Mr. and Mrs. Taylor Kennerly are pictured with bulldog “Tiger” in the 1930s.

Happy birthday, Trinity High School

BY DAN WARREN

TRINITY

On Saturday, Aug. 6, Trinity High School celebrates its 125th birthday.

In the 1830s Margaret Mendenhall Leach was teaching her children and those of her friends, neighbors, and relatives in her home. As the number of students grew, four of the community fathers pooled their monies and energies and built a school on John Brown’s land (the present-day Surrett Drive), appropriately named Brown’s Schoolhouse, and hired Brantley York as the teacher. In May 1840 the school moved to what is now the site of Braxton Craven School. Brantley York soon quit; and Braxton Craven, his assistant, was put in charge of the school.

After various incarnations — Union Institute (the joint effort of the local Methodists and Quakers) and Normal College (in which control of the school was turned over to the state and the school became the first state-accredited teachers’ college) — control was given to the Methodist Conference; and the name was changed to Trinity College, with the community and post office taking its name.

After surviving the Civil War and the death of longtime president

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Craven, the Methodist Conference and the college trustees decided to accept an offer from Durham businessman Julian Carr and the Duke to only, the college was moved to the more urban setting of Durham. A preparatory school—the Trinity High School Department of Trinity College—was established in the college building.

In honor of the school's anniversary, Trinity High School is planning various commemorative activities over the year. What follows is a timeline of notable dates in the history of Trinity High School. Please note, due to the uncountable sports championships and tournaments won by various sports and academic groups over the decades, these are not included in the timeline.

1891 On August 6, 1891, the Trinity High School Department of Trinity College opens with Professor W. W. Berks as the headmaster. It is housed in Trinity College building, which the college was moved to Durham. The further separation of the Randolph County towns from the relocated school, the name of the community is officially changed from "Trinity College" to "Trinity County".

1893 George DeWitt Whitley, grandson of Braxton Craven, long-time president of Trinity College, had been born and raised in the Randolph County community but his family followed the college to Durham, where he graduated in 1895 and completed graduate work in 1897. He returned to Randolph County and became the principal of Trinity High School. The school building, now known by York's Columbia University, eventually becoming known as the science and physics department in the 19th century, he was personally involved in the work of Franklin Roosevelt to continue the study of the use of atomic energy. To be a "Trinity Preparatory School," the school was formally opened by the assistant principal and the chapel was named "Trinity." The school was recognized by the State of North Carolina as a public high school in 1900. The Randolph County Board of Education leases the former community hall and grounds from the college in 1900-1910 Trinity High School. A new building is constructed in 1902 from 1902 to 1908 a private school, under the patronage of the Episcopal Church. The school is housed in the college buildings. This school was abandoned by the Methodists as a church school for signs of the times point to future development of preparatory schools, not along the lines of church but of state schools.

1916 The eleventh grade is added.

1919 The Trinity High School Department of Trinity College opens with Professor W. W. Berks as the headmaster. It is housed in Trinity College building, which the college was moved to Durham. The further separation of the Randolph County towns from the relocated school, the name of the community is officially changed from "Trinity College" to "Trinity County".

1920-1921 A new building is constructed in 1902 from 1902 to 1908 a private school, under the patronage of the Episcopal Church. The school is housed in the college buildings. This school was abandoned by the Methodists as a church school for signs of the times point to future development of preparatory schools, not along the lines of church but of state schools.

1921 The first football game is played.

1923 The school becomes an officially recognized school by the state of North Carolina.

1925 The school becomes a four-year high school.

1926 The school becomes a five-year high school.

1927 The school becomes a six-year high school.

1928 The school becomes a seven-year high school.

1929 The school becomes an eight-year high school.

1930 The school becomes a nine-year high school.

1931 The school becomes a ten-year high school.

1932 The school becomes an eleven-year high school.

1933 The school becomes a twelve-year high school.

1934 The school becomes a thirteen-year high school.

1935 The school becomes a fourteen-year high school.

1936 The school becomes a fifteen-year high school.

1937 The school becomes a sixteen-year high school.

1938 The school becomes a seventeen-year high school.

1939 The school becomes an eighteen-year high school.

1940 The school becomes a nineteen-year high school.

1941 The school becomes a twenty-year high school.

1942 The school becomes a twenty-one-year high school.

1943 The school becomes a twenty-two-year high school.

1944 The school becomes a twenty-three-year high school.

1945 The school becomes a twenty-four-year high school.

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1948 The school becomes a twenty-seven-year high school.

