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Franklin's Work

The University of Pennsylvania originated in an academy founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1751, although it did not begin its career as a university until 1779. Franklin drew his plans for the "Academy and Charitable School of the Province of Pennsylvania" in 1743, and the proposals were renewed in 1749. In 1753 the academy was chartered and in 1755 the institution was incorporated as a college with the right to confer degrees.

The academy was formally opened on January 8, 1751, on Fourth street, below Arch, but the second object for which the school was started, that of a "Charitable School," was not carried out. Franklin had raised subscriptions to the amount of five thousand pounds to be paid in five yearly quotas.

The year after the institution was chartered, Rev. William Smith, a Scotchman, educated at the University of Aberdeen, was made teacher of natural and moral philosophy, and on the reorganization of the college became provost. The first commencement, with seven graduates, took place in May, 1757, among whom were Revs. Jacob

Duche and Samuel Magraw, Francis Hopkinson, Dr. Hugh Williamson, Dr. John Morgan and Paul Jackson.

The funds of the college were increased by subscriptions here and abroad. Provost Smith visited England and raised nearly seven thousand pounds and others added four thousand two hundred pounds. Benjamin Franklin was a member of the board of trustees of the institution, and contributed liberally to its support in its early years.

The medical department was added to the courses to be pursued in 1765 with Dr. John Morgan, one of its first graduating class, as professor of the theory and practice of physics. The peaceful progress of the institution was interrupted during the Revolution. Dr. Smith and some of the trustees and teachers were supposed to be affected too much by toryism. This led to the assembly in 1779 passing an annulment of the charter and creating a new institution, the University of Pennsylvania, with Dr. Ewing at its head as provost, and taking possession of the property.

In 1800 the trustees purchased the elegant mansion built for the president on Ninth street, on a lot extending from

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