



Record Group: New Jersey Normal School Association/New Jersey Model School Company
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[Content Note](#) | [Contents](#)

Institutional History

After more than a decade of active lobbying by school officials, teachers' groups, and several prominent political figures, the New Jersey legislature established the state's first "normal school" for teacher training by an act passed 9 February 1855. To fund the experiment, the law appropriated \$10,000 annually for a period of five successive years.

The first responsibility of the newly created board of trustees was the selection of a school site. Advertisements inviting proposals were placed in newspapers throughout the state, resulting in several attractive offers. The communities of Trenton, New Brunswick, Beverly, and Orange all submitted proposals; however, the capitol city of Trenton was considered to be the most advantageous location, being centrally situated in the state and allowing for the close supervision of the school by the legislature.

Of the several sites offered in Trenton, the school trustees selected the Clinton Avenue site offered by "The New Jersey Normal School Association," a group of fifty-one private individuals who contributed a total of \$18,650 toward securing the property and constructing the school building. William P. Sherman (who provided the lot for \$4,000 in stock) and Elias Cook held the greatest number of shares in the association. The facility was to be leased to the trustees of the school for a gross rent of \$3,000 for the five-year period.

With the first term scheduled to open on 1 October 1855, temporary quarters on Hanover Street were leased for the school from Dr. John McKelway. The cornerstone of the Clinton Avenue structure was laid on October 9th by Governor Rodman M. Price, one of the school's foremost proponents. By the start of the second term on 17 March 1856, the permanent site was ready for occupancy.

The act of 1855 establishing the State Normal School also authorized the creation of a model school to provide practice teaching for Normal School students. Originally housed within the Normal School building, the State Model School admitted students aged six to sixteen, and charged tuition fixed at \$10.00 per term. These tuition fees greatly supplemented (and eventually surpassed) the Normal School's annual appropriation of \$10,000. By 1857, the expanding model school had outgrown its quarters, and a separate facility was needed. This prompted the formation in May 1857 of a second private association, "The New Jersey Model School Company," which raised by subscription and loan the funds necessary for purchasing an adjacent lot on Clinton Avenue and constructing the second building. The Model School Company was repaid through rental fees and tuition certificates from the Normal School.

In 1859, and again in 1864, the legislature extended the funding of the State Normal School by five-year periods. By authority of an act passed 2 February 1865, the governor purchased both school properties on behalf of the State of

New Jersey for \$38,000.

NOTE: The state normal school remained at the Clinton Avenue location until 1928, when larger quarters were secured at Hillwood Lakes, Ewing Township. The Model School had been discontinued in 1917. The State Normal School is present-day Trenton State College, having held the name of New Jersey State Teachers College for many years.

Bibliography

Laws of 1855, chap. XIV, p. 25.

Laws of 1859, chap. CXVII, p. 327.

Laws of 1864, chap. CCCLXV, p. 648.

Laws of 1865, chap. I, p. 3.

New Jersey State Teachers College. *State Teachers College and State Normal School, Trenton, N.J.: Past, Present, and Future*. 1930.

Jarrold, Rachel M. and Glenn E. Fromm. *Time, the Great Teacher: A History of One Hundred Years of the New Jersey State Teachers College at Trenton, 1855-1955*. c1955.

Content Note

The record books of the New Jersey Normal School Association/New Jersey Model School Company were transferred to the state upon its purchase of the school properties in February 1865. The seven volumes were received by the Archives from the Secretary of State's Office in 1964, and consist of minutes and stock records. The books record the initial activities of the two groups, and their stock subscriptions and transfers.

Contents

Box 1 - New Jersey Normal School Association:

1. Constitution and minutes, 21 April 1856 - 7 February 1865.
2. Stock certificate book, 4 December 1856 - 7 February 1865.
3. Stock transfer certificate book, 1 December 1856 - 7 February 1865.
4. Stock transfer ledger (account book), 4 December 1856 - 7 February 1865.

Box 2 - New Jersey Model School Company:

5. Constitution and minutes, 29 May 1857 - 7 February 1865.
6. Stock certificate book, 1 September 1857 - 7 February 1865.
7. Stock transfer certificate book, 1 September 1857 - 7 February 1865.

If you have any questions about the information in this collection guide, please contact njarchives@sos.state.nj.us