

Mr. Shaw and Mr. Hannah

ROBERT SIDNEY SHAW WAS A NATURAL CHOICE TO BECOME THE new president of Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science in 1928. He had already served three times as interim president—during the six-month gap between Frank Kedzie’s and David Friday’s presidencies; during the interval between Friday’s and Kenyon Butterfield’s presidencies; and while Butterfield was on leave in 1928. None were easy times. Kedzie left because many at the college believed new leadership was needed; Friday left after being accused of traveling with his female research assistant on college business; and Butterfield resigned after being charged with cronyism and poor financial management.

PRESIDENT BUTTERFIELD

In 1924, Kenyon Butterfield had seemed a good fit for the presidency of the small agricultural college in East Lansing. Born in 1868 in Lapeer, Michigan, he had received a bachelor of science degree from the State Agricultural College in 1891 and a master’s degree from the University of Michigan in 1903. He had also served as secretary of the college, as superintendent of the Michigan Farmer’s Institute, and as a field agent for the school. He was appointed to the presidency of Rhode Island College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in 1903 and assumed the top position at Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1910, receiving an LL.D. from that school the same year. Butterfield was considered a “rural sociologist,” concerned about a wide range of agricultural issues, not just the technical side of planting and harvesting crops or raising healthy animals. His speaking and writing combined a little religion with some philosophical questions



Kenyon Butterfield graduated from Michigan Agricultural College in 1891 and served as the school's president from 1924 to 1928. Butterfield Hall, a dormitory in the Brody Residence Hall Complex, is named for him. Courtesy of MSU Archives and Historical Collections.

and a sprinkling of sociological jargon, unlike the more practical public musings of his former teacher at the State Agricultural College, William James Beal. Butterfield began a 1909 agriculture lecture at the Harvard Theological Seminary with the words, "When Jesus announced to the hearts overburdened with the cares of the daily toil that the birds of the heaven and the lilies of the field are the patterns for our industry, we can hardly believe that he intended to encourage thriftlessness or to abolish labor for bread. He was seeking to give proper proportion to human desires. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? are age-long queries. When men come to the full life of the spirit and when human justice is supreme, no doubt the ideal of Jesus will be realized and these questions will become incidental or at least subordinated to the quest for righteousness, and perhaps will be answered with less of sweat and toil than now."

It was not Butterfield's rhetorical gift that got him in trouble at Michigan Agricultural College but rather John D. Willard and John Phelan, friends and employees of Butterfield in Massachusetts whom he had urged to come to East Lansing and had given significant administrative responsibility. Both received bigger salaries than other senior administrators at the college, which caused resentment among many veteran faculty members. In addition, Butterfield was accused of mismanaging the college's budget, of conducting college business in secrecy, and of advocating continuing education programs for which the college lacked adequate funding. Butterfield quickly lost the support of the State Board of Agriculture, the college's governing board, and came under attack in Michigan's newspapers. In the early spring of 1928, the board seized control of the college budget while Butterfield was abroad on a visit to the Holy Land. In April 1928, the *State Journal* predicted that Butterfield would have no choice but to resign and claimed much of the credit for exposing the problems: "Investigation by the press, notably by *The State Journal*, was the most powerful factor in the solution of the tangled internal affairs of Michigan State College. [The board] made the resignation of President Kenyon Leech Butterfield almost imperative; politely eliminated President Butterfield's two 'vice presidents'; and effected salary economies of similar kind all along the line, throughout the faculty and administrative staff."

SHAW TAKES CHARGE

On 22 May the State Board of Agriculture unanimously accepted Butterfield's resignation and named Robert Shaw as Michigan State College's fourth president in thirteen years. "There are greater problems confronting the institution today than ever before in my twenty-six years of experience," Shaw declared upon accepting the position. "The presidency is a radical change for my plans for later life, but if I can be of any service to the institution, I am glad to do it."

A Canadian, Shaw had earned a bachelor's degree at Ontario Agricultural College (later Guelph University) in 1893 and had spent the next five years managing his father's farm in Woodburn, Ontario. He emigrated to the United States in 1898 to become an assistant professor of agriculture and animal husbandry at Montana State College, and four years later moved to the State Agricultural College, where he was appointed dean of agriculture in 1908. When he assumed the presidency, the college was running a deficit of about sixty-five thousand dollars; a year later, however, MSC boasted a reserve of around one hundred thousand dollars. The new president's talent for keeping costs under control was less important than his ability to cut weak programs and approve only new courses of study that seemed essential to the college's well-being.

