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INDIANA COUNTY

175th

Anniversary History

by

Clarence D. Stephenson

*To Bill LaFranchi, Thanks
for your help at IUP Library
Clarence Stephenson July 11, 1989*

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"the said school or college may go into operation when the sum of \$3,000 has been subscribed, and 10 percentum of the same paid in" (\$300). The corporators and directors named in the Act were Porter Kinports, E. B. Camp, John E. Johnson, Jackson Patchin, R. H. McCormick, Jesse M. Harter, Robert McKeage, Templeton Hazlett, John F. Notley, B. F. Douglass, John Curry and Robert Hughes. At the annual meeting on January 5, 1869 they were empowered to elect five of their number to serve as directors for a term of three years.

Accordingly the first board of directors organized by electing R. H. McCormick, president; I. A. Hollister, secretary; and R. C. McCurdy, treasurer. In 1870 an item appeared indicating that the school had opened. Little else is known. It is said that eighty pupils were enrolled at one point, but soon the promoters seem to have lost heart, probably due to the inception of the Indiana Normal School. The last minutes of the directors were dated November 23, 1874.⁵⁴

Indiana Normal School: The movement for a normal school in Indiana appears to have begun during the December 1869 session of the Indiana County Teachers Institute. Samuel Wolf stated that the matter was discussed at that time: "Our best citizens were interested in the matter, and steps were then taken to raise stock; and books were soon after opened for that purpose. About eighteen or twenty thousand dollars were subscribed and there the matter rested."⁵⁵

A "Normal School Association" was organized some time in 1870 at a meeting in the office of Indiana County Superintendent J. T. Gibson in Indiana. John Sutton was elected president; S. M. Clark, vice president; and J. T. Gibson, secretary. Other members attending were A. W. Wilson, Harry White, John H. Lichteberger and McCreery, principal of Indiana schools.⁵⁶

A letter from a "Citizen" was published in August 1870 pointing out the value of a normal school and asking "Why can we not have such a school in our midst?"⁵⁷ A letter from Harry White favoring the establishment of a normal school was published about the same time.⁵⁸ Another meeting of the Normal School Association was held September 3 with John Sutton presiding and J. T. Gibson, secretary; followed by another a week later. The subject came up again in December at a meeting of the Teachers Institute at which time the County Superintendent was designated to press for some action.⁵⁹

As the new year 1871 dawned, a committee of the Normal School Association - Peter Sutton, S. M. Clark and Harry White - advertised a meeting to be held Jan. 9 at the office of the County Superintendent, third floor, Courthouse. At that time Mr. Clark informed those attending that pledges of stock exceeded \$20,000 even before a canvass of In-

diana had been made. It was decided to make a complete canvass and meet again on the 16th. The **Indiana Democrat** supported the project whole-heartedly: "This is the right kind of venture to 'take stock' in." When the committee met again on the 16th it was found that \$35,200 had been subscribed, all except about \$1,000 from residents of Indiana and West Indiana. It was then decided to extend the campaign to White Township and schedule meetings through January up to February 2 in outlying communities: Greenville, Marion, Plumville, Shelocta, Jacksonville and Homer.⁶⁰

An "Address in behalf of the establishment of a State Normal School in Indiana County. . ." was published by a committee composed of A. J. Bolar, G. W. Hood and R. W. McKee. Some extracts from this follow:

The committee appointed at the last County Institute to bring the subject more especially before the friends of education in this county, think the school should be in Indiana County because it is the most central location and can be easily reached by easy and cheap means of travel.**

But the advantages of such a school does not necessarily stop with only those who may choose to make teaching a profession. Such a school would afford facilities for acquiring a liberal education, such as every one should have who enters any of the learned professions.

**Much as has been said against (teaching), lightly as it has been esteemed and spoken of, it has its place in . . . the foundation of all our institutions, civil, political and religious . . .

There is no other profession of such vital importance . . . and no other in which there is more need for improvement. Special preparation is required in all other learned professions and the institutions are provided for this special purpose . . . Let us have the same advantages for the teachers, and not only so, but let it be required of him that he have this special training.

