

1870

# 01 History of the West Chester Academy or 'Cornerstone Writings'

John J. Lewis

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## **History of the West Chester Academy or 'Cornerstone Writings'**

written in 1870 by John J. Lewis, Esq.  
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**NOTE:** This history was scanned from a 1972 reprint of Lewis' history which was published by Anro Press of Devon. Thanks go to Dick Swain, Director of the West Chester University Library, for making this available.

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### **SEPTUM CESTRICUM II HISTORY OF THE WEST CHESTER ACADEMY or CORNERSTONE WRITINGS BY JOSEPH J, LEWIS September 13, 1870**

Introduction by Frank Helms, Librarian, West Chester State College

Preface and Footnotes  
by Dorothy I. Lansing, M.D.

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Dedicated to Dr. William Darlington 1782 - 1863 First President of the Chester County Medical Society 1828 - 1852 Builder and Founder of West Chester Academy and Secretary to the Academy 1811 - 1863

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## INTRODUCTION

The history of the adventures suffered by this concise history of the fate of the West Chester Academy and the Chester County Cabinet of Natural Sciences and how they became the West Chester State Normal School, now West Chester State College, is a story unto itself.

The 1874 "old main" suffered demolition in August of 1971; and it was hoped that the steel cornerstone box would be found. When the demolition was completed, no box had apparently been found.

During this past winter, the cornerstone materials containing this history were anonymously given to a member of the college's Alumni Board of Directors, Dr. Stanley Weintraub, who happens to be a faculty member at Pennsylvania State University. The contents found their way into my hands courtesy of Mr. George Latt, Director of Alumni Affairs at West Chester State College. A Penn State student who had worked on the demolition team, found the box and thought it would contain money. Finders keepers. When he pried it open and found that it held ancient documents, he felt guilty and made the effort to return the papers to the college.

The writer of this cornerstone history of the West Chester Academy, Joseph J. Lewis, is responsible, as his story shows, for the creation of what is now West Chester State College.

Frank Helms, Librarian West Chester State College 6-26-72

## EDITOR'S NOTE.

The writer of this cornerstone history of the West Chester Academy, the Honorable Joseph J. Lewis, was born October 5, 1801, at Westtown, Chester County, Pennsylvania and died April 5, 1883. His father, the math teacher at the Westtown school, afterwards established his own school in New Garden township. Young Joseph's education was polished at the Friend's Academy on 4th Street in Philadelphia. At the age of 21, he took charge of the Chester County Academy in Great Valley, built with state funds from the 1809 poor law. In 1825 he was admitted to the Chester County Bar and for 28 years he practiced law with Townsend Haines. In 1827, he married Mary S. Miner,

daughter of Federalist editor Charles Miner. In 1829 and 1830, he was the unsuccessful anti-Jackson candidate for the state legislature and in 1857, the unsuccessful Republican candidate for the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. He was the Commissioner of Internal Revenue from 1863-1865, his partner having been Treasurer of the U. S. In addition, he served as Burgess of West Chester 1839-1844 and President of West Chester Railroad for 5 years. He remarried, twice, to Sarah Jones and to Mrs. P. A. Brooks. His story relative to education in Chester County he retells as part of the overall history of the Academy in this work.

He was an accomplished author although he never published a book. At the age of 23, he wrote the history of Chester County, Pennsylvania, in a series of 29 letters printed in the *West Chester Village Record* and reprinted in *Poulson's Advertiser*. This work is available as a clipping file at the Chester County Historical Society Library. He also wrote the biographical memoir on Townsend Haines, his law partner in West Chester, for Futhey and Cope's History of Chester County (1881). His most famous piece of writing, however, is and was the biography of presidential candidate, 1860, Abraham Lincoln. He was responsible for the Pennsylvania delegation to the 1860 convention in Chicago creating the winning majority of votes for Lincoln and a mutual friend, Jesse Fell, once of West Chester, then of Springfield, Illinois, persuaded Lincoln to write his own autobiography which Fell then sent to Joseph J. Lewis for the proper rendition. It was widely copied by all of the newspapers of the land after it was printed by Samuel R. Downing in West Chester. In later life, Mr. Lewis remained on the board of the West Chester Normal School until 1881, served as Provost of the Law department of Lincoln University, founded the Microscopical Society of West Chester in 1877 and the Philosophical Society of West Chester in 1878.