Shaw also proved adept at raising funds by encouraging gifts to the college. In early 1938, MSC received five hundred thousand dollars from the Horace H. Rackham and Mary A. Rackham Fund, at the time the largest private grant the school had ever received. The money was earmarked for conducting research in agriculture with the aim of finding special industrial uses, other than food, for farm produce. During the 1937-38 school year, the college received a variety of other gifts, including six thousand dollars for entomology, four thousand dollars for sugar-beet research, nine hundred dollars for research in food preservation, and five hundred dollars for a fellowship in agricultural economics. Fred Jenison of Lansing donated flags for the band, the Detroit unit of the Women's Farm and Garden Society gave a stone sundial, and President Shaw provided more than two thousand trees to the college to "add more beauty to the campus."

After assuming the presidency, Shaw worked to transform the college's administrative structure, placing a bevy of new men and

women in charge of key areas. After two stints as acting dean, Henry Bernard Dirks became dean of the engineering department in 1931. Dirks had come to East Lansing from Princeton University in 1919 and had served as East Lansing's mayor in 1928–29. During his first few years in office, Shaw also appointed Marie Dye as dean of home economics, Harold Smith Patton as head of economics, Everett Lewis Austin as acting dean of education, Elisabeth Conrad as dean of women, Joseph Cox as dean of agriculture, and Victor Gardner as head of the Extension Service. The *MSC Record* applauded Shaw's choices, proclaiming, "No one can say that President Shaw's appointments have not lived up to expectations and more. From home economics to athletics and from agriculture to a dean of women the individuals finally decided upon by the administration to fill the jobs have all been masters of their subjects not only in sound knowledge but in many cases have been able to lend inspirational guidance to their particular departments that is daily putting Michigan State more and more along the highway of continued success and prosperity."

Shaw also had to replace MSC institution Linda E. Landon, who in 1932 retired after forty years as head librarian. Shaw chose Jackson E. Towne, a Milwaukee native who held degrees from both Harvard University and the University of Illinois and who had previously served as head of the library at Peabody College in Tennessee. Towne remained at Michigan State until his retirement in 1959.

Towne was a meticulous administrator, often penning somewhat dull but detailed accounts of library activities. His history of the library written in the early 1960s offers extensive detail about his administration's committees, circulation procedures, ordering philosophies, and cataloging methods. He also provided valuable insight into Michigan State's faculty and student body. For example, he documented a 1936 survey of the reading habits of male MSC students that appeared in *Christian Education* magazine:

Sixty-five and a half per cent read no books at all during the college year outside their assignments. Of this number, 67.5 per cent read some during vacations, which leaves from one-fifth to one-quarter of the men of the college never reading at all except when compelled to by class assignments. Those who do read spend about half of their time with novels, merely to "while away the



President Robert Shaw receives congratulations on his tenth anniversary as president of Michigan State College. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.

time." Of the other books read the types mentioned particularly were biography, history, and world affairs. Seventy-eight [percent] of the men students read magazines. The magazine most read, interestingly enough, is *Collier's*, having almost twice the popularity of the next highest magazines in our count, the *American* and *Saturday Evening Post*. Then comes *Reader's Digest*, with about 10 percent reading it from time to time. About 4 percent read *Harper's* regularly or occasionally, 2 percent the *Atlantic Monthly*, with all sorts of other magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Christian Century*, *Review of Reviews*, having their one or two readers per hundred men students.

Towne apparently believed that students should be reading more, and early in his tenure he wrote a library handbook to be distributed to all entering freshmen. The back of the handbook offered students some suggestions:

1. Take time regularly each week to read books on some subjects entirely outside of your regular work.
2. Make the acquaintance of some of the standard magazines which you never read before.
3. Throughout your college course learn to use books as tools and as sources of information. Such knowledge will always be of value in countless ways.

4. Learn to know books as friends. Experience the pleasure of reading and the inspiration that can come from intimate contact with the greatest minds of all ages.

