

Historical Notes

*An Abstract of the Accounts of the ACADEMY in Philadelphia,
from the 27th of December 1749, to the 10th of June 1752*

RECEIPTS, viz. Received in Part of the Subscriptions, Benefactions, viz

£ 1530 18 0 Benefactions ...

From the Corporation of Philadelphia, besides their Subscription, £ 200 0 0 ...

Received for the Entrances, School Money, and Firing to this Day, £ 577 6 7

PAYMENTS, viz.

*Paid Edmund Woolley and John Coates (who were appointed by the late Trustees
of the New Building to receive the Consideration Money) for the Building, and
Ground belonging thereto £ 755 18 11*

*Expended in carrying up Partition walls, Chimnies, Stair case, and fitting up
Apartments for their several Schools, Levelling, Paving, &c. &c. £ 1104 16 0 ...*

*Remitted to Peter Collinson, of London, for a Parcel of Books and Mathematical
Instruments, for the Use of the Schools £ 173 10*

*Paid for Fire wood for two Winters, and sundry Utensils for the Schools,
£ 52 17 10*

*Paid the Rector, Master and Tutors, on Account of their Salaries to this Day
£ 902 8 5*

*The Books and Vouchers for the several Articles of this Account are in the Hands
of William Coleman, Treasurer to the Academy, where any Subscriber may at any
time freely inspect or peruse them.*

*The great expence of Purchasing and Building, necessary for the speedy
Accommodation and Establishment of the Academy, having occasioned the
Trustees to be considerably in Advance before the annual Subscriptions could be
collected, [it is] hoped every Subscriber will be so good as to send his Money to the
Treasurer punctually for the future, that they may be reimbursed. The third Year
Subscription will be due the 25th of November next.*

—The Pennsylvania Gazette, 26 October 1752

Benjamin Franklin not only founded the University of Pennsylvania, he also managed virtually every aspect of its planning and operation for the first seven years of its life. When he published this brief, but characteristically pithy account of Penn's first thirty months, he was clearly proud of all that had been accomplished in such a relatively short period of time, but also mindful of the continuing need to rally support for the school. Franklin truly cared about public service and Penn was surely one of his greatest achievements. To the modern eye, however, even a cursory examination of Franklin's account brings another realization: the University of Pennsylvania has grown from very humble beginnings. The University's public celebration of Commencement, a day when thousands of people set out on their own lives, offers an appropriate time for reflection on the great mission of higher education in America.

The "Publick Academy in the City of Philadelphia" becomes the University of Pennsylvania

No detail of Penn's first years escaped Franklin's attention in his role as President of the Trustees. He negotiated the purchase of the New Building property from the followers of the Great Awakening evangelist, George Whitefield. He re-designed the unfinished interior of the preaching hall and supervised its construction. He hired the first faculty, headed the first development campaign, and co-authored the collegiate charter of 1755. Even as early as November 1753, however, he realized that he must reach beyond Philadelphia if he was, as he put it, to "see a perfect institution." Like all colonial Pennsylvanians, Franklin looked to the heirs of William Penn to support and, hopefully, to endow the public charities of the Province. As he sought to recruit his choice for Penn's first Provost — a

brilliant young Scotsman, William Smith – Franklin described the Academy's circumstances succinctly, "Matters relating to the Academy remain in *statu quo*. The trustees would be glad to see a Provost established there, but they dread entering into new Engagements till they are got out of debt; ... unless the Proprietors shall think fit to put the finishing Hand to our Institution, it must, I fear, wait some years longer before it can arrive at that State of Perfection, which to me it now seems capable of." Less than a year later Franklin's wish was fulfilled. William Penn's fourth son, Thomas, had acquired three-quarters control of Pennsylvania on the death of an elder brother in 1748. In the spring of 1754 he responded to Franklin and the other Trustees by partially endowing the position of Provost. He also began to take an active interest in the work of the Academy, authorizing the issuance of the collegiate charter in 1755. Meanwhile, central and western Pennsylvania became the principal battleground in the American phase of a world war known in Europe as the Seven Years War. Franklin and Thomas Penn found themselves on opposite sides of the political reaction in Pennsylvania and Penn, relying upon his allies among the other Trustees, forced Franklin out of the College and Academy presidency in 1756. Franklin moved on to other, equally rewarding roles in public service, but he retained a deep enmity for Thomas Penn throughout his life.

