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# The University of Pennsylvania Today

Cornell M. Dowlin

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# The University of Pennsylvania Today

## **Abstract**

The present volume has been prepared in the hope that it will be of interest to visitors to the University of Pennsylvania and also to undergraduates, alumni, and other friends of the University who would be glad to have a brief outline of its present organization and activities, the extent of its physical equipment, and something of the origin of its many divisions.

In the arrangement of the material, it was found advisable not to give a strictly geographical account of the Campus and its buildings and of the departments of the University. Because of the belief that visitors and others will especially wish to learn how the University of Pennsylvania functions, the book has been organized on the basis of departments. Strangers to the Campus are urged to examine the map printed on the end-papers and to make full use of the index. If a considerable amount of space has been devoted to current research activities, which change from year to year, the reader will realize that no picture of the University at work would be complete without a description of the varied contribution to human knowledge that is continually being made. For a full account of the growth of the University from its Colonial roots to the present, the reader is referred to the *History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740-1940*, by Edward Potts Cheyney, for fifty-one years an active member of the Department of History and since 1935 Professor Emeritus and Curator of the Lea Library of Medieval and Church History.

## **Comments**

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THE  
UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA  
TODAY



*Library*

CAMPUS VIEW  
*Irvine Auditorium*

*College Hall*

THE  
UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA

T O D A Y

*ITS BUILDINGS*  
*DEPARTMENTS & WORK*

• • •

*Edited by*

Cornell M. Dowlin

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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS

*Philadelphia*

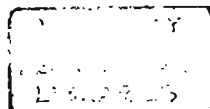
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## FOREWORD

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The Editor wishes to express his deep appreciation to Dr. Cheyney for his assistance in supplying data and for the Introduction which he has provided for this book. The Editor is also grateful for the assistance rendered him by Dr. Edward W. Mumford, Secretary of the Corporation and the official custodian of the archives of the University; to the various departmental officers and others who have contributed articles and information; and to Dr. George E. Nitzsche, Recorder of the University, whose files are a storehouse of interesting information and whose interest has been of great value. Dr. Nitzsche is the compiler of a guidebook to the University which, between 1905 and 1918, passed through seven editions.

In the eighteenth century the Oxford University guidebooks were amplified by a wag (Thomas Warton), who published a *Companion to the Guide* and a *Guide to the Companion*. It is hoped that similar adjuncts to the present work will not be needed.

CORNELL M. DOWLIN



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## INTRODUCTION

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THE buildings and grounds that now spread through West Philadelphia and stretch to several outlying regions are the third of the successive homes of the University. In almost any corner of the present Campus could be tacked the couple of buildings with their acre of ground at Fourth and Arch streets that formed its first. It was in these two buildings and the three or four adjacent houses in which the professors lived that the colonial College led its vigorous and picturesque life. The college hall was for a long time the largest building in the city, and it was in it that colonial governors and the aristocracy of Philadelphia and, after the Revolution, representatives of the new republican government and foreign diplomats attended academic and other functions.

By the close of the eighteenth century this location had become too restricted and too inconvenient of access to satisfy the University authorities. Moreover, a stately house, built by the government of Pennsylvania in a much better part of the city as a dwelling house for the President when it was expected that Philadelphia would remain the national capital, was lying untenanted and for sale. It was surrounded by open lots that might well be utilized or made a source of income. "The President's House," as it was always called, and its successors at Ninth and Market streets became the University's second home. The house was purchased, repaired, then extended, then replaced on the same site by the two buildings, one for the College, one for the Medical School, that gave the University certainly its most symmetrical and on the whole the most pleasing architectural appearance in its history. In these buildings, with a few dependencies for the Medical School, its life was carried on for a half-century or more.

By about 1870 it had become evident that neither the size of the buildings on Ninth Street, nor the repute of the neighborhood, nor the land available for growth, was suited to a dignified and growing institution. Ringed around with dwelling houses, shops, offices, and saloons, the University had no room for expansion of any kind.

The old questions whether to remain a city college or to go to the

country; whether to settle in some small town, as had been the policy of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and most other American and English colleges, where students should live on the campus in buildings belonging to the University; or to separate academic life from personal life, as at Columbia and in the Scotch and continental universities, came up for vigorous discussion. Each had its advocates. The decision to remain a city institution was mainly the result of two circumstances: the desire of the Philadelphia trustees to keep the institution near enough to make their visits to it easy, and the knowledge of the existence of an available tract to the west of the Schuylkill yet within the limits of the city life and its advantages. The land belonged to the city and, it was hoped, could be purchased on favorable terms.

So the old site was sold, and in June 1871, the corner stone of College Hall, the first building west of the river and the nucleus of the present extensive but somewhat incongruous agglomeration of buildings was laid. However, the first four, the greenstone group that covers the first ten-acre purchase of land—College Hall, the University Hospital, the medical building of that period (now Logan Hall), and the dental (now Hare) building of the time—were consistent enough in design and materials, if not very distinguished in their architecture. Since that period the University has nibbled away at the city land, obtaining one piece after another, on one set of conditions or another, and for the various uses of old or new departments or activities as they have been undertaken. Some independent purchases or gifts of adjacent land have been made, till the West Philadelphia property alone now covers 112 acres, on which have been erected or purchased since the migration some 130 buildings, and within the bounds of which have been laid eight athletic fields, the Botanical Gardens, and various parking places. These buildings, in the natural course of things, have been altered, added to, superseded, and changed in purpose as demands and funds have required or permitted.

But all this is merely the outer shell of the University, for a university is an organism in which the shell and the life within it are incapable of being separated. Classrooms and libraries and laboratories, studies and museums, seminary rooms and dormitories and places of recreation are alike the necessary means by which the life and work of faculty and students can be carried on. In the following survey of the buildings as they are now, an attempt will be made to describe the organization and work of all the principal departments of the University.

EDWARD POTTS CHEYNEY