

# Penn State First Founded As Farmers' High School

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State College was passing through its darkest days.

However, a new leader, the second great president, Dr. George W. Atherton, had been found, destined to serve nearly a quarter of a century. He received an institution of one building, Old Main, completed in December, 1862, a massive but forbidding structure, with a dark, almost prison-like interior, a student body so depleted in numbers that it scarcely exceeded the faculty, and with a reputation and name over the State (however unjust) of an educational failure and not entitled to the proceeds of the Land Grant. With rare determination and insight, he placed the work of the institution squarely upon its charter, won the people of the Commonwealth in its support, found in Governor James A. Beaver, a life-long friend of the College, a tower of strength and enthusiasm.

A revamping of Old Main was begun, over-crowded departments began their exodus to new buildings. The schools were organized in 1896, dormitories were erected, a University Inn, and the first buildings by private donors, the Carnegie Library and Schwab Auditorium. Agriculture began its modern development with a building program and expansion of facilities under the aegis of the Allied Agricultural Societies in 1900. Engineering owes its first adequate housing to Governor Pattison who became a "warm friend of Penn State" during his second administration, while most caustic in his denunciations in his vetoes of the bills of 1883 and 1885.

Liberal studies were strengthened,

departments of physical education, forestry, home economics, the calorimeter and research activities were established, a Summer School and Farmers' Institutes fostered. Dr. Atherton left the institution firmly established in the hearts of the people of the Commonwealth as the crown of the free public school system, an institution of nearly one thousand students, thirty buildings, nineteen four-year courses, and (with surprisingly few omissions) all the major lines of development of a modern State university, at least in embryo.

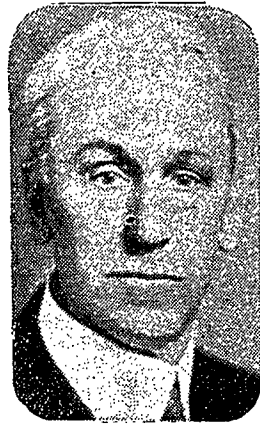
Thus the College groped its way during the first quarter century. It "found itself" under President Atherton during the second quarter century. Its rapid development has come during the third quarter century, and peculiarly so in the last five years. Presidents Sparks, Thomas and Hetzel are three different types of executives. Under Dr. Sparks the student body grew almost phenomenally, popularizing and extension activities were greatly increased, the Summer School established on a new basis in 1910. Comprehensive building plans were outlined, and genuine additions to the plant made. More adequate support was provided in which the active cooperation of Governor Tener should be noted. President Sparks bore a huge burden during the Great War—a burden which sapped his strength to the breaking point, leading to his retirement in 1920. Dr. Sparks handed over to President John Martin Thomas an institution with 370 on the faculty and a resident student body of 4,016.

The service of Dr. Thomas of four years was marked by plans for a greater Penn State, a better physical plant, more adequate legislative support. The College campaign to raise \$2,000,000 for welfare buildings was organized and vigorously carried on. The \$8,000,000 bond issue was proposed although not realized since the revenues of the State were assured adequate to meet the new building program. Four permanent buildings were erected and the School of Education and the Graduate School established.

September 24, 1926, Dr. Ralph Dorr Hetzel was called to the presidency and a new Penn State began rapidly to realize itself. An adequate campus plan and the following new buildings which were dedicated as part of the Seventy-Fifth Celebration tell something of the external story: Recreation Hall, Engineering Building, Mineral Industries, Old Main, Frear and Grange Dormitories, Liberal Arts, and Chemistry units, Power Plant, Botany Building, Hospital Service Building, and other permanent units. The inward history of change and development is even more significant. A new freedom to teach, a more liberal environment in which to learn, a continuous search for avenues of service to the Commonwealth—these are some of the spiritual factors which are moulding a new and inner Penn State while the campus is undergoing an almost complete transformation.

**VOCATIONAL ADVICE OFFERED**  
Guidance along vocational lines has been offered for the past two years to freshmen and other students by a service in charge of Prof. Robert G. Bernreuter, of the School of Education. This service will probably be continued this year.

## College Historian



Dr. Erwin W. Rankle, who as the college historian and professor of philosophy, has spent a great deal of time in recent years compiling a history of the institution since its founding seventy-eight years ago.

## College Catalogue Describes Campus Of 50 Years Ago

The Penn State campus of 1881-82, with all its class rooms, laboratories, the library, the chapel hall, and numerous dormitories in Old Main, presented a vastly different picture than the campus of the present. A description of the College at that time is given by the College catalogue for that year.

The catalogue or calendar was a sixteen-page booklet, three by five and a quarter inches. The faculty consisted of thirteen men and two women, headed by James A. McKee, M. A., Acting President. Miss Anna M. Cooper, B. S., was "Lady Principal," while Miss Hattie I. Foster was "Instructor in Music."

In its description of the campus, the catalogue says that the main building "contains the public rooms, such as chapel, library, cabinets, laboratories, class-rooms, and social halls, and a large number of dormitories. . . . The other buildings are professors' houses, barns, engine-houses, etc."

At that time, the College provided a bedstead, mattress, washstand, and a chair for each student who roomed in Old Main. However, all other articles such as bedding, wash-bowl, pitcher, mirror, and lamps had to be furnished by the student himself.

The College provided no boarding facilities at that time, students being obliged to eat in town. However, meals were served at about half the present rates, since schedules in the bulletin show.

"The College does not maintain a boarding hall," the catalogue states, "and most students depending on the boarding houses in the vicinity, the regular charge being \$3 per week. The College offers special facilities to those who board themselves singly, and also to the College Boarding club, which supplies its members, now numbering about twenty, with good boarding at about \$2 per week."

