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H i s t o r i c a l N o t e s

Whereas, the
Wellbeing of a
Society depends on the
Education of their Youth, as
well as in great measure, the
Eternal welfare of every
Individual, by impressing on
their tender minds Principles
of Morality and Religion;
instructing them in the
several Dutys they owe to the
Society in which they live,
and one towards another;
giving them the Knowledge
of Languages, & other Parts
of Useful Learning necessary
Thereo; in order to render
them serviceable in the
several publick Stations to
which they may be called....

Charter of Franklin's Academy and
Charitable School, 1753

Franklin's Aim:
To Educate for Public Service

The preamble to Penn's first corporate charter expressed clearly the vision Benjamin Franklin had for his innovative institution of learning. His school would begin with a declaration of the worth of the individual and the obligation of a civilized society to provide for higher education. It would build on knowledge and grow on intellectual curiosity. It would aim at the highest standards of academic excellence and for a lifetime of public service in the world beyond the classroom and laboratory. Franklin's dreams of 250 years ago give us cause for celebration at Commencement today, for they continue to represent the core values of the international research institution that Penn has become in the 21st century.

In 1753 Franklin was in the fourth year of his uniring efforts to make Philadelphia a center for learning in the American colonies. He won the interest and support of the Penn family proprietors of Pennsylvania, who responded by incorporating "The Trustees of the Academy and Charitable School in the Province of Pennsylvania." They also donated £500 to the institution, which enabled the Trustees to pay off the debt incurred in purchasing the original Fourth and Arch Streets campus. This assured the financial well being of the Academy and Charitable School and brought notice to the Academy in British publications such as The Gentleman's Magazine.

The Academy and Charitable School actually consisted of four schools, each headed by its own faculty master, and by the close of 1753 a fifth was added. This last was perhaps the most remarkable, for it was a "School of Girls." In November the Trustees authorized Franklin to hire a faculty master for primary-age girls, who would "teach them Reading, Sewing, and Knitting." One month later he reported that Frances Holwell would "keep a School of Girls and teach them to sew, read, and mark" and that she had already enrolled her first class of students. Frances Holwell thereby became the first woman member of Penn's faculty and she was surely the first woman faculty member of any of the institutions that today compose the Ivy League.

Two of the other four schools offered elementary education to boys. The Charity School taught the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic to boys whose parents were not required to pay tuition. The Writing School, on the other hand, was one of the three schools of the Academy and its students enjoyed a robust primary and middle school education.

The principal work of the Academy, however, consisted of two schools open to teenage boys. The first of these was the English School and in it Franklin incorporated the ideals that motivated him from the beginning. The core curriculum was the study of "the English Tongue grammatically and as a Language" and was therefore intended to be accessible to Americans from all walks of life. Students learned composition, literature, public discourse, geography, the history of the modern Western world, mathematics, and philosophy. This curriculum – modern, not classical – suited a new world of scientific discovery, the spread of print culture to every part of the globe, and the development of international commerce. Perhaps most important to Franklin, the English School was utilitarian, with instruction in "merchants accounts...drawing in perspective...[and] the mechanick arts." In Franklin's hands, the aims of the English School were both intellectual and practical, with the result that its graduates were prepared to serve their respective communities and society at large. As a model of higher education, there was nothing like it in the English-speaking world. It was as innovative as it was pragmatic.

Most of Franklin's fellow Trustees, however, preferred the Latin School for their sons. It was intended to prepare its students for admission to a traditional English college or university. Its curriculum consisted of the classical languages of Latin and Greek, including oratory and prose composition in those languages. The Latin School appealed to the colonial elite, whose ambitions included acceptance as "gentlemen" in English society.
At the close of 1753, just four years after Franklin called the first meeting of Trustees, Penn had strong, well-regarded faculty in charge of each of its five schools, a total enrollment of more than 300 students, and a debt-free campus. Thus the foundation was well laid for the establishment of the College in 1755 and the School of Medicine in 1765.

1803: A Model Institution for a New Nation

Fifty years after Franklin's charter, the School of Medicine had forged to the front of the University's reputation. The medical faculty included Benjamin Rush, William Shippen, and Caspar Wistar, three of the most distinguished educators in early American medicine. They attracted students from every state in the nation and lectured to classes as large as one hundred and twenty-five. By 1803 the student body at the School of Medicine was five times the size of the College and in 1806 the medical faculty petitioned the Trustees for a new building on the new Ninth Street campus. In many ways it was the School of Medicine that had assumed the role of Franklin at Penn. It was practical and forward looking. Its faculty and students applied their knowledge and clinical skills in the service of society. The character of the School of Medicine was entrepreneurial and distinctly American. It was the first of Penn's schools to give the University national standing.