**Last but not least it is said by those who have had opportunities of knowing that it pays Stockholders a large percentage on money invested.⁶¹

By January 26 nearly \$40,000 had been subscribed and the **Indiana Democrat** was optimistic, "It looks as though we are to have the school, with all its many benefits."⁶²

In February 1871 it was reported that Harry White in the State Senate had introduced a bill to incorporate the normal school for the ninth district in Indiana. 38 persons were named as incorporators and

stockholders who, with others, were empowered to elect 15 trustees. The bill passed and was signed March 25 by Governor Geary. Later in May it was learned that White had introduced another bill for a \$15,000 appropriation. This also became law later in the year.⁶³

At the teachers institute in Indiana, December 1871, it is said, "Professor A. N. Raub of Lock Haven spoke so forcibly . . . of the project of establishing a State Normal School here, that the work of taking stock was immediately resumed and the project was not abandoned until success was insured."⁶⁴ By the end of January 1872 the **Indiana Democrat**, exulted: "HUZZAH! HUZZAH! THE NORMAL SCHOOL A SUCCESS," and the **Indiana Progress** reported subscriptions totalling \$53,400. The names of the 152 subscribers, and the amount pledged by each, were published in the next issue.⁶⁵

The **Indiana Messenger** criticized Senator White for supporting a bill authorizing the State Superintendent to appoint two members of the board of trustees.⁶⁶

The incorporators met April 15, 1872 in the Courthouse, elected John Sutton chairman, and Silas M. Clark, secretary, and fixed May 7 as the date for subscribers to elect trustees. By that time there were 2154 shares of stock amounting to \$53,850 ranging in blocks of four (\$100) to \$5,000. At the May 7 meeting the following were elected as the first trustees: S. M. Clark 1958 votes, John Sutton 1950, Samuel McCartney 1732, Harry White 1602, George S. Christy 1388, Peter Sutton 1366, Joseph R. Smith 1358, Dr. Thomas St. Clair 1330, George W. Boadenhamer 1310. There were also 15 unsuccessful candidates who received 3420 votes. Each \$25 share of stock was one vote; therefore large stockholders such as John Sutton and Harry White, who each held 200 shares of stock, could cast that many votes for themselves.⁶⁷

The new trustees met May 13, 1872 and organized by electing John Sutton, president; Samuel McCartney, vice president, and Silas M. Clark, secretary. The Act of Incorporation specified that the treasurer not be a trustee. A. W. Wilson was appointed later. A committee consisting of White, Clark, McCartney and Peter Sutton was appointed to visit established normal schools of the State and determine what kind of building would be suitable.⁶⁸

The next step was to select a tract of land. This was done on June 11, 1872. Two tracts were offered, one of ten acres by James P. Carter for \$2,000, and another 14-acre location by John Sutton for \$7,000. The Carter land was in White Township. Mr. Sutton and Harry White declined to vote, and the other trustees decided to accept the Sutton offer.⁶⁹

Harry White and some others were dissatisfied with the choice of the

Sutton land and, at the next meeting of the trustees on July 20, 1872, Samuel McCartney moved that the matter be reconsidered, seconded by White. The vote was four to four and President Sutton voted against reconsideration, thus breaking the tie. White then "retired." James W. Drum was chosen as architect for a fee of 2 1/2% of the cost, of which \$500 would be paid in shares of stock.⁷⁰

A "Notice to Builders and Contractors" was published August 22, 1872 describing in general terms a building of four stories with three wings comprising a 221-foot frontage.⁷¹ At one point it was reported the contract had been awarded to Dickey & Son of Allegheny City for \$84,000 cash, plus \$8,000 in stock, but later this was reconsidered and the trustees finally settled on Voris, Haigh & Gregg of Shippensburg for \$96,000.⁷² Perhaps the trustees may have felt it unwise to have so much stock in the hands of the contractor.

Ground was broken in April 1873, at which time an artesian well had been dug down 100 feet.⁷³ While construction proceeded, the trustees notified those not paying their 10% assessment on stock pledges that a law suit would be instituted if not paid by June 20. Harry White had repudiated his \$5,000 pledge and, with two other subscribers, was preparing to appeal to the State Supreme Court. The **Indiana Democrat** declared this was "the mistake of his life," and warned "let it be understood that the man who signs that paper . . . SIGNS HIS DEATH WARRANT AS A PUBLIC MAN."⁷⁴

In July \$5,000 was due the contractors but Mr. Drum held up the payment until he could ascertain whether the foundation specifications had been complied with. Everything will be adjusted, the **Indiana Progress** felt, "to the satisfaction of all parties."⁷⁵ On November 22, 1873 work ceased, at which time the brick laying had been completed to the third floor. Conrad Kuhn of Indiana had so far supplied about 1,100,000 bricks. Mr. Overmyer, foreman of the bricklayers, treated his men to an oyster supper.⁷⁶