By 1938, when Shaw completed his tenth year as president, the *MSC Record* declared his tenure a resounding success. During the preceding school year, Michigan State had enrolled a record 5,547 students from forty-one states and eight foreign countries. The school had gained membership in the American Association of Universities in 1931. Shaw's choices for dean of men and dean of women, Mitchell and Conrad, had performed admirably in their positions, the *Record* said, helping to create an atmosphere in which there had been "no serious campus disciplinary problems" during the previous few years. Shaw had also implemented a retirement system for faculty members.

THE SCANDAL OF 1932

The biggest change during Shaw's early years may have been precipitated by rumors of scandal at the highest levels of college administration. In early 1932, East Lansing resident Sara R. Fagan, an honors graduate of the University of Michigan, a member of Phi Beta Kappa Society, and an observer and writer on government and politics in Lansing for fourteen years, sent newspapers statewide a series of stories criticizing Michigan State. Fagan urged the publications' editors to print the stories, to use her byline, and to pay her one dollar for each story used. "They should prove valuable in building up circulation for any newspaper," she suggested. "Their main purpose, however, is to clean up a disgraceful, if not criminal, situation and restore State College to the place it once held in the life of Michigan and the world of education." At issue were alleged improprieties in the music department, conflicts of interest related to board members and college officials, possible illegal real estate deals, and illegal transactions between a college official and an East Lansing bank where college payroll funds were deposited.

Other observers were also concerned. The State Board of Agriculture asked special assistant attorney general Joseph Baldwin to

investigate on the board's behalf. In addition, five Ingham County residents requested that a grand jury be formed to investigate irregularities at the college. Several legislators also became interested. Baldwin found no wrongdoing and put out a 25 November 1932 press release in which he heaped praise on MSC. "It is the consensus of opinion that once the present difficulty is cleared up, the College stands on the eve of its greatest development. I have found a remarkable spirit of loyalty to the present administration, headed by President Robert S. Shaw." The faculty is largely "made up of trained, conscientious educators who are disturbed by the present situation only through a realization of the damage that can be done by careless charges and unfounded gossip." Leland W. Carr, an Ingham County circuit court judge, served as a one-man grand jury and also found no evidence of "the commission of any criminal offense" by college officials.

Although the college had been exonerated, three MSC employees were terminated in late November 1932: agricultural school dean Joseph Cox, supervisor of publications James Hasselman, and college historian and former president Frank S. Kedzie. According to a statement issued by Shaw,

Readjustments in the personnel of the staff of Michigan State College have become imperative for the reason that some individuals have aided in the constant circulation of rumors, criticisms and charges, both on and off campus, over a period of some months, which have been proven by the investigation of a grand jury and the office of the attorney general to be essentially without foundation or justification. These conditions have persisted despite repeated requests and warnings from the administration which has waited patiently even in the face of un-kept promises until now some corrective action must be taken. The continued repetition of these unfounded rumors, criticisms and charges against both members of the board and the faculty resulted in seriously affecting the morale of the staff, destroying harmonious relationships and engendering a spirit of distrust and unrest inimical to the best interests of the college. These conditions can no longer be tolerated.

Some Michigan newspapers suggested that the terminations were too harsh, but Shaw enjoyed widespread support on campus.

The student council passed a resolution expressing “confidence in the integrity and ability of the governing officers at this school,” and numerous deans and professors met on 28 January 1933 and released an open letter to Shaw expressing their support of the administration. The statement concluded, “The record of this College is an open book. We pledge support to any action you may take to maintain the good name of the Institution and further the cause of education.” The signers of the letter included numerous prominent college faculty members, including Ernst Bessey (mycology), Arthur Clark (chemistry), Jackson Towne (library), W. O. Hedrick (economics), Lloyd Emmons (mathematics), Ward Giltner (veterinary medicine), Marie Dye (nutrition), Rufus Pettit (entomology), Ernest Anthony (agriculture), and John Ryder (liberal arts).

Of the three dismissals, Kedzie’s was the most notable. He had both taught at the college and had served as its president, earning the moniker the Grand Old Man of the college. Until his death on 5 January 1935 he remained a frequent visitor to campus. When he died, classes were canceled, and the chimes of Beaumont Tower tolled as his body was transported to Evergreen Cemetery in Jackson. “The news of Dr. Kedzie’s death made me feel as I have often felt when a great tree on our College campus has been cut down,” said college secretary John Hannah. “With it disappears something splendid and stalwart, something of long, steady, sound growth, something that flowered in foliage of beauty and helpfulness and filled out the landscape, making other trees near it seem stunted and insignificant. His passing will bring in a hundred alumni circles all over the country a sense of disturbing loss and a regret for a good man gone.”

