

**EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS IN
THE RELIGIOUS
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

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Educational Institutions in the Religious Society of Friends by Edward H. Magill

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EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

BY

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Education in the Religious Society of Friends.*

Edward H. Magill, LL. D.

I PROPOSE to give some account of the principal colleges, boarding schools and other educational institutions conducted by Friends, from the time of the rise of the Society, about 1647, to the present day. I shall treat of these institutions in the chronological order of their opening so far as it can be ascertained. In this account I shall attempt to include all of the most important educational institutions of Friends, and it should be observed that I use the beautiful and simple term Friends unaccompanied by any qualifying word, to which divisions in the society have sometimes given rise. All branches of the Society claim the name of Friends, and I prefer to accept their claim, and this is done with no desire to arrogate for any particular branch of the Society any of the credit which may be due for the influence of any of the educational institutions named. I have earnestly endeavored to treat all impartially, and I sincerely hope that Friends will be satisfied with the result. When it is considered how widely the materials for this historical account are scattered, and that no attempt at any systematic collection has ever been previously made to my knowledge, I may reasonably ask for kind consideration for any errors or omissions which may inadvertently have occurred.

After presenting the various institutions in their chronological order, with such brief consideration as they may seem respectively to claim and as the limit of this paper will permit, I propose to close by a general summary and the presentation of such salient points in the methods and results of education among Friends as shall have been suggested by the consideration, in detail, of the different institutions.

*This article, owing to its length, was read only in part, but from its historic value we print the entire paper.

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RISE OF FRIENDS, 1647.

It was in the year 1647 that George Fox, at the age of twenty-three, began to assemble large bodies of seekers after the Truth by his earnest preaching of the simple faith of the early Christians.

From the very first, Friends have felt a deep and abiding interest in the proper education of their children, and to secure this most desirable result schools under their own care were early established.

FIRST BOARDING SCHOOLS, 1667.

The first of these, of which we have any account, are mentioned on page 316, of the Folio Edition of the Journal of George Fox, printed in 1694. The time referred to was 1667, or only twenty years after the first congregations of Friends had been assembled, and the reference is made in these words: "Then returning toward London by Waltham, I advised the setting up of a school there for teaching boys, and also a woman's school to be set up at Schacklewell for instructing girls and young maidens in whatever things were civil or useful in the creation." This comprehensive language reminds us of the words of Ezra Cornell in establishing, in these later days, Cornell University, where "any one may study any thing on any subject." But the training of the intellect alone was never made, with Friends, a primary object. The head of this school for boys was Christopher Taylor, who is described as "a man of learning and piety." (Annual Monitor, 1843, p. 116.) But in his responsible duties he found a most valuable co-worker in John Matern, of Germany, who "appears to have been a man of learning, having been educated in the colleges of his country, and designed for the office of a priest." He was one of those who were turned to the principles of Friends by the preaching, in Germany, of the despised and persecuted Quakers.

It was through the influence of the Spirit that Matern came over to England, where he soon entered the family of Christopher Taylor, in 1674, and remained with him in the school (subsequently removed to Edmonton) until his death, in 1680. Of him it is said by William Pennington, who was then a student in the Edmonton school, "He was a man that truly feared the Lord,

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and was an instrument in His hand in his day for the help of others. He labored daily for us, his scholars, both for our souls and bodies. He taught us with diligence, that we might not frustrate the intent of our coming to the school as to our learning, and prayed continually to the Lord that we might be edified as to our inward condition." From the language of Samuel Tuke, in a paper read at Ackworth, in 1838, on "The past proceedings and experience of the Society of Friends in connection with the education of youth," it is clear that throughout its history there were, as he says, in active operation at the Edmonton school, "the three most powerful means by which good men have been enabled to promote the work of grace in others, namely, example, precept and prayer."

I have dwelt somewhat fully upon this first boarding school of the Society of Friends, because I deemed it important to thus emphasize, in the beginning, the fact that the primary object of schools among Friends has been, not the giving of the needed instruction in the languages, the mathematics and the sciences, however important these studies may be in their place, but the training up of good men and women.

It will also be observed that the equality of facilities for instruction offered to both sexes among Friends, which has always been characteristic of their methods of education, is hinted at in this first movement of George Fox, in which he also suggests the establishment of what he calls a "women's school." It was left for these later days of greater advancement to incorporate with this idea of equality that of complete co-education, now being so successfully carried out.

In a very few years after the establishment of the first boarding school, by the advice of George Fox, there were at least fifteen others set up in England, of which two were for girls only and two (perhaps four) for boys and girls.

FIRST CORPORATE ACTION ON EDUCATION, 1672.

In 1672 a proposal was brought before the so-called "six weeks' meeting," in London, to erect a school for teaching poor Friends' children, "gratis." This proposal was unanimously agreed to, and a committee was appointed to carry it out. The master was to be "well skilled in Latin, writing and arithmetic."

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This appears to be the first corporate action of the society on the subject of education.

EDUCATION OF POOR GIRLS, GRATIS, 1677.