His hurriedly written cornerstone manuscript if somewhat marred by left out words and lost punctuation is herewith reproduced as he wrote it with footnotes to alleviate the errors.

DIL

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## HISTORY OF THE WEST CHESTER ACADEMY

As the funds for the establishment of the Normal School which this building is designed to accommodate are derived in large measure from the sale of the property belonging to "The Trustees and contributors to the West Chester

Academy" it appears proper that a short history of that institution be deposited in the corner stone of the new building. I have been therefore applied to, to prepare such a history, and I proceed cheerfully to perform the task, altho' owing to the pressure of engagement, it must be done very hurriedly and in a few hours of a single day.

In the year 1811 a number of persons in the Borough of West Chester and the country adjacent feeling the need of an academical institution resolved to establish one in that Borough. A subscription was accordingly set on foot and upwards of seven thousand dollars subscribed for the purpose.

A similar institution called the Chester County Academy had been recently established in the great valley about six miles north of West Chester.(1) It was expected generally by the citizens of our Borough that this academy would be located here. Some adverse influences caused that expectation to be disappointed.

The irritation arising from this disappointment was not without its effect on the subscriptions for the new enterprise, and it was not long before a sufficient amount of money was promised to justify ...

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... the purchase of a scite for an academy building and the erection of the building itself.

On the 28th of September 1811 the first meeting of the subscribers was held, at the Court House in West Chester. It was well attended and the best spirit was manifested. John Forsythe a highly respectable member of the Society of Friends was appointed President and Dr. William Darlington Secretary. The latter was the soul of the enterprise from the beginning.(2) It was there resolved that three persons should be elected as commissioners to purchase a scite for an academy building and "to employ workmen and engage materials for its erection," and also to superintend the erection - that the scite to be purchased should be conveyed to them in trust for the benefit of the academy and conveyed to such trustees as should be thereafter appointed - that the commissioners should be authorized to collect the moneys subscribed and expend them so far as necessary for the erection of the academy building and also to appoint a treasurer to aid them in the accomplishment of their purposes as commissioners.

Col. Joseph McClellan, William Bennett and Dr. William Darlington were appointed commissioners by the meeting, and Dr. Jonas Preston, John Forsythe, William Hemphill Esq., John Duer, Jr., Esq., and Abraham Baily Esq. were made a committee to draft a constitution, to be submitted to the subscribers at a future meeting.

Col. Joseph McClellan had been a Captain in the Pennsylvania line during the war of the revolution and had served with credit from 1776 to 1781. He had been in many battles and though not a brilliant man was distinguished for his coolness and courage in ...

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... action and his scrupulous attention to every duty as an officer and soldier in the field or in the camp. He was elected sheriff of the county some years prior to 1811, and at this time had acquired a competent estate. About 1825 he removed from West Chester to a farm which he purchased in Brandy wine township where he lived in the enjoyment of a serene old age, till past his eightieth year.(3) Dr. Jonas Preston the chairman of the committee appointed to draft a constitution was the same gentleman who afterwards left the bulk of his fortune amounting to nearly four hundred thousand dollars to establish the Preston Retreat, a hospital for the accommodation and treatment of lying-in-women in the city of Philadelphia. He was a member of the Society of Friends, of amiable temper, engaging and even polished manners, and always zealous in the promotion of good works. William Hemphill was a son in law of Col. McClellan and a prominent member of the Chester County bar. He died in 1816 before he had fully attained middle age. John Duer was a member of the same bar, and enjoyed at one time a large practice. He died in 1827 at the age of forty six. William Bennett one of the commissioners owned a farm lying principally within the borough. He was a plain Friend like Dr. Jonas Preston, but was withal an ardent federalist, and continued as long as he lived to take a deep interest in elections. He afterwards became an enthusiastic partisan of General Jackson differing radically from the great body of his political associates. Wm. Townsend another of the committee, was a Friend, and at this time far advanced in life. He was a man of high respectability and owned considerable property in the Borough.

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Abraham Baily the last named committee man resided in Marshalton about four miles west of West Chester. He was a federal politician of some prominence, and represented the county in the state legislature both in the Senate and the lower house.(4) He was a quiet man of good character and fair abilities.