JOHN HANNAH APPEARS ON THE SCENE

While Shaw worked to stabilize the college’s economic situation and to repair public relations damage caused by previous presidents, a young John Hannah began to make a name for himself in Michigan agricultural circles. Hannah had originally planned to become a lawyer but changed his mind and became an expert in chicken husbandry and a teacher to Michigan farmers. The choice made sense in light of his background. His ancestors had been blacksmiths, schoolteachers,

and—perhaps most important for his future career—farmers and flower growers. His grandfather had emigrated from Britain and established a market gardening business and flower shop in Grand Rapids. “My father did not attend primary school,” Hannah recalled many years later. “My grandmother felt that she could give him a better primary education at home than that provided by one-room country schools of the day. She was a scholarly person, able to read and translate rapidly from Latin and Greek, the academic language for scholars of her youth.” Wilfred Steele Hannah apparently inherited his mother’s intellectual curiosity. “My father had become very much interested in horticulture and was generally regarded as quite an authority on scientific agriculture,” John Hannah wrote. “I remember the many large and impressive looking books in his library that dealt with botany and horticulture. He always referred to plants by their scientific names.”

Mary Ellen Malone, John Hannah’s mother, grew up on a farm in Grattan Township outside of Grand Rapids and attended Ferris Institute, where she became acquainted with future Michigan governor Woodbridge N. Ferris. She later taught grade school in Kent County. John Hannah was born on 9 October 1902, in Grand Rapids, and eventually had three younger siblings. The Hannahs raised flowers, vegetables, and chickens. John took over responsibility for the chicken flock when he was just five or six years old and became known for his Black Orpingtons, which he exhibited at local fairs. While in high school, he served as secretary of the West Michigan Poultry Association, and he later became secretary of the State Poultry Association. After graduating from Grand Rapids South High School and Grand Rapids Junior College, he went to the University of Michigan to study law.

“In the winter of 1921–22, E. C. Foreman, who had been on the Agricultural Extension staff at M.A.C. and was head of the Poultry Department, came to visit me in Ann Arbor,” Hannah remembered. “He asked me what I was going to do when I finished law school, and I told him frankly I did not know. Before the conversation was over, he suggested that if I came to East Lansing and took a degree in agriculture, he would give me a job as an extension poultryman at an annual salary of \$2,500. Two thousand five hundred dollars a year sounded to me like a tremendous amount of money.” Hannah



John Hannah's first job after graduation was as a poultry specialist at Michigan Agricultural College. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.

arrived in East Lansing in the fall of 1922 and, by transferring his credits from junior college and the University of Michigan, received a bachelor's degree just one year later.

As planned, he took the job as an extension specialist, a position in which he performed well. Former forestry department chair Paul Herbert remembered Hannah as "a poultry specialist and a bachelor. Once in awhile he ate breakfast with some of the other bachelor instructors in Hunt Food Shop [an East Lansing restaurant]. However, he did not mix much, partly I suppose because he was in the field so much. But he was well liked in the field. I remember once up near Newberry on a small cutover farm of brush and 100 Leghorns, the old farmer's wife waxed eloquent over John." Bacteriology professor Walter L. Mallmann wrote that he was "impressed with [Hannah's] desire to acquire knowledge as a student and to disseminate his knowledge to the poultry producers as an extension worker. He had



Longtime athletic trainer Jack Heppinstall was an early Hannah friend. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.

the uncanny ability to appraise the knowledgeability of his audience and to accordingly set a pattern of presentation that was understood. He was well-liked and his teachings accepted.” According to university historian Madison Kuhn, Hannah’s success as an extension specialist came from his refusal to talk down to his farm audience. “He explained carefully until he could speak the language of science to men who understood. He impressed them with his quiet handsomeness, his modesty, his serious manner, and his quick understanding of the reasons that could prompt a listener’s question. At his first culling demonstration in his home county, old friends hoped to trap him by slipping one little white hen into each new group of birds. After he rejected her repeatedly, they agreed to his competence.”

