

SIA TWO-PAGE SPREAD



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PLACE IN HISTORY



Staff photo/Linda Laird

A historic marker designating Wesley College as the oldest private college in Delaware was revealed Thursday near the school. Attending the event were, from left, college president Dr. Scott Miller, the historic-markers director Russ McCabe, Rep. John C. Still III, R-Dover North, Rep. Donna D. Stone, R-Dover South, and Dover Mayor James L. Hutchison.



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the name of the Wesley Female College. After 1882 it rapidly lost its prestige and soon died.

Another school that continues to make rich contributions to the culture of the state is the Wilmington Conference Academy, established in 1873, at Dover, which has had as students many of the later leaders of the state, and has contributed the majority of the ministers to the Conference. Like many a maiden, it did not hesitate to change its name as occasions demanded. Begun as the Wilmington Conference Academy, it wedded an endowment and was called the Wesley Collegiate Institute. It spent a few years as a widow and joyfully united to a new move and became the Wesley Junior College (1941).

The changed emphasis upon religious education evidences itself in more than the improvement in Sunday School technique. The employment of a full time director of religious education, the setting up of numerous training schools, the starting of a camp for intermediates, summer institutes and assemblies, all testify to the radical change from the time when the pioneer preachers carried books with them and sold them on a non-profit basis for the sole purpose of educating folks.

Many of the pioneer preachers learned Greek and Hebrew while riding on horseback between their appointments. They mastered philosophy and taught themselves the fundamentals of theology when hard beds kept them awake. The time came when the demand for trained ministers was so imperative that the Methodist Church now asks every candidate to be a college graduate and have a diploma from some recognized seminary. Out of this demand came a full realization of the obligation of the church toward such men, and it began to scale upward its salary and care for its ministers. The early pioneers received the magnificent salary of "sixty four dollars a year if they needed it." Hard work and small salary drove hundreds out of the ranks of the traveling ministry. Then came the upswing in salary and provisions for retirement. As late as 1900, the largest amount paid any retired man was \$240. By placing E. H. Dashiell in the field and educating the laymen, the funds of the Conference Claimants have increased until the Conference has an endowment of \$325,000 invested, besides receiving from the charges some \$50,000 yearly. Parsonages also were reconditioned. Modern improvements were installed and the comfort of the man who heads the charge is considered essential to his success.

The early records reveal that Rev. Jesse Lee and Rev. Pedicord came to the Peninsula to seek funds to build the first Methodist church in Boston. If any one should visit the Peninsula now to collect funds to build a church anywhere in the world, it would be such a small item that even the local papers would not publish it. Thus the Methodist Church has advanced in giving and in world wide outlook.

Social problems were also church challenges and Methodism tackled them with intelligence and consecration. The great debates around slavery

campus, was the latest addition to the University group. It houses 50,000 volumes.

The enrollment in the University of Delaware in 1925, exceeded a thousand students, made up as follows: Delaware College, 333; Women's College, 239; University Extension, 58; Summer School for Teachers, 371.

Wesley Collegiate Institute—The Wilmington Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1870 and 1872, considered the question of establishing an academy, and in February, 1873, "The Wilmington Conference Academy" was incorporated. In April of that year, the board of trustees, of 34 members, purchased six acres of land in Dover, for \$5,500 and upon it in the next year erected a building, meanwhile opening in a rented building near the corner of Governor Avenue and Division Street, Dover, in September, 1873. Forty-four boys were enrolled in the first year, and in September, 1874, the new building was opened, with forty boarders and 35 day students, ten of latter being young ladies. In the academic year 1874-75, the full enrollment was ninety-five students, and at that time the faculty numbered six. Five students were graduated in June, 1875.

The school building was destroyed by fire in March, 1876, but another building was erected upon its site, and opened in September, 1878. The academy, in the meantime, had been conducted in temporary quarters.

The increase in the female enrollment made it necessary to erect another building for their accommodation. This girls' school was sited on Bradford Street, opposite the academy, but in 1891, a new building for young women was erected at the south end of the academy.

In June, 1917, broader corporate powers were secured to give the school collegiate scope, and in October of the same year the name of the academy was changed to "Wesley Collegiate Institute." To this institute, a month later, the school property was conveyed by the Wilmington Conference Academy, and in 1918, an endowment fund of \$223,850 was raised. Thus, the Methodist Church was able to foster and develop in the capital of the State a well-established and endowed collegiate institute that is a substantial addition to Delaware's institutions of higher education. Clarence A. Short is president of Wesley Collegiate Institute.

Ursuline Academy—The Catholic Church, too, true to its traditions has not neglected the educational needs of its people. The Ursuline Academy, founded in Wilmington in 1893, by Ursuline sisters, to continue a boarding and day schools for girls conducted since 1868, by Visitation sisters, has gone forward, despite early vicissitudes, to creditable place among the educational institutions of the State. The academy has