The College at Penn graduated its first class in 1757, a class of just six young men, but one destined for greatness. Among the six were a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, a Signer of the U.S. Constitution, two clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church, one clergyman of the Presbyterian Church, and one young man who traveled to Scotland, and in 1763, earned the M.D. degree of the University of Edinburgh. This was John Morgan, who, on his return to Philadelphia,



Ringling of the Old Academy Bell, October 1962. It was largely due to the efforts of Benjamin Franklin that a bell was installed in the cupola of the tower of the Academy building at Fourth and Arch Streets in Old City Philadelphia in 1752. In 1802, when the University moved to a new campus on Ninth Street, the Academy bell was left behind. It moved several times in the 19th century, not finding a permanent home until 1869. When that home was demolished in 1945, the University finally recovered its Academy bell. In 1962 the University rang the bell at the dedication of the new Van Pelt Library. There the Academy bell may still be seen in its new home. In this view, University President Gaylord P. Harnwell (on the left) leads in ringing the bell, joined by (from left to right) Pennsylvania Governor David L. Lawrence; University Trustees Robert Dechert and Wilfred D. Gillen; and the Library's benefactors David and Elizabeth (Patterson) Van Pelt. Photographer unknown. *Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.*

successfully proposed the establishment of America's first school of medicine. Morgan had the foresight to bring with him from England a letter of endorsement from Thomas Penn. The Trustees adopted the plan immediately and appointed Morgan to the first professorship of medicine and William Shippen to the first professorship of anatomy and surgery. In 1768, the School of Medicine graduated its first class and Penn became, *de facto*, America's first university.

While 1765 was the year in which Penn established a second school under a single institutional governing body, nearly fifteen years would pass before it would be named the University of Pennsylvania. While Thomas

Penn, Provost William Smith, and Franklin's successor as President of the Board, the Church of England clergyman, Richard Peters, together assured the College and Academy of financial stability and continuity, they aligned Penn with the Church of England and support for King George III. When the American Revolutionaries took control of Pennsylvania, among their targets were Penn's Trustees. In 1779 the new state legislature declared the 1755 charter null and void, replaced it with a new charter, and appointed a new board of trustees. Penn's new Trustees, in turn, immediately elected a new Provost. Penn's name under the new charter was the "University of the State of

Pennsylvania" and Penn thereby became, *de iure*, the first institution of higher education in British North America to take the name university (one week, it should be noted, before the Virginia legislature voted the same honor to William and Mary).

Penn in 1802: A New Campus

Two hundred years ago the University proudly moved from its first campus, at the southwest corner of Fourth and Arch Streets, to the "President's House" on the west side of Ninth Street, between Market and Chestnut Streets. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had commissioned the great mansion in an effort to honor the President of the United States, but to John Adams it was reminiscent of the palaces of Europe and therefore an unfit residence for the leader of a free republic. In 1801, when the Federal government left Philadelphia for the new city of Washington, D.C., the state of Pennsylvania made the

property available to the University. Penn converted the building's interior to classrooms, laboratories, and faculty offices and on 29 March 1802 the student bodies of the Academy, the College and the Department of Medicine moved into their new home. The University remained at the Ninth Street campus until its move to West Philadelphia in 1872.

At the Commencement of 1802, held on Thursday, 27 May, the Trustees gathered at the Ninth Street campus, where they were joined by Thomas McKean, the Governor of Pennsylvania, the faculty, the candidates for degrees, and "the students in general." Governor McKean and the Trustees then led the academic procession six blocks to the "hall" of the old campus, where they were greeted by "a great number of respectable citizens, both ladies and gentlemen." The commencement program included three under-

