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# History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740-1940

Edward Potts Cheyney

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# History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740-1940

## **Abstract**

In writing this book Dr. E. W. Mumford, Secretary of the University, has given me invaluable assistance at every turn and I find it difficult to express adequately my sense of obligation and gratitude to him. I can only say that without his advice and help, generously offered and unsparingly given, I would not have begun and could not have finished the book. Other officers of the University and of the alumni societies, especially Dean Pepper, Mr. George E. Nitzsche, Recorder, Mr. C. S. Thompson, Librarian, Mr. C. J. Miel, Manager of the University Fund and Mr. Horace M. Lippincott, Editor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and *General Magazine* have offered and given me much help.

Colleagues in the Faculty, some of them now in retirement, responded promptly, fully, and thoughtfully to my questions about their respective departments. I collected in this way much information that it has proved impossible, unfortunately, to include in this book. I hope they will not be disappointed. Limitations of space soon asserted themselves and it became evident that a single volume could include little more than an account of the establishment and early circumstances of departments that have had a long and interesting history, and a mere mention rather than a full discussion of much that was significant. Limitations of time stood equally in the way. The two years or somewhat more that have been given to the preparation of the history did not give time to gain familiarity with such a complex body as the University has come to be, beyond the vague knowledge gained by one who has grown up with it. The volume entitled *The University of Pennsylvania Today* provides a partial corrective to these deficiencies, and contains much material I have with a heavy heart laid aside.

## **Comments**

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History of the  
UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA

*Ask Counsel of both Times; of the Ancient Time, what is best, and of the Latter Time, what is fittest. Reform, therefore, without Bravery or Scandal of Former Times and Persons, but yet set it down to thyself as well to create good Precedents as to follow Them.*

—BACON

History of the

UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA

1740 - 1940

By

*Edward Potts Cheney*



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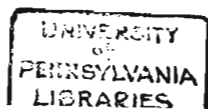
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**PENNIMAN**



To the  
ALUMNI OF THE UNIVERSITY  
*who along with the Trustees, the Faculty,  
the Administrative Officers and the Students  
are the University*

this book is affectionately dedicated

## PREFACE

IN writing this book Dr. E. W. Mumford, Secretary of the University, has given me invaluable assistance at every turn and I find it difficult to express adequately my sense of obligation and gratitude to him. I can only say that without his advice and help, generously offered and unsparingly given, I would not have begun and could not have finished the book. Other officers of the University and of the alumni societies, especially Dean Pepper, Mr. George E. Nitzsche, Recorder, Mr. C. S. Thompson, Librarian, Mr. C. J. Miel, Manager of the University Fund and Mr. Horace M. Lippincott, Editor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and *General Magazine* have offered and given me much help.

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This inadequacy is especially true of the Medical School and its allied interests. They have proved to be too extensive and varied to be included in any other way than as part of the general stream of University history. Yet there have been periods when



the Medical School was the largest and best-known part of the University, and its whole history is one of extreme interest quite apart from its University connection. Notwithstanding the answers Dean Pepper gave to my specific questions, it became evident, as I have pointed out in the text, that the Medical School needs and deserves a volume of its own. This lack is partially filled for the early period by the publication of Dr. Joseph Carson's *History of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, from its Foundation in 1765* (Phila., 1869), and by F. R. Packard's, *History of Medicine in the United States* (2 vols. N.Y. 1931), especially Volume I, chapter 3. "The Earliest Medical Schools." But the former is antiquated and at best only comes down to 1830, while Packard deals with Pennsylvania only as one, even if the first of American medical schools. There is abundance of material to hand for a valuable and interesting history of the Medical School.

Other departments also have had an active and separate life that should be chronicled. Some have been partially though not adequately recorded, as *The Wharton School: Its First Fifty Years, 1881-1931*, and the excellent *History of the School of Veterinary Medicine, 1884-1934*, compiled by the Faculty of that School. There are histories of some other departments published on similar memorial occasions.

As indicated in the last few pages of the book I have not undertaken to include the history of what are called extra-curricular activities. Not only is their record an obscure one, but each has followed a course apart from the general progress of University history. Each should have a written history of its own. Athletics have awakened so much interest and been so closely connected with the popularity of the University that it is only the difficulty of bringing their history into compact form that has justified including so little about them. A history of athletics at Pennsylvania is to be published in the near future.