Shortly after arriving in East Lansing, Hannah began his connection with the college’s football team. According to longtime Michigan State athletic trainer Jack Heppinstall, Hannah “started coming to all the football games at Michigan State and to many practices, where he became acquainted with the coaches, the players, and others connected with the team.” At a time when football players did not yet receive scholarships and had to provide for their own meals, Hannah “had an apartment on Grove Street which needed taking care of, so he always had some needy football player living with him to help with the cooking and dishes and cleaning, etc. By all accounts it was a very

good place to eat.” The team came to hold an important place in Hannah’s heart, and *Lansing State Journal* sportswriter George Alderton recalled that “when State defeated Michigan in Ann Arbor for the first time in nineteen years—that was in 1934—I went around to the dressing room after the game and Dr. Hannah was there shaking hands with everyone, and I think I saw tears on his cheeks.” Arthur F. Brandstatter, who later became head of Michigan State’s criminal justice school, recalled that Hannah was “keenly interested in encouraging young people to enroll. . . . He occasionally accompanied Michigan State coaches on recruiting trips and assisted coaches in convincing high school athletes to cast their lot with Michigan State. I met him my senior year at Ecorse High School, and that meeting changed the entire course of my life. It ultimately gave me an opportunity to study at college and to know well one of the most dedicated and warm-hearted human beings I have ever met.”

Alderton also remembered the future president’s devotion to his work and to the school:

I made a trip with him one time from Los Angeles to Lansing on a train and shared a state room with him. He was working all of the time during the ride, except when he slept, of course. He had a big briefcase that was packed. He pulled off his coat and started putting papers around on tables and chairs and beds, and walked back and forth studying first one and then another, and moving them from one pile to another. He was indeed a busy man at all times. . . . Another memory of Dr. Hannah: It was registration week on campus in one of those early years, and he was on the football sideline with me, as he was briefly many times, and he looked up at the clouded sky and said, “I just hope that we are not going to encounter rain for a few days.” When I asked why, he replied, “You know, there are a lot of young people here enrolling for classes, and if we have rainy days and nights, they go home in droves! Homesickness hits them hard.” He wanted what was then Michigan State College to grow in numbers, students, faculty and buildings.

Marie Mercier, who later served as Hannah’s secretary when he was secretary to the Board of Agriculture, similarly wrote in 1971 that she remembered Hannah in the late 1920s and early 1930s “as a very

studious person—always reading books of an educational nature and never spending time on frivolous things.”

In 1933, as president-elect of the International Baby Chick Association, Hannah played an instrumental part in the drafting of a fair trade code that protected honest hatcheries against unscrupulous competition. The code prohibited exaggerated advertising, set a minimum size for hatching eggs, established health standards, required that chicks be sold at or above the cost of production, and regulated hours and wages for workers. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the measure into law in late 1933. Hannah took a year’s leave of absence from Michigan State to establish the Kansas City offices of the agency that would enforce the new code. “Hundreds of professors planned and advised in the New Deal,” Kuhn observed, “but fewer occupied line executive positions. Hannah was an exception.” Hannah and his staff became known as effective enforcers, and 95 percent of the attendees at Hannah’s regional meetings voted to continue the code without amendment. But Hannah did not enjoy his stint working for the federal government. “I was sent to the Middle West to tell farmers how much to charge for their chickens and eggs,” he told the *Detroit News* in 1966. “I decided it wasn’t for me to tell farmers how they should run their business. So I left the NRA [National Recovery Administration], considered a Chicago packing firm’s offer of an \$18,000-a-year job, but decided my future was back at MSU.”

Heppinstall remembered that Hannah “received a telegram from President Shaw offering him the Secretaryship of the College and the State Board. [Hannah] seemed very pleased when asked what he intended to do about the offer and said he was going to sleep on it that night, then think it over carefully, ask for time until we get home, and make some offers or concessions that he thought ought to be taken care of before he accepted the position. They must have been satisfactory to the Board for he got the position.” According to Hannah’s memoir, the new position came with a salary of \$4,200 a year, much less than he received in his current position. However, Hannah “had already concluded that there were things more important to me than making money and I had about made up my mind that I would rather return to a university—particularly to Michigan State College—than do anything else. It seemed to me that when a person gets old and looks back over his life, what is



Lansing State Journal sportswriter George Alderton covered Michigan State athletics from the 1920s through 1962. He and journalist Dale Stafford are credited with giving the college its Spartan nickname. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.