At that time, all students were required to take military training three times a week, but seniors and juniors had to attend only half the classes assigned to members of the two lower classes. The uniform was made of cadet gray cloth in a standard pattern.

The semester type of college year was not in force fifty years ago. The year was divided into a fall session of sixteen weeks and winter and spring sessions of twelve weeks each.

At that time, the College also maintained a preparatory school for students coming from districts where there were no advanced schools. In this division, the student could select a course either in general science or one in the classics.

At the end of his sophomore year, the student might continue in his chosen course or enter one of four "technical" courses. The curricula which he might enter included agriculture, natural history, chemistry and physics, and civil engineering.

According to the catalogue, General Science was probably the most popular course, embracing German and French, mathematics, and an outline of the natural and metaphysical sciences. The classical course combined the components of an old-fashioned "college course" with a large amount of scientific knowledge and practical training.

The predecessor of the modern winter courses in agriculture existed in the Farmers' Institute of 1882. This was a series of lectures given during a ten-day period in the month of January.

## 2 HONOR SOCIETIES REWARD FRESHMEN

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Members of all classes who have demonstrated their ability along literary lines are elected to membership.

Along musical lines, Kappa Gamma Psi and Phi Mu Alpha, national professional and honorary societies, award membership for outstanding achievement in any campus musical organization. Among women students, the Louise Homer club is the honorary musical group. In dramatics, Theta Alpha Phi has as its eligibility requirement the playing of two major or four minor roles in a student production or the demonstration of proficiency along some other phase of dramatic art.

**5 Groups in Agriculture**  
Five honorary or professional fraternities reward achievement in the various curricula of the School of Agriculture. These include Gamma Sigma Delta, the honor society of agriculture; Alpha Tau Alpha, agricultural education; Pi Alpha Xi, floriculture; Xi Sigma Pi, forestry; and Alpha Phi Omega, scouting.

In the School of Chemistry and Physics Phi Lambda Upsilon recognizes high scholarship among men in the chemistry curricula, while Sigma Pi Sigma does the same for men and women in physics. Iota Sigma Pi is the national women's honorary and professional chemistry fraternity, and Alpha Phi Mu is a local pre-medical society open to students preparing to study medicine.

Kappa Delta Pi and Kappa Phi Kappa, both national organizations, are the chief honoraries in the School of Education. The former is open to both men and women in the two upper classes, while the latter restricts its membership to upperclass men enrolled in the school. Psi Chi encourages scholarship in psychology, and Omicron Nu honors high standing junior and senior women in the home economics curriculum.

**Engineering Has 7 Groups**  
Seven honorary or professional groups recognize achievement in the School of Engineering. Tau Beta Pi elects from the upper fifth of the junior and seniors in the school. Sigma Tau requires marked ability along the professional lines of its members and

## Registers Freshmen



WILLIAM S. HOFFMAN

Pi Tau Sigma elects on a basis of mechanical engineering ability. Chi Epsilon promotes scholarship among the civil engineering students, while Eta Kappa Nu encourages electrical engineering. Scarb is a professional group of students in architecture as is Pi Gamma Alpha in fine arts.

In the School of Liberal Arts, Pi Gamma Mu is a national social science honorary which elects juniors and seniors on the basis of scholastic records in social science subjects. Delta Sigma Pi is a national professional society for students in the commerce and finance curriculum, while Pi Mu Epsilon encourages high scholarship in mathematics, regardless of school. Pi Lambda Sigma is the local pre-law group for students interested and proficient in the romance languages and literature.

High ranking students in the mining and geology curricula are eligible for Sigma Gamma Epsilon, a national professional fraternity. Gamma Alpha Mu is a local honorary fraternity whose membership is limited to members of the gymnastic team. To many of the students taking advanced R. O. T. C., Scabbard and Blade, a national group, offers membership; while Pershing Rifles does the same for underclassmen proficient in military drill.

## First Students at College Helped Complete Building

"Every college has a legend . . . In seventy-five years, Penn State has gathered many memories, recorded in old volumes and dusty prints for each new class to read and wonder.

What were freshmen like seventy-five years ago? They had no customs, no upperclassmen to look up to; they had little, in fact, but classes and long hours of work. The sixty-nine students who arrived at Penn State as the first freshmen class in February, 1869, found Old Main in the process of construction, and to them was delegated the task of finishing the building.

The undergraduate of today would look askance at these pioneers. In those early days when Penn State was still the "Farmers' High School," students rose at 5 o'clock each morning, and began their study or work before 6 o'clock. Their classes lasted until 6 o'clock at night, and all lights were out before 10 o'clock.

**Freshmen Treated Harshly**  
Old Main housed the entire College in 1869, and until 1886, dormitories, classrooms and administrative offices alike were contained in the same structure. Even after that time students lived there for many years.

Around this ancient building, now replaced by a modern administrative building, hover many of the legends which have passed on from class to class. Battles between classes, and factions have become historic, and the "Old Main rats," whose haunts were in the upper stores, number many alumni still.

Many grey-haired gentlemen will remember with a sigh of regret the episode of the attic cave-in. Before prohibition, one student beer party was rudely interrupted when the liquid refreshment crashed to the floor below. There was a suicide window,

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## ORATORS ADDRESSED 2,600 IN AUDIENCES LAST YEAR

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the form of a key, given by the College to any student who participates in five intercollegiate debates in one year.

For the administration of debating affairs, there is a Forensic Council of nine members appointed by the president of the senior class from students in the three upper classes. A president of the group is elected and holds membership in the Student Council. The Forensic Council sponsors the intramural debate contest and aids in conducting the extemporaneous speaking contest for which all students are eligible.



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