Dr. Wm. Darlington of the committee appointed to draft a constitution, undertook to perform that duty, and the committee reported his draft to a meeting of the contributors which met at the courthouse on Saturday the thirtieth of November 1811. Abraham Baily presided at that meeting and Dr. Wm. Darlington acted as secretary.

The constitution as submitted by the committee was after a few ammendments adopted under the name of "Articles of Association of the contributors to the West Chester Academy."

The constitution provided that the corporation shall be styled the Trustees and contributors to the West Chester Academy and shall consist of persons citizens of the commonwealth who shall have contributed each ten dollars or more towards establishing or supporting the academy.

That the business of the institution should be conducted by nine trustees five of whom should be a quorum, the trustees to be elected annually by ballot at a general meeting of the contributors, on the first Saturday in April in every year. If less than twenty persons should attend at the time and place appointed for the election, the trustees in office should continue to serve till the time of the next annual election. The place of any trustee becoming vacant, ...

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... might be filled by the board.

It was made the duty of the trustees to manage the property and concerns of the corporation, and "by all reasonable and practicable means to promote the careful inculcation of the principles of morality and good order in said academy" and also to employ well qualified teachers. They were authorized to appoint a secretary and treasurer, and they were required to present annually at each stated period of election exhibit, a fair statement of their accounts.(5)

The other articles were not in any respect different from those common to such associations acting as corporate bodies.

The meeting resolved to apply for a charter of incorporation,(6) under an act of assembly of April 6. 1791 entitled "An act to confer on certain associations of the citizens of Pennsylvania the powers and immunities of corporations or bodies politic in law." Wm. Hemphill, Wm. Darlington and Isaac Darlington, a committee to wait on the attorney general and supreme court with the articles of the association "to submit the same for their inspection and approbation and to take all further steps which may be necessary for the completion of the act of incorporation."

At the same meeting

Abraham Baily  
Jonas Preston  
William Hemphill  
John Forsythe  
William Darlington  
Richard Baker  
Joshua Weaver  
William Sharpless and  
William Townsend

were elected trustees.

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The committee appointed to procure a charter of incorporation waited on Jared Ingersoll Esquire then attorney(7) and on the eighteenth of March 1812 obtained his certificate that the articles of association were lawful and the next day, the judges of the supreme court, William Tilghman, Jasper Yeates, and Hugh M. Breckenridge certified their concurrence. The charter of incorporation was thereupon on the 27th day of March AD 1812 issued under the great seal of the commonwealth, and enrolled in the secretary's office in Book No. 1 page 89 which contains a record of acts on corporating religious charitable and literary societies.

The commissioners appointed by the contributors to select and purchase a scite and erect a building purchased a lot of ground on Gay Street, then the principal street of the Borough, and between where Darlington and New Streets have since been laid out. The lot was an eligible one for the purpose intended. It was about one hundred and fifty five feet in front and extended back to the line of Market Street as afterwards laid out and opened. It lay west



of the built part of the town which contained at that time only about six hundred inhabitants and did not reach in that direction beyond the present scite of Darlington Street.

The building was begun in the spring of 1812. Dr. Darlington furnished the plan and attended in large measure to the details of construction. It was about sixty feet in front by thirty six feet deep, and divided by an entry or hall twelve feet wide into two equal parts. There was a handsome stair case in the hall, the workmanship of which was considered at that time as displaying ...

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... more than usual elegance and taste. The building was two stories high with a projection and pediment in front. It was set back from the street about forty feet leaving space for a yard which was planted with trees flowers and shrubbery. On the lower floor were two large school rooms. On the upper were four - two over the east room on the lower floor, one over the entry or hall and the fourth over the lower west room and of the same size. The house was built of stone and rough cast. It was covered, except the roof and window shutters, with paint of a light yellow colour and when finished presented an appearance superior to most structures of the kind at that day when the architectural taste of our people was less developed than it now is. The work was creditable to the commissioners and highly satisfactory to the contributors.(8)

About the middle of August 1813 the structure was so nearly completed that it was thought proper to make preparation for the opening of the academy. The commissioners first appointed had been superceded by trustees elected under the charter and those trustees had been to some extent changed by an election on the third day of April 1813. At that time Jonas Preston, Wm. Hemphill, Isaac Darlington, Wm. Darlington, John Forsythe, Moses Marshall, John Graves, John Duer Jr and Wm. Townsend were (9). The building at the time of the election being unfinished the board was not immediately organized, but on being notified that the work was nearly done the trustees met on the 19th of August 1813, and appointed Dr. Jonas Preston President. Dr. Wm Darlington, Secretary and John Graves treasurer of the board, and(10) then proceeded to raise a committee to ...