President Shaw meets with the State Board of Agriculture around 1940. Seated are (*left to right*) Melville B. McPherson, Forest Akers, James Jakway, Lavina Masselink, Shaw, Chair William H. Berkey, Clark L. Brody, Hannah, and Charles O. Wilkins. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.

important in it is not prestige or the amount of money in the bank, but rather whether or not he feels his life has been useful. If he has been able to contribute, even in some small way, to making it possible for people to live lives that are more satisfying to them than they might otherwise have been, that, it seems to me, is probably the most meaningful of all life's satisfactions."

As the new secretary, Hannah worked with the state legislature to secure more appropriations, with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to secure funding for additional buildings, and with the State Board of Agriculture to keep members informed of college needs. One of Hannah's most valuable contributions was convincing both Shaw and the board that the college needed additional land for future development. "We decided to move south, making the east boundary of the campus south of the Red Cedar River at Hagadorn Road; the west boundary of the campus was to be Harrison Road, south from Michigan Avenue," Hannah said. "We wanted to acquire everything between the east and west boundaries as rapidly as possible. We also decided to buy only through private negotiation, without the use of

condemnation procedures. During the period when I was secretary and later when I was president, the university acquired a total of some 7,000 acres without ever condemning a single acre or a single lot. Sometimes it took a long time and much negotiation; sometimes we had to wait for people to die; sometimes we made it possible for the owners of the property to live in the houses after purchase, the land to be turned over to the university only after the current occupants had lived out their lives.”

MSC began buying land, securing federal funds for buildings, and starting construction. Abbot Hall (1938), the Auditorium (1940), Campbell Hall (1939), Jenison Field House (1940), the Music Building (1939), and the Olin Health Center (1939) were all constructed in part with funds supplied by the Public Works Administration (PWA). In many cases, the “self-liquidating” approach, used extensively over the next few decades, paid for the college’s share of construction. In the financing of the new hospital and health center, for example, MSC borrowed \$137,500 to cover its share, and the PWA provided \$112,500. The college paid back its loan by setting aside \$16,000 in student fees each year for ten years. The WPA supplied funding for workers to build campus roads, sidewalks, lawns, and other projects. In 1940, Hannah reported, the college employed more than four hundred WPA workers to perform such tasks as seeding the lawns around Jenison Field House and the secret football practice field, building tennis courts near Mason and Abbot Halls, painting the interiors of classrooms and dormitories, and installing farm drains. WPA workers also helped install the museum on the ground floor of the new Auditorium. While the government funding was a boon to the college, it also required substantial amounts of paperwork. As Mercier remembered,

If approval of a project was not forthcoming as soon as Mr. Hannah thought it should be, he would send telegrams to Washington inquiring about its status, and some of the projects required three or four telegrams to pry them loose. I really believe they were sick and tired of being pestered, so one by one the projects that were requested were approved and Mr. Hannah’s persistence paid off. During this time President Shaw did not approve of Mr. Hannah’s aggressiveness with regard to all these PWA projects. He feared

that Michigan State could never fulfill its obligation . . . on each project. But he was overruled, and in the end I am sure he was very pleased when the buildings were completed. This did not bother Mr. Hannah in the least, for he knew he was doing what was right for Michigan State.

Another thing that Mr. Hannah accomplished shortly after he became secretary was the removal of several houses on West Circle Drive. In the early days these houses were used by the faculty and were still in use for one thing or another. One of the buildings was used as the Health Service. Women's dormitories stand on the sites of these houses today. This feat was not accomplished without a great deal of protest from older faculty members and from townspeople who thought the houses should remain as landmarks. Mr. Hannah knew this was necessary for expansion of the campus and he acted over these protests.

In its December 1938 issue, the *MSC Record* declared the college's building program a remarkable success. Reporter Ralph Norman explained that the total cost of the nine new structures and improvement of the college grounds was \$6,012,770, with \$1,429,470 supplied by the PWA and \$1,429,470 supplied by the WPA. Most of the rest was funded by the college with bond issues, to be repaid with building income. Norman proudly pointed out that the new construction cost the state only \$142,150. Nevertheless, Hannah wanted more, telling Norman, "Although the building program will relieve housing congestion and improve hospital facilities, the program does not permit construction of classroom and laboratory buildings. Construction is limited almost entirely to buildings which may be self-financed through building income or student fees. The need for state-financed buildings to provide for the rapidly growing student body at Michigan State College is nearly as great as ever."

