integral part of the university system.

⁹⁸Salisbury Daily Times, April 30, 1970. Washington Post, April 30, 1970.

⁹⁹Baltimore Sun, May 14, 1970.

¹⁰⁰Minutes of the University of Maryland, Board of Regents, June 26, 1970.

In retrospect, J. T. Williams had outlived his usefulness at Maryland State College. A stern and enigmatic man, President Williams had administered the college in a strict and often puritanical manner. A decade of civil rights agitation and the many changes in higher education in general in the 1960's rendered Williams an anachronism. In Williams' last months as president of the institution, the faculty had been bitterly divided on the issue of his leadership of the college. Several faculty members disassociated themselves from Williams when it became clear that the "ship was sinking." Others defended their President passionately.

In spite of the gloom, there was time for an occasional optimistic reflection. J. T. Williams as a man and as an educator had been accepted by the Eastern Shore. Appointed to numerous commissions and on the Board of Directors of Peninsula General Hospital, Williams was able to play an important role in enhancing community life for both whites and blacks on Delmarva.

When the school at Princess Anne became an integral part of the University of Maryland in 1970, it could trace its history for over eighty years through various stages of development. Beginning as a preparatory school, the institution successfully evolved into an academy, junior college, four year college, and university division. The administrative affairs of the school were under the control of both church and state. In addition, the sources of

income and support were furnished through private contributions, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and state and federal governments. As a land grant school, this Eastern Shore college attempted, often with great difficulty, to provide the black citizens of Maryland with training in agriculture, sciences, and the liberal arts. It also contributed greatly to public education in the state through its teacher education programs. In final analysis, the school's history had been marked by both triumph and tragedy. Its destiny has often seemed uncertain. As an historical case study, this college is an excellent example of the deleterious forces of racism and institutional neglect.

The future of black higher education in the South generally, and in Maryland in particular, will be determined by the state legislatures and the federal government. The story of the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore illustrates in many respects the ambivalent attitude of both agencies towards black education. Throughout the South, the 1890 land grant institutions have attempted since 1954 to form a common front to secure more equitable funding and public recognition. These schools have succeeded in obtaining funds for institutional development and research. Whether southern legislatures, such as Maryland, will continue to preserve this historic identity of the 1890 land grant colleges is a hotly contested question.

Meanwhile, the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore and its fellow 1890 institutions can take comfort in the fact that their intense commitment to their students and their land grant mission has contributed greatly to expanding opportunities in higher education *for all.*

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APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Thesis: THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF A BLACK LAND
GRANT COLLEGE: THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND,
EASTERN SHORE, 1886-1970

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Master of Arts, 1976

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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: The Historical Evolution of a Black Land
Grant College: The University of Maryland,
Eastern Shore, 1886-1970

Ruth Eilen Wennersten, Master of Arts, 1976

Thesis directed by: J. Kirkpatrick Flack, Associate Professor,
Department of History

During the period 1886-1970 the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore evolved from a small Methodist training institute for Negroes to a full-fledged campus of the state university system. While the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore has had several names in its history, it has remained primarily a land grant institution operating under the authority of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890. Throughout its history the school has been moulded and influenced by the prevalent racial climate of Maryland and the South. The University of Maryland, Eastern Shore has provided students with an inexpensive education and an entry to the professions and has survived as an institution of higher education despite the fact that until recently the State of Maryland neglected to fulfill its legal and moral obligation to provide adequate funding and planning for the school.