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... receive proposals from teachers.

The board met again on the 20th of September following and several applications of teachers read. The trustees appear not to have been satisfied to appoint any of the applicants for at that meeting they directed the secretary to address a letter to the Rev, John Gemmil inviting him to take upon himself the superintendence of the academy, and offering him a compensation of six hundred and fifty dollars for his services. Such an offer would appear at this day meanly inadequate but it was not deemed(11) at that time. Mr. Gemmil was a good classical scholar and a gentleman of superior talents and attainments. He was a doctor of divinity, an eloquent preacher, and was the owner of a good estate. I remember inquiring of Isaac Darlington in 1827 who was then president Judge of the County of this judicial district what kind of man Dr. Gemmil was. We were on our return from the funeral of Judge Davis and having stopped at the White Horse tavern to dine were sitting with some others in the landlord's spacious parlors, with our coats off, the day being very warm. The judge answered in this way. I can give you a better idea of Dr. Gemmil, than by any description, by merely saying that if he were in full life and were to enter that door, not one of us sitting here in this careless way, but would instantly rise and draw on his coat. I need hardly add he was a man of remarkable presence and gave the impression, at a glance, of a finished gentleman." (12)

At the next meeting of the trustees held on the fourth of October 1813 a letter from Dr. Gemmil was read accepting the direction of the academy on the terms offered.

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At the same meeting Jonathan Gause was appointed teacher of English for the term of one year; he to receive three dollars per quarter for each pupil, the trustees reserving the privilege if the school should become large of placing such proportions of the pupils as they should deem best under the care of another teacher or the whole school to be subject to the visitation and inspection of Dr. Gemmil as principal.

On the 18th of October following the English school opened under the direction of Jonathan Gause. The minutes of the trustees give no information as to the time of the opening of the classical school. It is to be presumed however that as the pupils in the department of the languages were few, Dr. Gemmil did not organize his class till a later period.

On the 24th of Nov. a vacancy having occurred in the board by the death of Moses Marshall, Abraham Baily was appointed trustee in his stead. Moses Marshall was the son of Humphrey Marshall, the proprietor of a botanical garden at Marshalton which was named in honor of him, and was a man of high respectability. Dr. Darlington a number of years after the time of which I am now writing collected the correspondence of Humphrey Marshall, mainly on botanical subjects, and adding a neat memoir prepared by himself, published it in one large volume. Mr. Marshall the father was an enthusiastic student of botany, and to those acquainted with that science the volume is instructive and even attractive; and it is not without interest to the general readers.

A note occurs in the minutes of the board of trustees, dated Dec: 20. 1813 by which it appears that the board spent the day ...

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... in noticing the progress of the schools, and they agreed to meet monthly during the winter season.

No further notice of the proceedings of the board occurs on the minutes till the second day of April 1814 when it appears that Dr. Jonas Preston, Abraham Baily, John Forsythe, Wm. Townsend, Isaac Darlington, Daniel Hiester, Wm. Darlington, John Graves and John Duer Jr. were elected trustees and a committee was appointed to settle the accounts of the building commissioners.

On the tenth of June 1816 a committee consisting John Forsythe, <sup>(13)</sup> Isaac Darlington, John Duer Jr. and Wm. Darlington was appointed to examine and observe the progress of the pupils as often as they deem expedient till the tenth day of September following when they were to make report, but what that report was, if it was ever made does not appear.

But it does appear that on that day a letter was received from Dr. Gemmil announcing his resignation as principal of the academy, "in consequence of ill health," and containing a statement of what he supposed would be an equitable charge for his services while he occupies that position.