One of the most ambitious of the new structures was the Music Building. Dedicated on 3 December 1939, the facility represented the fulfillment of the dreams of music department director Lewis Richards, who had arrived on campus in 1927. At the time, the program was housed in the old economics department building, a frame structure originally designed without any thought to acoustics. Richards saw endless possibilities for musical excellence, if only he



had a state-of-the-art facility, and devised a plan for an elaborate new curriculum and building. After seeing Richards's plan, world-famous pianist and Detroit Symphony Orchestra conductor Ossip Gabrilowitsch told Richards, "If the college will allow you to put into effect only half of what you have on these pages, you will have the most outstanding department of music in the country." The college approved the plan, mainly because it fell under the administration's definition of a self-liquidating building project. "The music building is paid for by those majoring in music," Hannah said. "The charge paid for the use of the music practice rooms is more than sufficient to take care of the interest and retire the bonds as they become due." When his new building was completed, Richards was elated.

Another major arts-related structure erected during this time was the band shell, a gift of the Class of 1937. Located behind the chemistry building, the shell was dedicated on 11 May 1938 and

Dedicated in 1939, the Music Building gave Michigan State a cutting-edge arts facility and enabled music department director Lewis Richards to put into practice his long-held dreams for the department's curriculum. Courtesy of MSU Archives and Historical Collections.



Michigan State's band shell, a gift of the Class of 1937, provided a venue for orchestral concerts, Shakespearean plays, and religious services.

Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.

subsequently “was used continuously,” the *MSC Record* reported. “Besides attracting huge crowds to the band concert series, the open-air amphitheatre served as the locale for a new type of religious service, the Campus Inspirational Hour held every Sunday morning at 9 o’clock. Sponsored by the YMCA, the half-hour program consisted of music and poetry taken from the services of all religious faiths.”

Other campus buildings constructed early in Shaw’s administration included a new library, later to become a museum, on Circle Drive. Next door, on the site of old College Hall, the first building in the United States to be used for agricultural education, workers were completing 104-foot-tall Beaumont Tower. A gift of John and Alice Beaumont of Detroit, the structure featured a clock and a carillon that chimed every fifteen minutes. Across the Red Cedar River, Demonstration Hall was going up, eventually providing extensive facilities for military training as well as ice skating, equestrian, and athletic

events; on Farm Lane, just south of the Red Cedar, new dairy barns, a state-of-the-art milk house, and a modern bull barn were nearing completion.

Lansing native Edwyn A. Bowd bore much of the responsibility for the architecture of these and other campus buildings constructed in the first half of the twentieth century. Bowd played key roles in the design and planning of Lansing's First Baptist Church (1891), City Hall (1894), and Pilgrim Congregational Church (1898), as well as several exhibits at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition and the St. Louis World's Fair held in 1904 and the refurbishment of the Ingham County Courthouse. In early 1902, he was appointed architect of Michigan Agricultural College. "He will design all buildings which may be required for the institution and supervise their erection," the *Lansing State Journal* reported. Over the next several decades, he and later his partner, Orlie Munson, would be responsible for such structures as the Intramural Recreative Sports-Circle, the library (now the museum), Olds Hall, Agriculture Hall, Marshall Hall, Human Ecology, the horticulture building, Natural Science, the Auditorium, Giltner Hall, Spartan Stadium, and Jenison Field House.

By 1939 Hannah was receiving almost as much attention both on and off campus as Shaw. Hannah perhaps became even better known after he married the president's daughter, Sarah Shaw, in 1938. Starting with the October 1939 issue of the *MSC Record*, Hannah penned a column describing current events at MSC, beginning his initial piece, "It is with considerable misgivings that I inflict upon you my first efforts as a columnist." Hannah used this forum to point out that Michigan State now had 6,663 students attending classes for college credit; two new dormitories, T. C. Abbot Hall for men and Louise H. Campbell Hall for women, each of which had cost more than a half million dollars, were now in use; and the old hospital (formerly President Snyder's house) had been converted to a cooperative residence for women.