In 1677 a committee was appointed by the same meeting to provide for the admission of girls to the school at Shacklewell on the same terms ("gratis for poor children"), and each monthly meeting was directed to pay for the cost of the education of the poor of its own members.

SUGGESTION OF GEORGE FOX.

The same meeting (about the same time, date not given) considered a proposition made by George Fox, that a school should be established "to teach the languages, together with the nature of herbs, roots, plants and trees." It will thus be seen that the practical instruction, so characteristic of Friends' schools, was shadowed forth thus early in this proposition of George Fox to introduce the study of natural history.

SETTLEMENT OF PHILADELPHIA, 1682.

And in this country, Friends had no sooner effected their early settlement in Pennsylvania, in 1682, than they began to take public measures for the promotion of education. The following minute of a council in Philadelphia, held on the 18th of Tenth mo., 1683, is of sufficient interest and importance to claim a place in this paper.

EARLY ATTENTION OF FRIENDS TO EDUCATION, 1683.

The governor (William Penn) and council having taken into their serious consideration the necessity there is for the instruction and sober education of youth in the town of Philadelphia sent for Enoch Flower, an inhabitant of said town, who, for twenty years past, hath been exercised in that care and employment in England, to whom having communicated their minds, he embraced it upon the following terms:

To learn to read English.....	4 s. by the quarter
To learn to read and write.....	6 s. by the quarter
To learn to read and write and cast.....	8 s. by the quarter

"For boarding a scholar, that is to say, diet, washing, lodging and schooling, £10 for the whole year."

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FRIENDS PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1689.

What was first denominated the "Friends Public School" was opened in Philadelphia in 1689, and incorporated by Deputy Governor Markham in 1697. Three successive charters were granted this school by William Penn in 1701, 1708 and 1711. These three original charters all state that the school is founded "at the request, cost and charges of the people of God called Quakers," and they carefully provide that while "the rich are received or admitted, taught and instructed at reasonable rates, the poor are to be maintained and schooled for nothing." The care of Friends in this respect in all of their educational work is worthy of special attention.

THE WILLIAM PENN CHARTER SCHOOL, 1689.

The William Penn Charter School, of Philadelphia, is the lineal descendant of the original "Friends Public School," and it is now managed by corporators holding their appointment under the third charter, granted by William Penn in 1711. Although this charter does not restrict membership in the corporation to any particular denomination, the present corporators are all Friends, and the school is managed in accordance with the principles of Friends; and the students, as is usual in Friends' schools, regularly attend midweek meeting. The whole number of students the past year, 1892, was 406. The organization is modeled after the best English schools, the instruction is thorough and comprehensive, and between thirty and forty boys are sent from the graduating class to the various colleges every year. It holds a rank today among the best of our secondary schools.

REORGANIZATION OF THE WILLIAM PENN CHARTER SCHOOL, 1875.

There was a reorganization of the school on a higher grade under the head mastership of Richard M. Jones in 1875, although the real date of the foundation of the school was, as has been stated above, 1689.

COLLEGE OF INDUSTRY AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS RECOMMENDED, 1697.

The tendency of Friends toward the practical in their education is again observed in the action of the "Morning Meeting" of London, which, in 1697, advised at monthly and quarterly meet-

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ings that "Friends of estate" should subscribe to the founding of a "College of Industry." It also recommended that the several meetings should establish, in the several counties, schools "for instruction in French, in languages and sciences, and in connection with labor." It also advised the training of teachers, and this advice was given, it will be observed, nearly two hundred years ago. By continual care of the yearly and the subordinate meetings, schools were supplied with good teachers; so that, as a rule, Friends were, until considerably later after the public attention was drawn to the proper preparation of teachers, better educated, as a class, than the average of the community.

CLERKENWELL SCHOOL, 1702.

In 1702 the Quarterly Meeting of London opened a school at Clerkenwell. This was the first of the public endowed schools of the Society of Friends, and it has been carried on, practically without intermission, now for 191 years. In 1823 it was removed to Croydon, and in 1879 again removed to Saffron Walden, and it is at present one of the most flourishing public schools of Friends in England. An important item in the curriculum of this school in the earlier days, as well as of others which followed its example, was "manual labor," although, in the language of a recent writer in the "Friends Quarterly Examiner," of London, "the idea of combining labor with mental instruction in our schools is now one of past generations." Manual labor was the largest part of the occupation of the students in the earlier history of the school, so that it received the name of the Clerkenwell workhouse, but this labor was gradually diminished, and after the removal of the school to Croydon it was practically discontinued.

On its removal to Saffron Walden it was established upon substantially the same basis as Ackworth, in the very year that the Ackworth school celebrated its centenary.

At this point, I fear that there must be a wide hiatus in my list of dates. The difficulty of the task which I have undertaken will be appreciated on considering the fact that so few reliable records are to be found. We know from tradition, and in a general way, that the cause of education, on both sides of the Atlantic, is largely indebted to Friends; but, as they have ever been more