As he did not insist on the payment of the salary for which he agreed, it is presumable that his pupils were few and his duties light. His claim whatever it was, was not at that time considered and was not adjusted till after his death

which occurred soon after his resignation. The only further entry on this subject is under the date of Feb 28 1877 where we find this resolution.(14)

"Resolved that the sum of sevety five dollars be allowed to the estate of John Gemmil deceased in full on his services as ...

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... principal, and as a compensation for the money paid by him to John Jacobs Jr. for instructing the latin class"

This John Jacobs Jr. was a son of John Jacobs a wealthy landholder in the Chester Valley and a near neighbour of Dr. Gemmil. He was well educated, but having failed in business in Philadelphia involving his father to a large amount, he adopted teaching as a vocation and followed it as his only regular employment to the end of his life which occurred about two years ago in one of the western states where he had long resided totally estranged from his family.

As frequently happens in enterprises of a public nature the ardor of those originally engaged appears to have cooled to some extent when the subscription money was demanded and some who had subscribed were backward in paying. On the 28th of December 1814 it was therefore resolved that legal measures be forthwith taken to collect the subscription money then unpaid. How many suits were commenced in obedience to this resolution is not stated. We have notice of only one on the minutes. This was brought against "Eachus" who appears to have procured a judgment in his favour before a Justice of the peace, and the board order(15) an appeal to be taken.

On the 20th of Feb. 1815 the trustees conceiving "that a more perfect and regular system of tuition should be introduced into the academy and believing that the establishment of classes in the school under the direction of the trustees and in conformity with fixed and known regulations (as in the case of all well regulated seminaries) would enduce to good order and to the advantage of the ...

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... scholars" resolved that after the first Saturday of the next April the school should be divided into three classes for each of which classes a competent

teacher should be appointed, and that a committee of the board "should superintend the admission of scholars and the management of the school," and rules were prescribed for each admission and for the advancement of pupils from class to class.

This system thus adopted was tried for a time but was found not to work well in practice owing to the miscellaneous character of the school and the small number of pupils pursuing the study of the Latin classics, and after a short trial it was abandoned.

At the same meeting the treasurer reported that the executors of the will of Thomas Wister had paid into his hands since the last meeting of the board five hundred dollars for the benefit of the institution. The interest of this fund was directed by the testator to be applied to the schooling of poor children as the trustees should direct.

March 15, 1815 The trustees fixed the salary of the teacher of the Junior class at four hundred dollars per annum and that of the English class at Six hundred.

Joseph Cooper was appointed teacher of the Junior class and Jonathan Gause teacher of the 2nd class for the ensuing year.

Francis Glass agreed to take charge of the senior class, he to receive all money paid for tuition of that class, as a compensation for his services.

He was a fine classical scholar and the author of a Life of Washington in latin. His manufacturer of Roman words to designate ...

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... the implements of modern warfare was somewhat amusing, but taking the book as a whole it was a highly creditable performance.

Mr. Glass continued to teach the latin class about a year. He was then succeeded by Wm T. Woodman, at the salary of \$400.

Jonathan Gause was engaged for another year at a salary of \$600. This appears by the minutes of the board dated April 29. 1816.

On the seventh of April 1817 a donation of \$1000 to the Academy was reported by the secretary.

On the next day Jonathan Gause was appointed teacher of English for another year at a salary of \$550, with a proviso that if the trustees should be enabled to sink the debt of the institution one hundred dollars his salary should be \$600. Job Wickersham was at the same time appointed teacher of the Junior class for a year at 350 dollars, and the Latin school was suspended.

The trustees at the same time purchased fifty shares of the capital stock of the Bank of Chester County then recently instituted.

The impression of the U. S. arms on the American half dollar was adopted for the corporate seal of the Academy. Dec 24. 1818. Nathaniel Todd was appointed to take charge of all the classes of the institution - he to take all the enrollments, to keep the buildings in repair and teach such pupils gratis as should be designated by the trustees as entitled to the benefit of the Wistar donation. His duties to commence on the first of April 1818.(16)

Mr. Todd continued to have charge of the academy till the first of April 1822. A few months prior to which date he was notified ...

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... that the trustees decided to repossess the buildings and property in his charge; and soon after the trustees again engaged the services of Jonathan Gause as teacher on the same terms as those on which his predecessor had contracted.