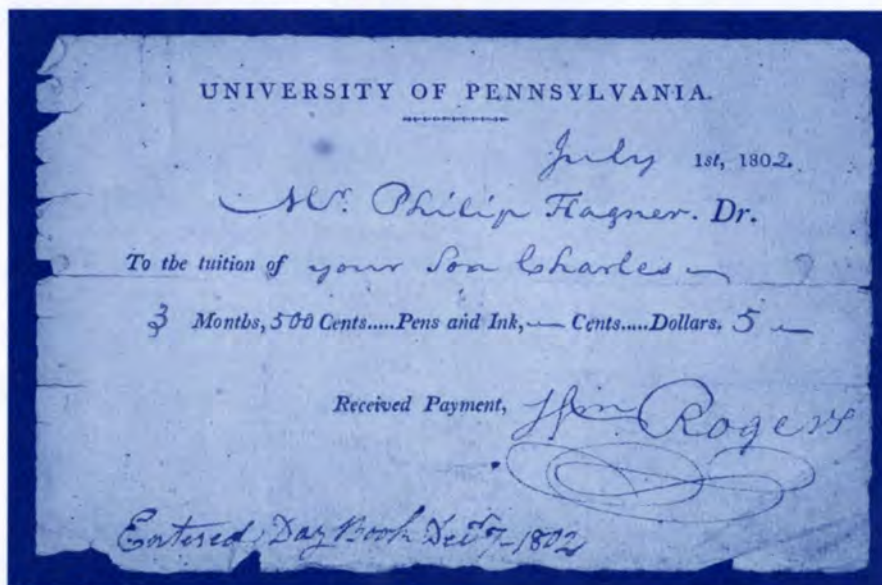
graduate presentations: a Latin salutary, "On the advantages enjoyed by the people of the United States;" a debate on the question, "Whether dueling, to revenge private injuries, be lawful in civil society;" and a valedictory oration on "The necessity of an early application to the pursuits of literature." The Trustees conferred the degree of Bachelor of Arts on five young men, all of whom later enjoyed distinguished careers in Philadelphia-area business and law.

Penn's reputation as a national center for medical education was already established by 1802. Enrollment in the Department of Medicine, as it was then known, was four times greater than in the College and the twenty-one graduates in the Class of 1802 included residents of seven U.S. states and one foreign nation.

Within a few weeks of Commencement, however, Philadelphia's most infamous 18th century scourge, yellow fever, broke out yet again. Through the summer and fall of 1802, the mosquito-borne disease reduced America's greatest city to near paralysis. Provost John Ewing – who had served continuously since 1779 – was one of those who died that summer. The Trustees did not meet and classes did not resume until November, after the first hard frost had ended the deadly threat. By then the University faced real hardship. Tuition had not been invoiced and could not be collected. The faculty had not been paid for four months and several professors sought reimbursement for the wages of their teaching assistants, whom they had paid out of their own pockets. The Trustees met four times in two months and by mid-December had agreed upon and voted appropriate compensation for all University faculty and staff. By the close of the calendar year the University had returned to its regular schedule and traditional rhythm.

The year 1802 also saw Penn's increasing participation in a larger world. In April the University library was delighted to receive a

Entered Day Book Dec' 7-1802. Two hundred years ago Penn faculty typically collected tuition directly from their students. Rev. Dr. William Rogers was Professor of English and Belles Lettres from 1792 to 1811. He was also master of the English School in the Academy, where Charles Hagner was a student in 1802. The extraordinary charge of just five dollars tuition for three months' instruction reflects an academic term in which the number of school days was greatly reduced by the yellow fever epidemic of that year. *Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.*