Indicative of its stature, Penn's School of Medicine was deeply involved in preparations for one of the most famous events in American history: the 1803 Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the vast lands of the Louisiana Purchase. In January of that year, President Thomas Jefferson directed Meriwether Lewis to Philadelphia to study under the medical school faculty. Penn faculty taught Lewis anatomy and medicine; botany and zoology; geology and paleontology; and

The Gentleman's Magazine: For December 1753.

A brief account of the Academy in the City of Philadelphia.

This institution owes its being to a set of private men, who, at the close of the war, having consulted and agreed upon the general heads, published their proposals, framed a body of foundations with liberty to alter and amend, and appointed twenty four trustees, without any regard to religious differences, to carry them into execution. The scheme, on its publication, was so well liked, that in a very short time, the subscriptions rose up to 5000 a year, for five years.

For the convenience of the trustees, while bullets would have suffered by their absence, it was, after some debates, agreed to fix the academy in the city; and the trustees of a convenient building offering to transfer their right in latter the site of the academy, the proposal was gladly accepted, and a conveyance thenceon immediately drawn. This building supply'd the academy out of the smallest part of it, with as many handsome and convenient rooms for the schools, as if built on purpose; and there is still left as much of that part, ready leased, and adorned with a beautiful roof, or pulpit, as will serve for a large oratory, or hall, for public inspection, and since the conveyance of this large building, the trustees have purchased several contiguous lots, with buildings on them, as make a wide, and spacious area, for the scholars exercises, and on which, in time, as the funds encrease, a regular college may be conveniently built.

The scheme thus far advanced, the corporation, having duly weigh'd its utility, voted 200l. to be paid to the trustees in hand; and 100l. a year for five years; 50l. of which they have appropriated to the use of an intended charity school, for instructing poor children gratis, in the principles of the Christian religion, and in reading, writing, and arithmetic. One of the most promising children is to be annually chosen out of the charity school by the corporation, and educated gratis, in higher learning, in the academy.

The masters of the academy, are a rector, who teaches Greek, and Latin, an English master and a teacher of the mathematicks, tutors, and others will be added, as the scholars encrease.

While the pupils in the Latin and Greek schools, are taught the grammatical construction of the cedulrians, lectures will be read to those who are forward enough, wherein the subject matters of each author will be explained, and illustrated, and his beauties pointed out.

Even the children exercises will be composed by the masters, adapted to their capacity and proficency, and consist of history, morals, and the plain parts of natural philosophy which by these means may be taught along with the language. In the Latin schools the masters will be particularly enjoined, to correct, rhime, and beautify their mother tongue, so that the scholars may be enabled to understand it perfectly well, and write it with propriety and elegance.

The English language will be taught in a grammatical manner, and in a separate school, for the benefit of those who may not be inclined to learn Latin. Persons unacquainted with grammar are unable to express themselves with propriety and correctness, and it is a vulgar error to imagine that even the learning Latin will make them masters of their mother tongue. The rules of the Latin grammar are not the very same as the rules of the English grammar; every language has its own peculiarities, which render a separate list of rules and instructions necessary for the attainment of it.

In this academy the fame regard will be had to the health and morality of the children as to their proficiency in literature. Strict order and discipline will be established. Their diversions, exercises, and meals will be regulated. Shame, correction and emulation will each be properly and judiciously applied to the promotion of the institution, and care will be taken to influence the minds of the children an early spirit of piety and devotion, and a profound awe and reverence for the Supreme Being.

This foundation is call'd an academy yet it is more properly an almshouse of schools, under one roof, subject to the inspection of trustees, and the only such branches of science, as are adapted to the circumstances of the province are at present proposed to be taught in it, yet it may reasonably be expected that such additions will be made to the present toils, as will improve it into a collegiate institution, and a seminary for every kind of science.

Historical Notes (continued)
astronomy, surveying, and map making. Scientific knowledge in all these areas was necessary in order to document the observations made during the course of the expedition. In 1807, on the return from their extraordinary journey, the journals of Lewis and his partner, William Clark, proved extremely valuable in helping President Jefferson and the U.S. Congress know and understand the territory beyond the Mississippi.

1853: A New Provost and One of a Different Kind
In 1853 the Trustees elected the first Provost in University history who was not an ordained clergyman. They chose Henry Vethake, a Professor of Mathematics at Penn since 1836 and Vice Provost since 1845. The Trustees also elected Henry Reed, Professor of English Literature, to the position of Vice Provost. With these selections Penn moved decisively in the direction of a secular institution, though not perhaps as far in the direction of Franklin's "practical" education as many have claimed. The faculty continued to insist on a reading knowledge of Latin and Greek as a prerequisite to admission to the College and these subjects were surely the more "ornamental" in Franklin's formula. Despite its new Provost, the College, throughout the 1850s, retained a very conventional curriculum.