1949 The school becomes a twenty-eight-year high school.

1950 The school becomes a twenty-nine-year high school.

1951 The school becomes a thirty-year high school.

1952 The school becomes a thirty-one-year high school.

1953 The school becomes a thirty-two-year high school.

1954 The school becomes a thirty-three-year high school.

1955 The school becomes a thirty-four-year high school.

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1957 The school becomes a thirty-six-year high school.

1958 The school becomes a thirty-seven-year high school.

1959 The school becomes a thirty-eight-year high school.

1960 The school becomes a thirty-nine-year high school.

1961 The school becomes a forty-year high school.

1962 The school becomes a forty-one-year high school.

1963 The school becomes a forty-two-year high school.

1964 The school becomes a forty-three-year high school.

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1989 The school becomes a sixty-eight-year high school.

1990 The school becomes a sixty-nine-year high school.

1991 The school becomes a seventy-year high school.

1992 The school becomes a seventy-one-year high school.

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1995 The school becomes a seventy-four-year high school.

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1999 The school becomes a seventy-eight-year high school.

2000 The school becomes a seventy-nine-year high school.

2001 The school becomes an eighty-year high school.

2002 The school becomes an eighty-one-year high school.

2003 The school becomes an eighty-two-year high school.

2004 The school becomes an eighty-three-year high school.

2005 The school becomes an eighty-four-year high school.

2006 The school becomes an eighty-five-year high school.

2007 The school becomes an eighty-six-year high school.

2008 The school becomes an eighty-seven-year high school.

2009 The school becomes an eighty-eight-year high school.

2010 The school becomes an eighty-nine-year high school.

2011 The school becomes a ninety-year high school.

2012 The school becomes a ninety-one-year high school.

2013 The school becomes a ninety-two-year high school.

2014 The school becomes a ninety-three-year high school.

2015 The school becomes a ninety-four-year high school.

2016 The school becomes a ninety-five-year high school.

2017 The school becomes a ninety-six-year high school.

2018 The school becomes a ninety-seven-year high school.

2019 The school becomes a ninety-eight-year high school.

2020 The school becomes a ninety-nine-year high school.

2021 The school becomes a one-hundred-year high school.
1958 School colors are changed to Columbia blue, white, and red.

1960 The investiture (capping) ceremony is introduced to THS by Mrs. Betsy Baker Cumby.

1962 Another addition is opened, connected to the 1951 building by a breezeway. It houses new shop and home economics areas and additional classrooms.

1966 Integration is accomplished, and the first black students are graduated. A group of community parents instigate a drive to call for a vote for a special supplemental school tax, exclusively for the Archdale/Trinity attendance district. It is voted in, and the monies generated annually continue to support and improve the local schools.

1969 A new high school campus is opened on nearby land purchased from the Younts family. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades are moved to the new Trinity Senior High School. The four-building school is called "an educational town," laid out like a college campus. The old campus becomes Trinity Junior High School.

1970 The THS choral department presents "The Sound of Music," under the direction of Mr. Joe Gamble and accompanied by Kathy Farlow, the first in what is to become the longest run of high school musicals in the state. The cast includes Deborah Hohn, Bob Spencer, Brenda Hall, Woody Hicks, DW Coggins, and Bonnie McElhanon.


1976 The ninth-grade is moved to the senior high.

1977 The 1924 building is closed.

1981 The 1924 building is razed. A memorial gazebo is constructed near the site, using eight of the ten columns used in the auditoriums of both the college building and the 1924 building. The last two columns were traded to Duke University for the original college bell, which is housed and displayed in the gazebo. Also included in the design are two iron urns that had flanked the entrance to the older section of the college building.

1996 The THS Class of 1997 introduces the tradition of "Senior blocks," allowing seniors to paint the individual concrete blocks in the arcade into "Senior wall," building class unity and respect.

1997 The City of Trinity re-incorporates with Dean Spinks as its first mayor. A mural is unveiled on the Braxton Craven School campus: the image is a photo album, representing education, with various images of Trinity's past "pasted" in the book.

2009 Due to overcrowding at THS, a new high school is opened in the Archdale/Trinity attendance district. While there was much consternation at the time, the friendly competition has only proven to make both schools stronger.

2014 Basketball coach Tim Kelly celebrates his 500th win. 2015 Soccer coach Mike Sink celebrates his 700th win.

2016 Trinity High School celebrates her 125th birthday on Aug. 6.