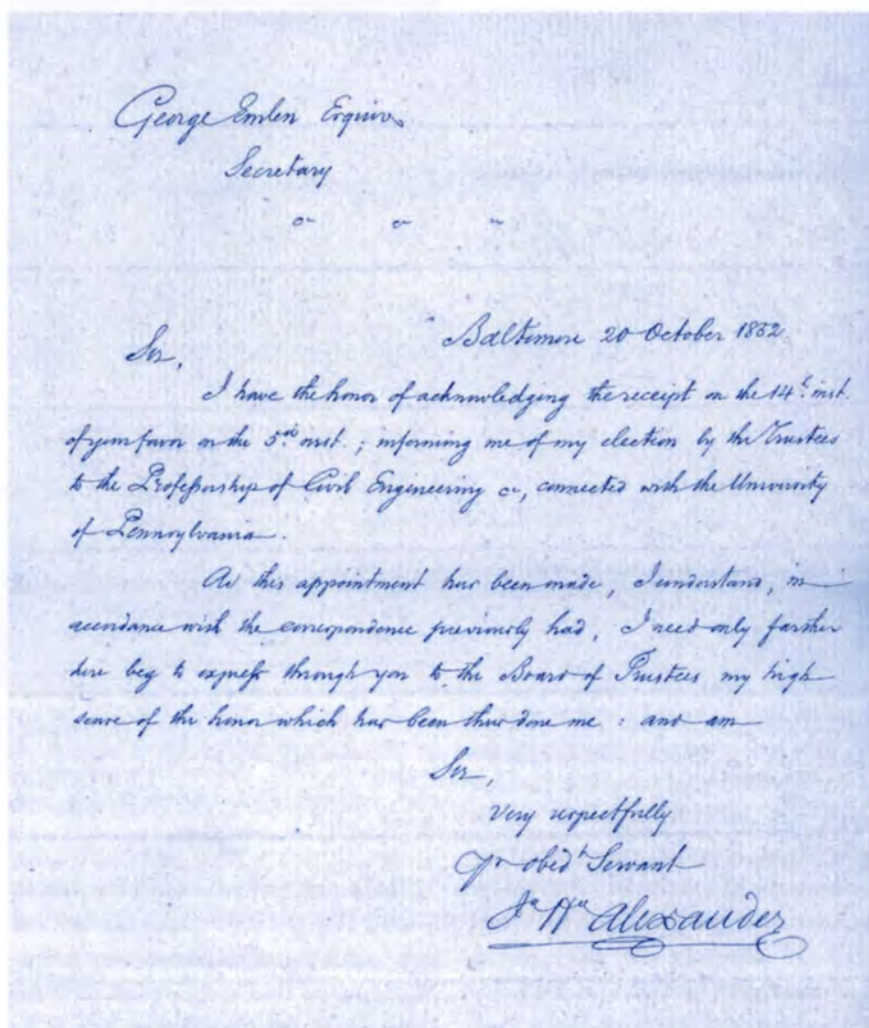


gift of "four Books in the Bengalese Language, which are presented by the Reverend Mr. William Carey, Baptist Missionary in India and Professor of the Bengalese and Sanskrit Languages in the College of Fort William in Calcutta." The Trustees "Resolved . . . to thank Mr. Carey in the name of the Board for his very valuable present."

1852: Schools of Applied Science and Law

The year 1852 was a watershed in University history. The Trustees re-organized the College, established two new schools – the Law School and the predecessor of the present-day School of Engineering and Applied Science – and created two new degrees, the Bachelor of Law and the Bachelor of Science. The Law School had existed briefly in the late eighteenth century, when U.S. Supreme Court Justice James Wilson served as Penn's first Professor of Law. In 1850 the Trustees had elected Philadelphia judge George Sharswood to the re-established professorship of law. In two years he had proven that the future of legal education was in the classroom of a university rather than in the traditional apprenticeship system.

At their May 1852 meeting, the Trustees formally established a Faculty of Law, to consist of a Professor of the Institutes of Law, who taught international, constitutional, commercial and civil law; a Professor of Practice, Pleading, and Evidence at Law and in Equity; and a Professor of the Law of Real Estate, Conveyancing, and Equity Jurisprudence. They appointed George Sharswood to the professorship of the Institutes of Law and declared that the Professor of the Institutes of Law should also be Dean of the Law School. They stipulated that the course of the Law School consisted of two years and that its graduates should, on the recommendation of the faculty, be entitled to the degree of Bachelor of Law.



1852 – Manuscript letter

George Emlen, Esquire
Secretary [of the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania]

Baltimore, 20 October 1852

Sir: I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt on the 14th inst. of your own on the 5th inst.; informing me of my election by the Trustees to the Professorship of Civil Engineering connected with the University of Pennsylvania.

As this appointment has been made, I understand, in accordance with the correspondence previously had, I need only further here beg to express through you, to the Board of Trustees, my high sense of the honor which has been thus done me and am Sir, very respectfully, your obedt. Servant. J.H. Alexander.

