

= Henry Martin Tupper =

Henry Martin Tupper D.D. (April 11 , 1831 ? November 12 , 1893) was a Baptist minister who founded Shaw University in Raleigh , North Carolina . Beginning with bible and literacy classes in December 1865 , it was the first university established for African Americans following the end of the civil war , and the oldest historically black college and university (HBCU) in the Southern United States , as well as one of the oldest co @-@ educational universities in the country . When the institute moved into a new building in 1871 , it was renamed as Shaw Collegiate Institute in honor of a major donor . Tupper served as the University 's first president from its founding until his death in 1893 .

= = Early life and military career = =

Henry Martin Tupper was born on April 11 , 1831 to Earl and Permellia Norris Tupper and raised on a farm in Monson , Massachusetts . He was the eldest of nine children . His grandfather , Ezra Tupper , and great @-@ grandfather , William Tupper , had both fought for the colonies in the American Revolutionary War . His paternal ancestry has been linked to a family of prominent Lutheran dissenters who left Germany and settled in England during the reign of Henry VIII . He was a distant relative of Martin Farquhar Tupper , an English poet of the 19th century . Clergyman Thomas Tupper , an ancestor of Henry Martin Tupper , emigrated from England to Barbados in the early 17th century . He later helped found the town of Sandwich , Massachusetts .

Neither of his parents were practicing Christians nor did Martin attend church as a child . He received little formal education until he turned eighteen , when he enrolled in Monson Academy . He converted to Christianity while at the Academy . In order to fund his continuing education , he took a job as a school teacher in New Jersey , where he was baptised in a nearby Baptist church . Later he joined a congregation in Wales , Massachusetts , near his hometown of Monson .

Tupper attended Amherst College and graduated in 1859 . He received his divinity degree from Newton Theological Institute in 1862 . While at school , he organized bible studies for African @-@ American youth . He also worked as a missionary among recent immigrants in Boston as part of his training . He had planned to serve as a missionary to Africa , however the Civil War intervened . Shortly after being ordained as a minister , he enlisted in the Union Army . Though his education would have qualified him for a military commission , there were no openings in the officer corps , so he enlisted as a soldier .

Tupper was assigned to the Army of the Potomac , Ninth Corps , under the command of Ambrose Burnside . He participated in the Battle of Fredericksburg . He was transferred to General Sherman 's Fifteenth Corps in time for the Vicksburg Campaign . He was injured at the Battle of Jackson .

Though Tupper was not an officer , he frequently served as a chaplain , ministering to sick and injured soldiers , and organizing prayer meetings and bible studies among soldiers . While in the army , he became acquainted with the plight of African @-@ American slaves . This inspired his later work .

= = Marriage and family = =

On January 25 , 1864 he married Sarah Baker Leonard of Stafford , Connecticut . She later joined him in his work , helping teach freedwomen as he taught the men . They had two children , Elizabeth Caroline and Edward Leonard Tupper . Sarah 's older brother Judson Wade Leonard , a successful businessman in woolen textiles , helped support Shaw University financially . The medical school was named for him .

= = Founder and president of Shaw University = =

After the Civil War , Tupper was commissioned by the Home Mission Society to act as a missionary to freed slaves in the American South . Discharged from the Union Army on July 14 , 1865 , he and

his wife Sarah departed for Raleigh , North Carolina on October 1 to begin his work . Traveling via train through Portsmouth , Virginia , they had delays due to extensive damage to the rail network caused by the Civil War ; they arrived in Raleigh on October 10 . The Tupper's began working among the freedmen . He procured food and clothing from the Freedman 's Bureau to help support the many homeless black men in Raleigh .

On December 1 , 1865 , Tupper began teaching bible study classes to freedmen in the Guion Hotel (located where the North Carolina Museum of History is now located) . This first bible class marks the traditional foundation date of Shaw University . He used the class as an opportunity to teach the freedmen to read and write , encouraging them to become Baptist ministers , and start their own congregations . In March 1866 , Sarah Tupper began teaching freedwomen in similar classes .

Having outgrown his temporary location at the Guion Hotel , Tupper purchased a plot of land , using \$ 500 saved from his military service . On the plot , located at the corner of Blount and Cabarrus streets in Raleigh , he constructed a two @-@ story timber building to serve as both a school and church . He named this the Raleigh Institute ; it was the first permanent home what would develop as Shaw University . The Home Mission Society and the Freedman 's Bureau jointly provided funding for the Institute .

As the school grew , Tupper searched for more space . Nearby to the south was the estate of Paul Barringer , the patriarch of a prominent North Carolina political dynasty . When the land came up for sale , Martin Tupper raised \$ 13 @,@ 000 for its purchase , mostly from private donors solicited personally by Tupper . The largest single donor was Elijah Shaw , a resident of Wales , Massachusetts , who donated \$ 5 @,@ 000 .

In his honor , the first building on the new campus was named Shaw Hall , and the school was renamed the Shaw Collegiate Institute . Tupper and his students and faculty moved into their new location in 1871 . Expansion proceeded quickly , as the first men 's dormitory opened in 1872 , and the first women 's dormitory , Estey Hall (named for another Northern benefactor , Jacob Estey of Brattleboro , Vermont) , opened in 1874 .

Under Tupper 's leadership , the school became chartered by the state as a university in 1875 . It added a medical and pharmacy program (Leonard Medical School) in 1881 , and a law program in 1888 . Each of these programs were the first of their kind for African @-@ American students . Note : Howard University , a historically black university , dates its law school to 1869 , when a law department was established by John Mercer Langston .

Tupper 's role as the founder of the first university dedicated to educating freedmen attracted opposition . During the Reconstruction era , his home was burned to the ground by the Ku Klux Klan . He and his wife fled and hid in a nearby cornfield . In 1870 the trustees of the local Second Baptist Church of Raleigh sued Tupper on charges of defrauding its members in relation to his fundraising for Shaw College . The suit was settled in his favor in 1875 .

= = Death = =

Tupper died on November 12 , 1893 following a prolonged illness . His funeral was reportedly one of the most attended in the history of Raleigh to that time . Tupper was buried on the campus in front of Shaw Hall .