As to the original sources from which this narrative is drawn, they are so multifarious that only a few of the more obvious can be mentioned. The minutes of the Board of Trustees are complete from 1749 to date, in the office of the Secretary. In his office are also the earlier minute books of the College and of other de-

partments, except those of the Medical School, which are in the office of that department. There are also many committee reports and other varied material in the "Archives" in the care of the Secretary. In the Library are thirteen volumes of "University Papers," mostly official documents of the first century of the University's life; various sets of scrapbooks, such as the twelve volumes collected by John C. Sims, four volumes of the records of the class of 1887, sets of periodicals, and a great number of bound pamphlets concerning various episodes in University history. There is much also in the Dr. E. F. Smith Memorial Library, useful for the history of the University, as well as concerning its special interest, the history of chemistry. The early newspapers are full of references to the College, and there are numberless scattered sources of information. The printed and manuscript material used in the preparation of this volume and all other known references to the history of the University have been listed, and this list will be preserved in the University Library in accessible form for the use of subsequent investigators.

As to histories of the University already written, they are few and inadequate, or this volume would not need to have been undertaken. The best, though unfortunately it covers scarcely more than twenty years of the two hundred, is *A History of the University of Pennsylvania from Its Foundation to A.D. 1770*, by Thomas Harrison Montgomery (Philadelphia, 1900). It closes with the following words, "Here the Author lays down his pen, hoping, however, that another may carry on the History of this University Family, illustrating its varying misfortunes during the Revolutionary struggle, its quiet life through the first seventy years of this century, and portraying with loving strokes its enlarged and influential work of the present generation, under the strong stimulus of which it is prepared to enter upon its great career in the Twentieth Century." There could be no higher aspiration for this book than that it should in some degree fulfil the hope expressed by Mr. Montgomery.

*A History of the University of Pennsylvania from the Beginning to the Year 1827*, by Dr. George B. Wood, was in its original form an address given before the Philomathean Society, June 1827, and before the Council of the Pennsylvania Historical So-

ciety on October 29 of the same year. It was, after being much expanded, published in Philadelphia in 1834. It is a good account but of course drawn from very insufficient sources. *The University of Pennsylvania, Franklin's College*, by Horace M. Lippincott (Phila. 1919), is an intimate account laying stress on the social interests and famous personages connected with the University, especially with the College. Charles W. Dulles, *The Charity School of 1740*, has gathered much of the scattered information about that neglected dependency of the University. Francis N. Thorpe, *Benjamin Franklin and the University of Pennsylvania* (Washington, 1893) contains sketches of the history of the different departments of the University up to the date of its publication.

A number of books, largely devoted to illustrations of the University, contain considerable textual material concerning its history. The fullest of these, also accompanied with many biographies, is in the series *Universities and their Sons*, edited by Joshua L. Chamberlain; *University of Pennsylvania*, 2 vols., Historical Editor, Edward P. Cheyney, Biographical Editor, Ellis P. Oberholtzer (Boston, 1901). One of the most informative of histories of this type is *The University of Pennsylvania, Its History, Traditions, etc.*, by George E. Nitzsche, numerous editions. Others are by Weygandt and McKeehan, by J. H. Penniman, and by J. B. McMaster.

In writing this history of the University I have endeavored constantly to consider its periodic character, the fact that it is intended to be a history of the two hundred years from its foundation to the year 1940. But the effort has been unsuccessful. I cannot think of the history of the University as coming to a close. The University is a running stream; it will not stop to be summed up or treated as a completed whole. The words "The End" may be written on the last page of the volume, but it is only this narrative, not the history of the University, that comes to a close; almost before this book is printed the University will already have started on its third century.

EDWARD P. CHEYNEY

April 1940

# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	vii
<b>BOOK I: EARLY TIMES: 1740-1779</b>	
<i>Chapter</i>	
1. The City	3
2. The Foundation: 1740-1755	17
3. The Colonial College: 1755-1779	53
<b>BOOK II: THE MIDDLE PERIOD: 1779-1829</b>	
4. Division and Reunion	129
5. Low Water: 1791-1828	176
<b>BOOK III: THE RENAISSANCE: 1829-1881</b>	
6. The Beginning of Expansion	219
7. The Move to West Philadelphia	257
<b>BOOK IV: MODERN TIMES: 1881-1940</b>	
8. The Era of Expansion	285
9. Provost, Trustees, and Alumni	360
10. Under a President: 1930-1940	414
Principal Officers	435
Index	437

*Book I*

EARLY TIMES

1740-1779