In establishing a school of applied science, the Trustees selected one of America's most prominent and respected scientists as the first Professor of Civil and Mining Engineering at Penn. John Henry Alexander (1812-67) was a graduate of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and had been appointed topographical engineer of the State of Maryland at the age of 22. He was a scientific pioneer in the fields of railroad development and coal-mining and was President of George's Creek Coal and Iron Company, which he helped to found, from 1836 to 1845. In September 1848, Alexander co-founded the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In 1852, he was elected a member of Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society. In March 1863 he became one of the fifty charter members and incorporators of the National Academy of Sciences. *Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.*

The new degree of Bachelor of Science, on the other hand, was revolutionary in its effect. The Trustees ordered that the College be organized in seven departments: Ancient Languages (Latin and Greek), Mathematics, Natural Philosophy and Chemistry, Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, English Literature, Modern Languages (French, German and Italian), and Natural History. The course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts required, as it always had, satisfactory completion of the subjects in the first four of these departments, plus the new subject of English Literature. The new degree of Bachelor of Science was offered to those students who did not take any classes in the Ancient Languages.

This decision – that undergraduate education at Penn no longer required advanced work in Latin and Greek – completely overturned the established order in the faculty. Rev. Dr. John Ludlow, who was in his eighteenth year as Provost of the University, was so profoundly opposed to this reform that he submitted his resignation. He was succeeded by Henry Vethake, an economist and mathematician and the first Provost in Penn's history who was not also an ordained clergyman. Henry Reed, the first professor of English Literature in Penn's history, became Vice Provost. A distinguished engineer, surveyor, and geologist, John H. Alexander, was recruited to fill the first professorship of Civil and Mining Engineering. The Trustees required that the faculty of applied science "combine strict theory with the fullest practical instruction and for that purpose every opportunity (to) be taken for visiting with the pupils the various workshops and manufactures within reach, the use of instruments (to) be taught in the field; and the months of July and August (to) be devoted to geological excursions and visits to mines." In its new School of Mines, Arts, and Manufactures, Penn was clearly returning to the utilitarian values of its founder Benjamin Franklin.



Hideyo Noguchi (1876-1928). Assistant to Simon Flexner, Professor of Pathology, 1901; Assistant in Pathology, School of Medicine, 1902; Assistant Demonstrator of Pathology, School of Medicine, 1903; appointed Research Assistant at the Carnegie Institute, Washington, D.C., 1904; appointed Assistant of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York City, 1904; recipient of the honorary degree of Master of Science, University of Pennsylvania, 1906. Guncker Gensen, photographer. *Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.*

1902: Dawning of a Research Institution

In 1902 Provost Charles Custis Harrison was in the eighth year of his extraordinary sixteen-year tenure as chief executive officer of the University. He was chiefly interested in facilities development and 1902 proved to be a year of exceptional accomplishment. The Randall Morgan Laboratory for Physics was dedicated in January; the Trustees named the architects of the proposed Towne Building that same month; in March construction began on the Medical Laboratories building on Hamilton Walk; and, in a series of actions during the course of the year, the Trustees took possession of the estate of Joseph Bennett and began long-range planning for Bennett Hall at the southeast corner of 34th and Walnut streets.

Together with new national research funding, the new buildings were harbingers of the modern research institution. Provost Harrison negotiated a major gift from Joseph Wharton, "by which the endowment of the Wharton

School was brought up to \$500,000" (or \$10.5 million in 2002 dollars). The Clark brothers, Clarence and Edward, donated \$100,000 to establish and endow the "Research Professorship in Assyriology" at the University of Pennsylvania Museum. The Clark Professorship, dedicated to the study and publication of the collections in the Babylonian section, has subsequently been held by several of the greatest scholars in the history of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, including the late Samuel Noah Kramer.

In 1902, members of the Penn faculty were also among the first scholars and scientists whose research was funded by the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Silas Weir Mitchell, a medical scientist and Trustee of the University, was among the first trustees of the Carnegie Institution. He was instrumental in winning research funding for Penn's Professor of Pathology, Simon Flexner, and for Flexner's brilliant laboratory associate, the bacteriologist Dr. Hideyo Noguchi. Mitchell also facilitated research grants to the chair of the Department of Botany and Zoology, Professor John M. Macfarlane, and his chief research associate, Dr. Henry S. Conard.

