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**Penn State First Founded
As Farmers' High School**

*Refounding Through Acceptance of Morrill Land
Grant Act Caused Development*

The Farmers' High School, baptismal name of the Penn State College, was a pioneer in agricultural education; its roots go back as early as 1850. Its development, if not its very existence, is due to its re-founding by the acceptance of the Morrill Act, signed by Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin, April 1, 1863, pledging the "faith of the State to carry the same into effect."

The first quarter of a century was marked by a struggle to hold the Land Grant, and by drifting and experiment in educational aims. Six presidents in twenty-three years were scarcely compatible with continuity of plan or purpose. Dr. Evan Pugh, a man of rare vision, trained by six years of study in the universities of Germany, France, and England, the first great president, died at the early age of 36, just as he was laying the foundations of Penn State. His successor, Dr. William H. Allen, formerly and later president of Girard College, served two years with no marked internal changes but with important activities in disposing of the Land Scrip.

Only one course, agriculture, was offered up to 1866, but the settlement of the entire Land Grant upon the College by the Act of 1867, led President John Fraser and the trustees to a "reorganization" in which engineering was to be taught, agriculture and the arts expanded. The program was too ambitious and too expensive to carry out. The trustees voted a "de-organization" and called Dr. Thomas H. Burrowes to salvage the College and restore it to its original purposes. His personal influence stemmed the tide of discouragement at home and opposition abroad (in which the so-called Model Experiment Farms largely figured), but he died in office after but three years of service. Dr. James Calder, a classically trained, classically minded executive, succeeded. The College grew in numbers, largely due to preparatory students, to music and art pupils. Three courses, agriculture, classical, and scientific, were offered, and women students were admitted on equal terms in 1871.

An unfortunate interregnum in 1880-1881 under President Shortridge re-opened the flood gates of criticism and personal recrimination. Students were few and in open rebellion. Faculty, trustee, and legislative investigations followed—the Pennsylvania 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, 1883, 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 to 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

**Thespians Will Look
To Class of '40
For Talent**

Students interested in developing their thespian talents may do so by participating in the activities of the Penn State Thespians, who put on two musical comedy shows during the school year.

Preliminary try-outs for the Thespians' first show will be held early in the fall. The exact dates will be announced in later issues of the COLLEGIAN. Freshmen are eligible to participate. Last year quite a few first year men and women earned places in the singing and dancing choruses and a few gained lead parts. Casting, under the direction of graduate directors, is completed by further trials throughout the year.

Women students were not allowed to take part in Thespian productions until 1930. From 1897, when the organization was founded, until that time, all the parts were taken by men. As the musical comedy era began, the Thespians turned to that type of entertainment, with the result that women gradually earned the right to participate.

Students Write Shows

The present director of the organization is J. Ewing "Sock" Kennedy '26. Prominent in Thespians during his undergraduate days, "Sock" went on Broadway upon graduation and played in the cast of "Good News." After a number of years, he returned to State College and immediately became connected with the Thespians.

The fall show, presented on the Friday night of Fall Houseparty, is usually in the form of revue. The spring show is more on the musical comedy line. The book, lyrics, and music for both of the Thespian productions last year were written by students, assisted by Kennedy and Prof. Hummel Fishburn, of the department of music.

**To the Parents of
Penn State Freshmen**

During the next four years, your son or daughter will spend the most enjoyable years of his or her life. Aside from receiving an education, he will participate in some form of extra-curricular activity.

A complete account of all of the news of the College and its students is published in the PENN STATE COLLEGIAN.

Why not subscribe now, and receive a full account of your son or daughter's achievements while at Penn State.

The \$2.50 subscription price is so small compared with the satisfaction and enjoyment that the Collegian will bring that you cannot afford to pass it by. The first issue comes September 9th, so fill out the blank below and return it immediately to make sure that you will receive the first Penn State news of the year on time.

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