The case of Indiana Normal School vs. Harry White and James Turner was in Court. After the annual election of trustees May 5, 1874 the controversy with Senator White was settled and he promised to pay his assessment.⁷⁷

Mr. Overmyer was badly injured June 20th when he was thrown from a tub used to haul bricks and mortar to the upper floors. He was descending at the close of the day in an empty tub when the rope broke and he fell 26 feet. By July 30 he was recovering and was hoping to "resume his occupation in a week or two."⁷⁸ The brickwork was completed early in September, at which time it was thought the roof would be in place in another two weeks.⁷⁹

Bonds to cover the expenses of furnishing the structure were offered to the public in amounts of \$50, \$100 and \$500 up to a total of \$35,000.⁸⁰ Plastering was completed by November 19 and Mr. Gregg, plastering foreman, gave another oyster supper for his men at Patton's in Indiana. T. C. Cooper, an Indiana photographer, took a picture of the Normal School and offered prints without frames for 50 cents, or \$1.25 and \$1.75 with frames.⁸¹

During the teachers institute in December 1874, those attending toured the building in a body.⁸² On February 6, 1875 the trustees inspected the building and accepted it from the contractor. The final cost was \$100,616. There still remained to be installed plumbing, steam heating, gas fixtures, furniture and miscellaneous items totalling \$33,500.⁸³

Dr. E. B. Fairfield was engaged as "Principal" of INS and gave a lecture March 24 in the school on "Tent Life In Palestine," 25 cents admission, proceeds for the benefit of the school.⁸⁴ The other members of the faculty were A. H. Berlin, Montrose, Pa., Model School; A. J. Bolar, Indiana, Pa., assistant, mathematics and teaching; Mary Bradley, Shippenburg, Pa., penmanship and drawing; T. J. Chapman, Ebensburg, Pa., English grammar; Hiram Collier, Bellefonte, Pa., chemistry and physics; Jane E. Leonard, Millersville, Pa., geography and history; J. W. Shoemaker and Ada Kershaw, Philadelphia, elocution and reading; and Joseph H. Young, Indiana, Pa., English literature.⁸⁵

During April and May the trustees solicited aid in making bed clothes from the ladies of Indiana. The **Indiana Democrat** noted sarcastically "of course this will be a THANKEE JOB. If the Directors had to pay for this work they would take it to Philadelphia."⁸⁶ This was a slap at the trustees for having the first catalogue printed by W. F. Geddes' Sons, Philadelphia. Extracts from the catalogue are found in III:239-245.

Newspaper advertisements announced the opening of INS on May 17, 1875 for the Spring Session of ten weeks. Expenses for the session were \$50 including board, light, tuition, etc., or \$14 for tuition only. The reported enrollment for the first term was 225 students.⁸⁷

The State "Board of Recognition" arrived May 21, 1875. A report of their proceedings is in III:237-239. State Superintendent Wickersham said the new building was "not equalled anywhere" and was "the best equipped in America."

Dr. Fairfield exerted himself on behalf of INS and was successful in raising \$3,000 for scientific instruments and \$400 for a new bell to be hung in the cupola. The inscription on the bell states that \$100 each was contributed by Hon. D. J. Morrell of Johnstown; James McMillen, Saltsburg; Hon. Edward S. Golden, Kittanning; and William I. Sterett, Saltsburg, December 8, 1875. The bell was placed in January 1876. It

weighed 1,058 pounds and was cast by Theodore Jones & Co., Troy, NY. It "has an excellent tone, different from any other of our bells," said the **Indiana Progress**.⁸⁸

Two literary societies were organized in 1875. One was at first named the "Fairfield Literary Society" but was later changed to "Erodelphian Literary Society." The other was the "Huyghenian Literary Society."⁸⁹ In 1880 Judge Barlow of central New York State offered to sell his "Museum of Natural History" to the Normal school "for a small sum," and it was said that "friends of the Normal school have determined upon an effort to buy it."⁹⁰ It is not known if the effort was successful. In 1881 the trustees made an arrangement with the West Indiana school directors whereby free tuition was granted to "not more than 100 pupils" who would attend the model school.⁹¹ Other steps to enhance the learning opportunities were the introduction of manual training and a night school in 1889.⁹² The INS libraries were said to have 3,000 to 4,000 volumes in 1889.⁹³