In his July 1940 column, Hannah announced that the museum was moving from the third floor of the library to the ground floor of the new Auditorium; that a new building was being constructed to house the college's egg-laying contests; that Michigan muck farmers had petitioned the college for more muck-farming research and that five thousand dollars had been appropriated for that purpose; and



John Hannah married Sarah Shaw, daughter of MSC President Robert Shaw, in 1938. Courtesy of MSU Archives and Historical Collections.

that the old gymnasium, replaced by Jenison Field House, was being revamped for use as a women's gymnasium. Hannah also reported that the college's current enrollment stood at 9,201 students, an enormous increase from the 3,959 who had matriculated just six years earlier. The growing number of students and the additional buildings needed to house and teach them was putting tremendous pressure on the power plant and forcing extensive purchases of electricity. Consequently, the board approved the expansion of the plant, thereby allowing the university to manufacture its own power and save approximately thirty thousand dollars a year.

While Hannah was receiving increased attention, Shaw was contemplating retirement. He had arrived at the State Agricultural



Sarah Hannah views a portrait of her father, Michigan State President Robert Shaw. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archive and Historical Collections.

College in 1902 as a professor of practical agriculture. When he officially announced his retirement in 1941, Michigan State College had become the fifteenth-largest institution of higher education in the United States. He had presented degrees to 10,084 students—66 percent of all the graduates in MSC’s eighty-six-year history. Numerous interviews conducted as Shaw neared retirement revealed that the president hated to wear dress suits; that he was a star baseball player in his youth; that he liked to dance but thought that students of the 1940s didn’t know how to waltz; and that he liked to be called Mr. Shaw rather than President Shaw. “Since he shies away from displays of sentiment, and from that authoritative title of ‘President’ which he has borne so honorably, perhaps the best farewell from M.S.C. students would be, ‘Goodbye, Mr. Shaw,’” student Peggy Trout wrote in the April 1941 *MSC Record*. “Thanks for being sincere and straight with us, clear through.”

Unlike some of his predecessors as the college’s president, Shaw departed with the respect and admiration of virtually all segments of the college. “We as students were very close to him,” A. L. Bibbins of the Class of 1915 wrote. “His patience and advice were of great value to us. His teaching and philosophy were supreme.” Current students echoed these sentiments: “He is such a keen and natural person—so

unaffected and genuine,” said Jean Bills, *Wolverine* business manager. “President Shaw should be respected as a capable administrator, which is evidenced by the growth of the college,” remarked senior class president Jim Otto. “He maintains a sincere attitude toward his work and is considerate of students and their activities.” The chair of the Water Carnival, Harry Jackson, said, “The president certainly is a lot of fun and a good mixer, but take my advice, if you have a good looking date, he is likely to cut in.” *Spartan* business manager Art Howland noted Shaw’s numerous campus improvements: “I heard that he authorized damming up the Red Cedar in order to make canoeing possible and that he suggested the possibility of planting the sand hill behind Demonstration hall with the beautiful pines that are there today.”

Shaw’s retirement precipitated an impressive honorary dinner held on 6 June 1941. The event’s honorary chairs included Michigan governor Murray D. Van Wagoner and Lansing industrialist Ransom E. Olds. Members of the sponsoring committee included Detroit industrialist Henry Ford, Lansing mayor Sam Street Hughes, *Detroit Free Press* publisher John S. Knight, *Detroit Times* publisher William E. Anderman, Detroit mayor Edward J. Jeffries Jr., Chrysler Corporation executive K. T. Keller, *Detroit News* president William E. Scripps, *Lansing State Journal* publisher Paul Martin, J. L. Hudson vice president Oscar Webber, and Michigan Bell Telephone president George M. Welsh.

JOHN HANNAH, PRESIDENT OF MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

John Hannah was quickly selected as MSC’s eleventh president. “Keeping in mind the fact that although the scope of the college activities has broadened greatly in its engineering, liberal arts, home economics, applied science, and veterinary divisions, and since Michigan State is primarily an agricultural college, it seemed best that its chief executive should come from the agricultural field, as does Mr. Hannah,” W. H. Berkey, chair of the State Board of Agriculture, announced. “A graduate of the Agricultural division, he became an extension worker in the poultry department and internationally known for his work. He was engaged in special work in line for the U.S.