

**QUARTO-CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF
THE WEST CHESTER STATE NORMAL
SCHOOL: OF THE FIRST DISTRICT, AT
WEST CHESTER, CHESTER COUNTY,
PENN'A. 1871-1896**

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Quarto-centennial History of the West Chester State Normal School: Of the First District, at West Chester, Chester County, Penn'a. 1871-1896 by Andrew Thomas Smith

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ANDREW THOMAS SMITH

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SCHOOL: OF THE FIRST DISTRICT, AT
WEST CHESTER, CHESTER COUNTY,
PENN'A. 1871-1896**



GEO. MORRIS PHILIPS, A. M., PH. D.
PRINCIPAL WEST CHESTER STATE NORMAL SCHOOL FROM 1891 UNTIL PRESENT TIME.

1871--1896.

QUARTO-CENTENNIAL HISTORY

OF THE

West Chester

State Normal School,

OF THE

FIRST DISTRICT.

AT

West Chester, Chester County, Penn'a.

PREPARED BY

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WEST CHESTER STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

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Editorial Note.



No attempt has been made to make this a complete history of the doings of the school, but rather to put into permanent form the leading features of interest.

It is greatly regretted that replies could not be received from all of the alumni; in consequence of this, some addresses and present occupations may be incorrect.

The writer wishes to take this opportunity to acknowledge his obligation to all who have so kindly aided in the collection of information for the work. Especial thanks are due to Mr. James Struthers Heberling, Secretary to the Principal, for his assistance in collecting and tabulating data.

A. T. S.

The West Chester State Normal School.

Its Inception.

Many difficulties attend an attempt to record the birth of any social, political, or educational movement; it is generally the idea of a man, talked about casually among men, and finally, expressed in some concerted action, forms a part of history. Such seems to have been the beginning of the Normal School idea in this district. The West Chester Academy, an institution incorporated "for the education of youth in the English and other languages, in the useful Arts, Sciences and Literature," had existed since March 27, 1812; and on April 29, 1869 a meeting of its Board of Trustees was held at the office of Mr. Wayne MacVeagh for the purpose of taking the first distinct step toward the establishment of the Normal School in this place.

The following minutes of the Board will indicate the work that was done upon that occasion:

"The Board met at Mr. MacVeagh's office, April 29, 1869. Present—Joseph J. Lewis, Dr. Wilmer Worthington, John Marshall, Joseph P. Wilson, Joseph Hemphill, J. L. Worthington, and Washington Townsend.

Prof. [James Pyle] Wickersham, Superintendent of the School Department of the State, was present by invitation.

After hearing some remarks from Prof. Wickersham upon the subject of the Normal Schools of this State it was resolved that a committee of three be appointed by the chair:

1st. To inquire as to the feasibility of establishing a Normal School in this district, being No. 1 of the Normal Schools of the State, and composed of the counties of Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Bucks.

2nd. As to the pecuniary means which can be commanded for the purpose, and also the requisite amount.

3rd. As to the locality of the institution, and generally to collect such facts as will enable the Trustees to come to some definite conclusions and action upon the subject.

The Chairman [Jos. J. Lewis Esq.] appointed Dr. Worthington, John Marshall, and Washington Townsend said committee. Mr. Townsend was excused from serving on said committee, and the President of the Board substituted in his place.

On motion, adjourned to meet at the call of the Committee.

J. LACEY DARLINGTON, Sec'y.

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Several meetings of the Trustees were held between the above date and Aug. 18, 1869, when arrangements were made for "a public meeting of the citizens interested in the establishment of a Normal School in West Chester." This meeting was held in the Court House, Monday evening, Aug. 23, 1869, and the gentlemen chosen as a committee to address it were Jos. J. Lewis, Dr. Worthington and Capt. R. T. Cornwell.

At the above mentioned meeting of the citizens, the following resolutions were offered by Wm. Darlington, Esq., and, after being earnestly advocated by Capt. R. T. Cornwell, Wm. B. Waddell, Esq., Prof. Wm. F. Wyers, Rev. Wm. R. Moore, and R. Emmett Monaghan, Esq., were unanimously adopted:

"Resolved: That we deem the establishment of a State Normal School in the Borough of West Chester, or its immediate vicinity, highly eligible and easily practicable and demanded by the needs of the First Normal School District.

"Resolved: That the proposition of the Trustees and Contributors of the West Chester Academy, to make their valuable property library, and museum, a basis for the establishment of such a Normal School, appears to us to be exceedingly liberal, and we recommend it to the favorable consideration of our fellow-citizens in the hope and expectation that it will receive their prompt and cordial support.

"Resolved: That William Darlington Esq., Samuel R. Shipley, Wayne MacVegh, Esq., Rev. William E. Moore Lewis W. Shields Wm. Appie, Bentley Worth, Jefferson Shaner, Iber Woodward, Col. Henry R. Guss, Dr. Geo. Martha, J. J. Parker, Stephen G. Snare, David M. McFarland, and Samuel G. Harry be a committee to confer with the said Trustees and contributors, to render such aid as may be necessary to carry their proposition and arrangement into execution and to obtain subscriptions to the stock of the corporation on such terms and conditions as may be deemed advisable to attain the object in view."