The Law School, which had existed briefly in the early national period, was re-established by the Trustees in 1850s and led by George Sharswood, a distinguished Philadelphia judge who would eventually rise to Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The two-year program consisted of twelve courses of lectures and led to the degree of Bachelor of Laws. Judge Sharswood and the other members of the faculty, however, believed their instruction to be supplemental only, as they required that all students, while taking Law School classes, serve legal apprenticeships to practicing attorneys. Admission to the practice of law remained in the hands of the preceptor, whose recommendation to the local county bar was the essential element in the process. The system of state-administered bar examination did not come into effect until the first decade of the 20th century.

The School of Medicine had truly become a great national institution for professional education. In the 1852-53 academic year, 431 students enrolled from twenty-five states and two foreign countries. Its seven-member faculty required the students to attend a three-year program of lectures, two years of apprenticeship with a practicing physician, a course of clinical instruction at Pennsylvania Hospital, and the preparation of a medical thesis. With courses in gross anatomy, biochemistry, medicine, obstetrics, pharmacology, physiology, and surgery, Penn's School of Medicine had no equal in mid-19th century America.

The Commencement of 1853 was held on Friday, the first of July, in the Hall of the Musical Fund Society, at Eighth and Locust Streets. Musical Fund Hall was one of the most prominent meeting places in 19th century America. Charles Dickens lectured there in 1842; William M. Thackeray gave lectures there in 1853; and in 1856, the Republican Party held its first national convention there, nominating John C. Fremont for President of the United States. In 1853 the annual University commencement continued in the British tradition it had followed since 1757, with much less emphasis on distinguished guests and the awarding of honorary degrees than became common in the 20th century. There was nevertheless a grand academic procession to the Musical Fund Hall followed by a program of eight student lectures, alternat-
ing at regular intervals with orchestral music. In 1853 the University conferred seventeen Bachelor of Arts degrees, eight Bachelor of Laws degrees, and, in separate ceremonies held in early April, 160 Doctor of Medicine degrees.

1903: Modern Schools, Facilities, and Student Life

During the last quarter of the 19th century Penn was transformed into an institution resembling the modern research university. Between 1873 and 1903 the University established three professional schools, a graduate school of arts and sciences, the University hospital, a medical research institute, and a museum of archaeology and anthropology. Professional and graduate education brought research and the advancement of knowledge, placing Penn at the forefront of American higher education. In his annual report for 1903, Provost Charles Custis Harrison proudly announced that the Trustees had entered into a contract to build "the best-equipped and best-housed School of Engineering hitherto planned." This was the Towne Building, totaling approximately 128,000 square feet in floor space, a massive "engineering laboratory," intended for "instruction and experimental work." It would take three years to construct and finish, but its funding was assured in 1903. Meanwhile, throughout 1903, another new structure – the Medical Laboratories – was under construction on Hamilton Walk. Known today as the John Morgan Building, this facility housed the Medical School's departments of Pathology, Physiology, and Pharmacology. In just a few months they would be completed and occupied. The Provost also reported that the University Library, though just twelve years old, was already filled to capacity and that an addition would soon be necessary. One hundred years ago Penn's campus was growing by leaps and bounds.

University life was also beginning to appear modern. Between 1873 and 1903 enrollment in the three undergraduate schools – the College, Towne Scientific School, and Wharton School – had grown at an astonishing rate. College houses – the Quads – first appeared on campus in 1896 and by 1903 the Upper Quad was complete. As funds permitted, additional houses were constructed along Spruce Street toward the Hospital. Greek life also flourished. More than twenty fraternities established campus residences and

Penn's women proudly formed the Beta Alpha chapter of the national Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. Houston Hall, which had opened in 1896, was the meeting place for men's student clubs ranging from religious associations to the performing arts and from debate and oratory to the study of foreign language and culture. Women students, in 1899 and 1900, established a separate Women's Club, in a house at 3903 Locust Street. The purpose of the Women's Club was "to promote social interests among the women students and especially to provide as far as possible for the undergraduates an opportunity for college life." The Club enjoyed sufficient support to outfit part of the house as a women's gymnasium. In 1903, however, on the east end of campus, the big news was the groundbreaking ceremony for Weightman Hall, which, when it opened in 1904, incorporated both men's and women's athletics.