Even as he was winning funding from the Carnegie Institution, Flexner was being recruited by John D. Rockefeller to accept the directorship of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (now Rockefeller University). Just a year earlier, in June 1901, Rockefeller had established the Institute as the nation's first center for biomedical research. Flexner soon accepted Rockefeller's offer, moved to New York City, and funded a research professorship, which he used to recruit Noguchi. In many ways the Rockefeller Institute was the model for the modern research institution and it was former Penn faculty who guided its mission and established

its reputation for great advances in medical research.

1952: Penn on the Stage of "American Leadership"

Penn's Class of 1952 will likely remember that Commencement was held in the Municipal Auditorium on South 34th Street, and may also recall that the Commencement speaker was Henry M. Wriston, who was then in his fifteenth year as President of Brown University. It was also, of course, a presidential election year and Penn's president, the late Harold E. Stassen, was deeply interested in the outcome. Stassen had been one of the leading candidates for the U.S. presidency in 1948 and throughout his four years at Penn had continued to be very active at the highest levels of national political life. By June 18th, when Penn held its Commencement, Dwight D. Eisenhower had announced his candidacy for the presidency and was already assured of the Republican party nomination. Stassen hoped for a prominent role in foreign policy in an Eisenhower administration. Wriston was nationally acclaimed for his expertise in foreign affairs and his moderate, balanced views were similar to those of Stassen. Stassen knew that Wriston's address would reflect well on Brown, on Penn, and on himself.

"American leadership," Wriston said, required both "a clear sense of direction and hospitality toward the views of those whom we seek to lead. We have done much better in the first than in the second. ... It is in sensitiveness to the views of our allies that we have not shown adequate capacity for leadership." The U.S. was failing, he said, to consider allies' responses to its actions. Wriston was also critical of the tendency to be "so obsessed with the tension between ourselves and the Russians" as to regard everything behind the Iron Curtain as unified. Wriston perceived a need for higher education, particularly in major universities, to respond, in part by developing degree pro-



Honorary Degree Recipients in June 1952. From left to right, Lester Weldon Nelson (B.S. in Ed., 1924), President of the Middle Atlantic States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools; Frederick Sumner McKay (D.D.S., 1900), dentist and pioneer in the fluoridation of public water supplies; Williams Biddle Cadwalader (M.D., 1902), Emeritus Professor of Neurology at the University of Pennsylvania and President of the Zoological Society of Pennsylvania; Harold E. Stassen, President of the University of Pennsylvania; William Carlos Williams (M.D., 1906), poet novelist, and physician; David Sarnoff, Chairman of the Board, Radio Corporation of America (RCA); and Henry Merritt Wriston, President of Brown University. Jack Snyder, photographer. *Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.*

grams in international relations. Penn, of course, was one of many research universities to accept that challenge and its programs today in International Relations and International Studies and Business are among its most popular.

Stassen, it turned out, foresaw his role in the Eisenhower White House accurately. Within two weeks of the presidential election, Eisenhower named Stassen to the cabinet-level post of Director of the federal government's Mutual Security Agency. Stassen immediately resigned the presidency at Penn, effective 20 January 1953, the first day of the new Eisenhower administration. His tenure was turbulent — with the organization of the Faculty Senate and skepticism among Penn's peer institutions about its commitment to the

ideals of the proposed Ivy League — but Stassen was also the leader who appointed the first Vice Provost for Research; who signed the 1952 Ivy Group agreement; who inaugurated the campus plan that established Locust Walk as Penn's central corridor; who conferred Penn's first honorary degree upon an African American, Ralph Johnson Bunche; and who welcomed Penn's first woman Trustee, Katharine E. McBride. President Harold E. Stassen set the stage for five decades of magnificent growth and accomplishment. The end of his presidency was, in many ways, the beginning of Penn's contemporary era.

*Mark Frazier Lloyd
Director,
University Archives and Records Center*