Mr. Gause commenced a second time to teach the classes of the Academy on the first of April 1822.

There being at this time some demand for a latin and Greek teacher, he invited Joseph J. Lewis to take charge of the pupils learning those languages on the terms that he should receive all the emoluments arising from the tuition of those languages and that he should assist in teaching the mathematical class as a compensation for his board in Mr. Gause's family. This is the same person that now writes this sketch. He began with Mr. Gause on the first of August 1822 and remained with him till Dec. 1, 1824. During this period he taught the latin and Greek classes which were small never exceeding eight or

ten pupils and assisted in the English department, particularly in the higher mathematics. He also wrote a history of Chester County which was published in the Village Record a weekly newspaper ably edited by Charles Miner afterward a member of Congress representing the district, and the author of the History of Wyoming and other works, and studied the law while teaching at the Academy.(17) In Dec. 1824 he left the academy and went to New York to finish his law studies under Chancellor Kent, the author of the commentaries.

On the 29th of April 1825 the board fearing that a street would be run through the Academy grounds ordered that two houses should be built on Gay Street, one on the east side and one on the west of the ...

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... Academy yard.

This was not a judicious proceeding and Mr. Miner who was a trustee so regarding it presented a spirited and well timed remonstrance against the measure. It was not heeded and the buildings were forthwith erected: and another location a little eastward of the Academy lot was found in the proposed street.(18) The erection of the houses cost \$2527.40. On the 13th of May 1825 Ziba Pyle was appointed President of the Board of trustees.(19)

Jonathan Gause continued to teach at the academy on the same terms as at first employed except that he was required to pay a rent of sixty dollars for one year and sixty five dollars for other years, as rent, till April 1, 1829, when in pursuance of notice given by the trustees he quit the property and Joseph Strode was appointed to succeed him, on the same terms.

Joseph Strode taught but one year only, and Jonathan Gause on Mr. Strode's departure rented of the trustees the two lower rooms for one year at \$25, he to teach two of the Wister pupils.(20)

At the end of the year Mr. Gause was directed to leave and on the 1st of Feb. 1831 an arrangement was made with Daniel Fuller and Dr. John Barber to take charge of the academy.

On the 18th of Nov. 1831. the corporation adopted a new seal with the motto from Horace of "Vim promovet insitam."(21) On the 20th of December of the same year the trustees resolved to erect a boarding house on Market Street, for a residence for the principal and the accommodation of students coming

from a distance.(22) The new house together with the academy building was rented for the year ...

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... following April 1, 1833 to Daniel Fuller for one year for a rent of \$400. The expense of the new building was found to be \$4819.58.

On the 1st of April 1834 Daniel Fuller quit the premises and an arrangement was made with Anthony Bolmar to take the property for four years paying \$150 for the first year \$200 for each year for the remaining years, of the term. The same year an act was passed by the state legislature appropriating \$1000 immediately and \$500 a year for three years for the relief of the academy and the thanks of the institution were rendered to Wm. Jackson of the Senate and Dr. Wilmer Worthington of the House of Representatives for their efforts in procuring the donation.

Mr. Bolmar continued to conduct the academy till the first day of April 1840 when having purchased the large property erected for the purpose of accommodating a female school and then lately sold at sheriffs sale, he removed his school thither.(23) This property is on the east side of the Borough and was at that time in an eligible situation and well adapted in every way to the purposes of a school. During Mr. Bolmar's occupation of the academy he was very successful. The numbers of his pupils sometimes amounted to nearly 200, and his profits were considerable. His management was entirely satisfactory to the trustees and they regretted to lose the benefit of his success.

The board next engaged the services of Wm. Henry Rees as successor to Mr. Bolmar on a contract for five years on terms similar to those on which Mr. Bolmar had taken the property.

In 1841 Mr. Rees gave up his contract, and James Crowell was [omission] ...