The academic year of 1903 culminated in Commencement exercises held in the
Academy of Music, at Broad and Locust Streets. The procession was led by the Trustees, Provost, honorary degree recipients, and University faculty, who stepped into horse-drawn carriages at the entrance to College Hall and were transported more than twenty blocks to the Academy. The graduating students, led by their class officers, paraded behind. The program was no longer student centered. Now it featured a distinguished guest speaker, who delivered a commencement address, as well as the singing of "Hail! Pennsylvania," an inspirational call to institutional loyalty. In short, the Commencement exercises of a century ago were very similar to what we know and celebrate today. In 1903 the Commencement speaker was Horace Howard Furness, literary scholar, Trustee of the University, and donor of the Shakespeare collection housed today in Van Pelt Library. The most prominent recipients of honorary degrees that year were William Crawford Gorgas, who had worked closely with Walter Reed in discovering the cause of yellow fever and developed methods of preventing the disease, and Woodrow Wilson, then President of Princeton University and later, President of the United States.

1953: Today's Campus on the Horizon
Fifty years ago, the University was in the midst of an extraordinary transition. Harold E. Stassen, Penn's President since 1948, left the University in January to take a cabinet-level position in the Eisenhower administration. Shortly thereafter, the Trustees and faculty Senate jointly announced that the next President would be an educator, committed to holding the position for at least ten years. Meanwhile, the Philadelphia Transportation Company (predecessor to SEPTA) was steadily progressing on its trolley-car tunnel, burrowing south under 36th Street and then southwest under Woodland Avenue. In April 1953 the trolleys were diverted west from a point that stands directly in front of today's Sweeten Alumni House and for the next two years rattled along what is now Locust Walk, before turning south to 40th Street and Baltimore Avenue. More than any other single factor, the trolley-car tunnel made it possible for Penn to unify its modern campus. There were several other notable indicators of institutional change in 1953, as well as of the impact Penn was having on the world. The first phase of the David Rittenhouse Laboratory was under construction, the third major building in the University's
$32,000,000 capital campaign of that era. After several years of indecision, the Trustees and senior administrators decided to forego “big time” collegiate athletics, particularly football. This enabled Penn to fulfill its commitment to the Ivy League, a decision which has since helped propel the University to the very top of research universities world wide. Another memorable decision came in April. Early in the year, the faculty Senate issued a report opposing a threatened U.S. Congressional investigation of the University, calling the proposed action a Communist “witch hunt.” Shortly thereafter a national magazine accused three Penn faculty members of being “Communist collaborators.” The Trustees and administration immediately issued a statement repudiating the charge, defending not only the three individuals named, but also the entire faculty. There was no Congressional investigation.

The Class of 1953 held its Commencement in the courtyard of the Quads. The Commencement speaker was Milton S. Eisenhower, President of Pennsylvania State University and brother of U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. William H. DuBarry, Acting President of the University, conferred the degrees, as well as commissions in the armed forces, and then conducted a special ceremony honoring the School of Dental Medicine on the seventy-fifth anniversary of its founding. Nearly 2,100 students took Penn degrees in June 1953, with one quarter of the total receiving Wharton’s undergraduate degree in business. The University also granted ten honorary degrees, two of which were noteworthy. An honorary Doctor of Letters was conferred upon Edith Hamilton, author of books on Greek, Roman, and biblical antiquity. Her most famous work, *The Greek Way* (1930) enjoyed enormous popularity and she published more than a dozen other books before her death in 1963. The other was the Doctor of Public Administration awarded to Thomas Bayard McCabe, President of the Scott Paper Company. He had held a series of appointments under U.S. Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, culminating in the presidency of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Edith Hamilton and Thomas McCabe were modern representatives of Franklin’s ideals and Penn recognized that by conferring its highest honors upon them.

Mark Frazier Lloyd
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**Distinguished Penn Women Faculty in 1953:**
Elizabeth Kerr Porter, R.N., B.S., M.S., Ed.D. Trained as a musician, Professor Porter entered nursing after the death of her husband. She earned Penn’s degrees of Master of Science and Doctor of Education, while simultaneously advancing through the faculty ranks to an endowed chair, the Helen Fuld Professor of Health Education, to which she was appointed in 1946. In 1949 she became Professor of Nursing at Case Western Reserve and in 1950 she was elected President of the American Nurses Association. In 1953, when Case Western named her Dean of its School of Nursing, Penn awarded her its honorary degree of Doctor of Science. Chase News Photo, ca. 1953. *Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.*

**Distinguished Penn Alumni in 1953:** Kwame Nkrumah. The most prominent Penn alumnus in world news in 1953 may have been Kwame Nkrumah (M.S. in Ed., 1942; A.M., 1943). He won acclaim in that year for leading the African nation of Ghana out of half a century of colonial rule. Among other accolades, he was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine and in a lengthy story in the *Saturday Evening Post*. When Nkrumah returned to Penn, he did so as Prime Minister of Ghana. In this view, taken on July 26, 1958, Vice Provost Roy F. Nichols leads a ceremony on College Hall Green, recognizing Nkrumah for his extraordinary achievement. Photograph by Jules Schick. *Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.*