This committee of fifteen presented its report to the citizens convened in the Court House, Sept. 9, 1869. The following were the points of agreement unanimously adopted:

"1st. That said Trustees [of West Chester Academy] shall apply for and if possible, produce such a modification of the charter of the Academy as will permit its change into that of a State Normal School in West Chester or vicinity.

"2nd. All the property of the Academy shall be handed over to and devoted to the purposes of the Normal School, subject to the trusts under which it is held, which shall be properly provided for.

"3rd. The Normal School shall be organized as a joint stock company with such an amount of capital as may be needed, to be divided into shares of fifty dollars each. In all elections each share shall be entitled to one vote.

"4th. In all elections for Trustees or Directors of the said Normal School, the present members of the Chester County Cabinet of Natural Sciences shall be entitled to four votes each.

"5th. The subscriptions to stock shall be made payable to John Marshall and William Wollerton and the money shall be expended upon the order of the majority of the Committee hereinafter mentioned.

"6th. The stockholders shall elect four persons and the Trustees of the Academy shall appoint four other persons who shall constitute a committee of eight who, or a majority of whom, shall have the whole power of determining the location of the school, erecting the buildings, and doing all other acts necessary to carry the project into effect.

"7th. The said four persons elected by the stock-holders shall have power to fill all vacancies happening in their body.

"8th. The meeting of stockholders to elect said four persons, shall be held at such time and place and upon such notice as shall be determined by John Marshall and William Wallerton."

This meeting was held Dec. 2, 1869, and the four persons chosen to represent the people in the management of the Normal School Association were Capt. R. T. Cornwell, William S. Kirk, John G. Robinson, and Lewis W. Shields.

The trustees of West Chester Academy were represented in the Normal School Board of Managers by Dr. Wilmer Worthington, C. C. Sellers, John Marshall and David M. McFarland, appointed at the meeting held January 3, 1870.

The first meeting of the joint Board of Managers of the Normal School was held in the office of Wayne MacVeagh, Jan. 15, 1870, at which time Dr. Wilmer Worthington was chosen President and Capt. R. T. Cornwell, Secretary.

This Board of Managers at once began operations looking toward the purchase of a lot and the erection of suitable buildings for the school. Numerous projects were offered to them for consideration and a large number of available lots presented to them for sale. Old buildings were offered, and alterations and enlargements proposed, but it was finally decided, March 28, 1870, that they would erect a new, commodious building containing modern conveniences and adapted to enlargement, as, growing needs might require, without destroying its symmetry. The lot finally decided upon, April 22, 1870, was the one owned by Hon. Wayne MacVeagh and originally contained ten acres. By May 24, 1870, the resolution "that we proceed to build the Normal School" was adopted.

The confidence with which the new movement had inspired the members of the West Chester Academy was shown the day before the passage of the above resolution by the Normal School Board of Managers, in the unanimous adoption of the following resolutions:

"WHEREAS, The amount of stock already subscribed to the West Chester State Normal School is sufficient to insure the success of the enterprise, beyond any reasonable doubt, and,

"WHEREAS, The plan of the proposed building submitted by the architect meets the approbation of this Board, and the estimates of its cost appear to come within the financial means of the Normal School Corporation, therefore,

Resolved: That the entire property of the West Chester Academy be and is hereby appropriated towards the establishment of the West Chester State Normal School."

The property was disposed of at private sale "in accordance with the provisions of an Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled 'an act to authorize the Trustees and contributors to the West Chester Academy to become a State Normal School,' passed the 10th day of March 1870;" "all that real estate with its appurtenances now owned by said corporation, between Gay and Market Streets, and Darlington and New Streets" in the Borough of West Chester, for the sum of \$17,000, and other property giving a grand total of \$28,784.36.

Work upon the main building was begun at once, and on Sept. 14, 1870, the corner-stone was laid by Dr. J. P. Wickersham, State Superintendent of Public Schools. By February 11, 1871, work upon the building had so far advanced, that application was made to the Superintendent of Common Schools to make the necessary inspection with a view to having it accepted as a State institution. "Upon this application a committee was appointed, who, on the 22d day of February, 1871, visited the buildings, made the necessary examination and reported favorably; whereupon the Superintendent issued his proclamation declaring the institution a State Normal School for the First District."

On May 1, 1871, the stockholders of the school met and elected a Board of Trustees, consisting of nine men, as follows: Dr. Wilmer Worthington, Wm. S. Kirk, R. T. Cornwell, John G. Robinson, Wm. E. Moore, Marshall B. Hickman, William B. Waddell, Esq., Evans Rogers, and Josiah Hoopes.

The organization of the Board was effected May 6, 1871, at which time Rev. Wm. E. Moore was chosen President; Capt. R. T. Cornwell, Secretary, and Thomas W. Marshall, Treasurer.

By July 20, 1871, the Trustees had selected Prof. Ezekiel H. Cook as the first Principal of the school. On the 25th of September, 1871, the school was opened amid very auspicious circumstances; the number of boarders enrolled was over one hundred and there were thirty day scholars.

Financial Statement.

The financial statement made by the building committee upon that occasion was a most promising one. Following is the re-