The faculty over the ensuing fifteen years, 1876-1890, grew slowly. By 1887 there were 16.⁹⁴ Dr. Fairfield was not happy at INS and complained in a letter to a friend, "We are in the midst of little else but blue Presbyterianism." He resigned in March 1876 and was succeeded by David M. Sensenig who declined reelection in the summer of 1878. In the catalogue of 1876 he stated "The Bible is our text-book of morals." Dr. John H. French took over in September 1878 and had charge until July 1881. R. Willis Fair acted as "Principal Pro Tem" until the arrival of Leonard H. Durling in October 1881.⁹⁵ Mr. Durling remained nearly 8 years and resigned July 1889. Dr. Z. X. Snyder was the fifth principal, serving until 1891. For more on the principals see IV:253-4, 301-02, 308-09, 343-4, and 523. During all these changes of administration Jane E. Leonard remained as preceptress and senior member of the faculty. A "love affair" between two unidentified faculty members in 1881 resulted in considerable gossip among the faculty and student body. Both were dismissed, but rehired.⁹⁶

An example of Commencement activities in 1880 is found in III: 249-251. Student enrollments increased gradually in most years but declined in others. In 1887 there were 601 students. One remarkable student was Elizabeth Cochran, also known as "Pink" Cochran, 1879-1880, who later became famous as "Nellie Bly," a **New York World** reporter who made a well publicized trip around the world in 1889-90.⁹⁷ Sarah Gallagher, Class of 1884, later had the honor of being the first woman to serve in the Pennsylvania Senate.⁹⁸ In January 1887 one of the students was said to be a full-blooded Sioux Indian.⁹⁹

John Sutton, president of the Normal School trustees, died June 14,

1877 and was succeeded by Silas M. Clark. See III:245-249. Space precludes coverage of the various trustees over the years. One who caused a stir was Peter Sutton, treasurer, who in November 1877 presented a bill for \$1,950 or 3% of all moneys that passed through his hands. He claimed his duties took all his time "to the neglect of his own business." There was an outburst of indignation from the trustees, who refused to pay, saying they "were under the impression that Mr. Sutton, like the other officers of the Board, was performing the duties . . . gratuitously."¹⁰⁰

Various improvements in the physical plant were made from time to time but "John Sutton Hall," as it is now known, continued to be the only building on the 12.4 acre campus except for the boiler plant erected in 1890 alongside the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks.¹⁰¹ In 1877 the West Indiana Borough council asked the trustees "to abate the nuisance caused by the running of the water from the sinks of the school building through a part of the borough. The smell is very offensive."¹⁰² The 1878 catalogue boasted of hot and cold water on every floor. In 1882 a telephone was installed connecting the Normal School to the trustee secretary's place of business.¹⁰³ In 1887 an "ugly hump" between the railroad and the Normal School was removed and "dumped into a small ravine that crosses the campus, thus making a beautiful grade from the railroad. . ." A gravel walk from the railroad to the "terrace steps" was built and shrubs and flowers planted alongside.¹⁰⁴ \$200 was also authorized that year to set up a gymnasium in two rooms of the basement.¹⁰⁵ The 1888-89 catalogue mentioned two workshops fitted up in the basement and equipped with tools for woodworking and industrial drawing. Consumption of coal in 1888 was reported to be 26,000 bushels annually, and 4,000 cubic feet of manufactured gas was consumed in a single night for lighting.¹⁰⁶ On December 26, 1888 it was announced that Sutton Bros. & Bell of Indiana was given a contract to install water pipe, a hydraulic elevator, and apparatus for flooding in case of fire.¹⁰⁷ The 1888-89 catalogue also stated the school building was connected with the town water pipes; and the 1889-90 catalogue informed prospective students that a steam laundry had been fitted up. Further improvements were accomplished in 1890 when Elliott of Pittsburgh contracted to lay additional walks, drives, flower beds, a large fountain east of the building "possibly thirty yards from the drive," a new main entrance at the northeast corner, more shrubbery, etc.¹⁰⁸ In December 1890 "an electric clock is the latest thing at Normal . . . when the hands reach certain periods they send a current all through the building, ringing gongs on every floor, thus doing away with a bell ringer". This cost \$279.¹⁰⁹

This account of the founding and early years of Indiana Normal

School has necessarily been brief due to the scope of this history. More details are found in John Edward Merryman's **The Indiana Story**, chapters 2 and 3, pp. 28-127.