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... In 1850 the Chester County cabinet of Natural Sciences was merged in the Academy, and a large and valuable building with an extensive collection of botanical and mineral specimens and a scientific library was transferred to the last named institution.(24)



In February 1857 Ziba Pyle who had been president of the board of Trustees died and Joseph J. Lewis the writer of this hasty notice was appointed in his stead. Mr. Pyle had been president of the board twenty five years. He was a member of the Chester County bar and a lawyer in good professional standing. His death occurred at the age of sixty six, before the infirmities of age had seriously impaired either his physical or mental vigour. His successor then appointed still continues to be president, though for several years in the interim absent from West Chester in the service of the United States Government.

On the 21st of October 1852 the contributors were convened for the purpose of considering the propriety of selling the two houses on Gay Street already mentioned. They approved the propositions to sell and the houses were therefore exposed to sale and in due time sold and conveyed.

On Dec. 17, 1853 the President was directed to give Mr. Crowell notice that they desired to repossess the academy buildings. That duty was performed and Mr. Crowell in answer informed Mr. Lewis that he would yield up possession on the first day of the following April. An arrangement was therefore made with William F. Wyers who agreed to rent the premises for three years. He entered into possession on the first day of April 1854 and succeeded<sup>(25)</sup> in establishing a large and flourishing school. He continued his school ...

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... in the academy buildings for upwards of twelve years and then having purchased the property late of Anthony Bolmar removed thither taking many of his pupils with him on the first of July 1866. He proved to be a valuable teacher.

In the autumn of 1856 the trustees caused the lower story of the Cabinet Hall to be new modelled and refitted and in the spring of 1857 one of the rooms was leased to Mary Pratt as a school room. In May 1858 the rest of the building an apartment having been added, rented all the rooms on the first and second stories to Dr. F. Taylor, Ellwood Harvey and Fordyce A. Allen for a normal school at a rent of \$350 a year.

In the course of the next two years this school came entirely under the control of Mr. Allen who purchased out a lease given to Mary Pratt, in order to obtain the room necessary for the accommodation of his pupils who had become

quite numerous. In 1862 a gymnasium was erected at the expense of the board for their accommodation. Mr. Alien in 1864 was ap[omission](26) principal of a Normal School recently established at Mansfield Tioga County Penna. He left in April of the same year and the apartments in the Cabinet Hall were immediately leased to Mr. Wyers, the academy rooms having become much crowded.

On the 25th of April 1863 Dr. Wm. Darlington died. He had attained the venerable age of eighty one and had been secretary of the board of Trustees from the establishment of the Academy. To his untiring patience, zeal for the promotions of learning and unabated interest in the institution its success is mainly owing. He settled in West Chester early in life as a practitioner of medicine, after ...

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... first visiting India and for six years represented the district in Congress. He was also for a time Canal commissioner under a law of the state and assisted to establish one system of internal navigation. After his resignation of the office of Canal commissioner he ceased to practice his profession and devoted much of his time to the cultivation(27) of botanical science. His book entitled Flora Cestrica was a valuable addition to the learning in the subject and passed through several editions the last of which was much enlarged and improved. His contributions to botany attracted the attention of scientists not only in America but in Europe also and he corresponded with many of the men distinguished men of the day particularly noted for their acquisitions in the same line of study. In the year 1829, (28) the faculty of Yale College conferred on him the degree of doctor of laws. He was a man of exemplary moral character, great public spirit, and agreeable manners. His habits of study continued to the last month of his life and his faculties of mind were not in the least impaired by advanced age. He left a memory that will long be cherished with unqualified respect by the citizens of his nation county and state.

After the resignation of Wm. F. Wyers the academy buildings were leased to I. Harte Worrall and J. Paulin, and the cabinet hall was leased to the Misses Lamborn for one year.

In April 1869, the board was called together for the purpose of considering the propriety of making an effort to establish a Normal .School in this district of the state - and it was suggested that the academy property be sold and the

proceeds appropriated to the establishment of such a school. It was estimated that the real estate ...

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... belonging to the West Chester Academy would sell for \$35000 - that \$15000 would be contributed by the state - and that \$50,000 might be raised by subscriptions. This suggestion came from Dr Wilmer Worthington and the president, who had previously conferred together on the subject, and was considered favourably by the board.(29)

Another meeting was called for the 29th of April and James P. Wickersham the state superintendent was invited to be present. In a conference with him he encouraged the proposed enterprise and gave some valuable information as to the erection of other Normal Schools. It was forthwith resolved to lay the subject before the surviving contributors and the late members of the Chester County Cabinet who all by the terms of merger held an interest in the institution. Their consent was obtained. A public meeting was then called and the project was submitted to the citizens. A cordial response was made and a committee appointed to consider the terms on which the property of the academy would be conceded to the new institution. After various meetings held by that committee and the trustees the terms of cession were agreed upon and report was made of the proceedings to another public meeting of the citizens. At that public meeting a subscription was opened and a liberal sum was immediately subscribed. A committee was appointed to solicit other subscriptions. That committee now reports that the amount of the subscriptions has risen to about \$48900 and that an additional sum of \$1500 will probably soon be made up.

The subscriptions having progressed so favourably that the success of the enterprise seemed no longer doubtful, it was deemed safe to commence the work of erecting the proposed building for the ...

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... Normal School and in July 1870 the whole was contracted for. The building was agreed to be erected for \$74000. In accordance with the plans of Addison Hutten the engineer.(30) This plan does not include wings, which may be built at some future period. The corner stone is to be laid tomorrow. The new

institution will be organized early in the year 1870, when the functions of the board of trustees of the West Chester Academy will cease.

Joseph J. Lewis. Sept 13. 1870

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## FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

1. As a result of the poor law passed in the State Legislature in 1809. Dr. Jonas Preston, donor of the Preston Retreat, created the bill and was proud to be known as its author.
2. William Darlington, 1782-1863, born in Birmingham township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, M.D. degree 1804. Practiced medicine 25 years. Congressman, banker, railroad builder, road builder, author, historian, active in community and county life, and famous botanist.
3. His farm within the confines of the borough of West Chester was purchased in 1820 by Dr. William Darlington.
4. The reference here is to the very sharp division of political parties then in Chester County to those of 1) Federalist and 2) Democratic Republican. Federalism lasted a generation longer in Chester County than it did on the national political scene where it collapsed with the nomination of Rufus King in 1816.
5. The word "and" belongs between the word "election" and the word "exhibit."
6. Misspelling. "Incorporation" should be "incorporation."
7. The word "attorney" should read "attorney general."
8. It was so handsome that its likeness was engraved on the paper money issued by the Bank of Chester County.
9. The word "elected" was inadvertently left out here.
10. This is the punctuation of the original.
11. "So" should be placed between the words "not" and "deemed."

12. These tavern get-togethers were so common that one between this cornerstone author, J. J. Lewis, and Jonathan Gause and Wm. Darlington became famous in 1823. See the newspapers (*Village Record* and *American Republican*) of that time.

13. The word "of" is missing following the word "consisting."

14. 1877 is obviously an error. It should be 1817.

15. "Order" should be "ordered."

16. The verb "were" should be present after the word "duties."

17. Charles Miner created the Americanism "he has an axe to grind" and was an able Federalist newspaper editor. He unfortunately became a bitter enemy of Dr. Darlington's in 1823.

18. This is true. Miner pointed out that such an investment of the Academy's capital funds could go up in the smoke of a fire and so he insisted that the tenement buildings, as they were called, be covered by fire insurance.

19. Ziba Pyle lived on the northeast corner of Church and Gay Streets.]

20. "Teah" should be "teach."

21. I am indebted to Katherine Trezevant for the information that this quote from Horace is incomplete and should be *Doctrina Vim Promovet Insitam*, translated as "Teaching Increases Inborn Strength."

22. The County of Chester from this point on became famous for its healthy private boarding schools easily reachable because Dr. Darlington had caused or promoted the building of the West Chester Railroad linked to Pennsylvania's system of canals - railroads.

23. The school was built for Almira Lincoln Phelps, author of many text books on botany.

24. The Cabinet was founded in 1826. In 1836 it built Cabinet Hall on Church Street, still standing.

25. "Sucessed" should be "succeeded."

26. Missed the rest of the word: "ap-" should be "appointed."

27. "Culivation" should be "cultivation."

28. 1829 is in error. The date should be 1855.

29. Dr. Wilmer Worthington as a young medical student was the preceptee of Dr. William Darlington at a fee of \$150. He began his training in July of 1822. In 1869 he was the presiding officer of the Senate of the State of Pennsylvania.

30. The engineer was also the architect.

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