

THE BENJAMIN P. CHENEY ACADEMY¹

In the development of a new country towns spring up quickly, enjoy brief periods of prosperity and then, with the shifting of economic interests, pass into obscurity. Such has been the history of Cheney, Washington, once the county seat of Spokane County and a considerable village of Eastern Washington, but now without claim to distinction save as the site of one of the State Normal Schools of Washington. In 1879 Spokane County was separated from Stevens County by an act of the Territorial Legislature and the temporary county seat was located at Spokane Falls. The following summer a town, favored by officials of the Northern Pacific railroad, was located on a site known to early settlers as Depot Springs.² In November, 1880, by vote of the people of Spokane County, the county seat was located at Depot Springs, which by this time had come to be called Cheney, in honor of one of the directors of the railroad.³ The six years which followed were "boom" years for Cheney, but in 1886 Spokane Falls had attained sufficient importance to win back the county seat. There followed a shifting of economic interests, and Cheney fell upon evil days. Turgid oratory and editorial effervescence failed to alter a condition. Worst of in the struggle for economic supremacy, the people of Cheney then turned their attention to a new desideratum and conceived the idea of making Cheney an educational center of Eastern Washington. In this enterprise more than ordinary success has crowned their efforts. The Benjamin

¹This article has been extracted from Chapter I of the present writer's *History of the State Normal School at Cheney, Ms.* This volume will be published within the year.

²H. T. Cowley, in Durham's *History of Spokane and the Inland Empire*, vol I, p. 374. On July 10, 1880, according to George Engel, *Reminiscences, Ms.*, the first political meeting in Cheney was held at the home of J. A. Lemon for the purpose of agreeing upon a location for a county seat. The minutes were published in the *Palouse Gazette* of July 16, 1880. From the following excerpt the influence of the Northern Pacific on the selection of the site may be inferred: "The interests of Spokane Falls were ably sustained by Andrew Lefevre, Spokane Bridge by Taylor Winn, and Spring Valley by Tobias Smythe. Mr. A. S. Abernethy then stated on behalf of the N. P. R. R., that a townsite had been finally located on S. 13, T. 23., R., 41, E., at present known as Depot Springs, as a point which will accommodate the largest area of agricultural country. The Depot Springs were then mentioned as a suitable place for the county seat, also Spokane Falls and Medical Lake. On an informal ballot being taken, the Depot Springs were ahead, and on a formal ballot being called for, the sense of the convention was declared unanimously in favor of Depot Springs."

³That Cheney has had three names is a fact which seems to have been overlooked by students of local history. My attention was first called to the matter by reading the reminiscences of George Engel, prepared for C. S. Kingston, vice president of the Normal School, in 1922. The manuscript is preserved in the Normal School Library. Said Mr. Engel: "We used to call Cheney then Depot Springs, from the fine spring that was near the site of the present depot. After this there was a little while that it was known as Billings, from Frederick Billings, one of the financiers of the railroad." In the *Palouse Gazette* of September 17, 1880, the following item appeared: "By order of General Sprague the townsite on the line of the Northern Pacific railroad, formerly called Billings, has been changed to Cheney, after Hon. Ben P. Cheney, one of the directors of the road. This point is more familiarly known as Depot Springs." Frederick Billings was president of the Northern Pacific from 1879 to 1881. For a further account of his career see Smalley, E. V.: *History of the Northern Pacific Railroad*. Putman's, New York, 1883.

P. Cheney Academy, established in Cheney through the generosity of Benjamin P. Cheney and the Northern Pacific railroad, gave the opportunity.⁴ When Washington was admitted to the Union, November 11, 1889, the trustees of the academy consented to the donation of the building and grounds to the state on condition that the state locate and maintain in Cheney in perpetuity an institution for the training of teachers.⁵ Around the establishment of the Normal School and the efforts and sacrifices of the people to retain and upbuild it in the face of fires, internal dissensions and political manipulations the history of Cheney has revolved since the beginning of statehood. Striving in the face of adversity to build up an institution which has now become the pride of the commonwealth, struggling against forces—natural as well as political—which would have daunted men and women of less courage and vision, the efforts of the pioneer citizens of Cheney in behalf of the Normal School have made one of the brilliant chapters in the annals of the Pacific Northwest. There have been few dull moments in the history of the State Normal School at Cheney. It has run the gamut of adversity. From its inception almost to the present it has been a storm center of politics. Twice it has been destroyed by fire,⁶ and three times it has been brought low by the veto power of the governor.⁷ Yet it has withstood all of these

4 Benjamin Pierce Cheney was born in Hillsboro, N. H., August 12, 1815. He received a common school education, became a stage driver and subsequently manager of the line. In 1842 he established, with two others, Cheney & Co's., Boston and Montreal Express. A few years later he formed the United States and Canada Express Co., of which he was president. In 1879 the great business he had founded was merged with the American Express Co., in which he became the largest stockholder and in which he held the office of director and treasurer until his retirement from active business life. He was a director of the Northern Pacific railroad for many years. In the course of his lifetime Mr. Cheney amassed a huge fortune, valued at his death in 1895 at \$9,000,000. Despite his lack of education, he had a broad outlook upon life, and was generous in his donations to educational institutions. He gave \$50,000 to Dartmouth College. He presented to his native state a bronze statue of Daniel Webster, with whom he had been on intimate terms in his days as a stage driver. Richard Olney paid him the following tribute: "Mr. Cheney was one of the self-made men of New England and possessed in large measure the qualities to which their success in life is to be attributed. From his youth up he was temperate, industrious and persevering and resolute in his determination to better the conditions to which he had been born. He brought to its accomplishment great native shrewdness, a kindly, cheerful and engaging disposition, a sense of honor, the lack of which often seriously impairs the efficiency of the strongest natures, and an intuitive and almost unerring judgment of human character and motives. The reward of his career was not merely a large fortune accumulated wholly by honorable means, but the respect and regard of the entire community in which he lived."

Mr. Cheney, in recognition of the honor which had been conferred upon him by associating his name with a town for which a promising future was anticipated, contributed \$10,000 toward the construction of an academy, and thereby laid the foundation for the educational system which Cheney enjoys today.

5 Stephen G. Grubb, author of the act which created the State Normal School at Cheney, wrote, several years afterward, a brief account of the vicissitudes of the measure in the legislature in 1889-90. His article was published in 1907 in the *Rhododendron*, the year book of the student body of the Normal School.

6 The academy building was destroyed by fire on August 27, 1891. The administration building of the Normal School, which was completed in 1896 at a cost of \$60,000, was destroyed on April 24, 1912.

7 Appropriations for the Normal School have been vetoed as follows: John H. McGraw, 1893; John R. Rogers, 1897; Ernest Lister, 1913. The school, by private assistance, was kept in operation despite the veto of Governor McGraw. During the year 1897-98 the school was obliged to close on account of Governor Roger's veto, but in the fall of 1898 it was reopened on a subscription and tuition basis. In 1913 the legislature passed the appropriation bill for the Normal School over the veto of Governor Lister.

misfortunes and justified the faith of the citizens of Cheney and the Inland Empire. But it is not within the purview of this article to trace the development of the Normal School. This article is limited to a brief treatment of the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy, the progenitor of the State Normal School at Cheney.

Benjamin P. Cheney, in consideration of the honor which had been conferred upon him, gave \$10,000 toward the establishment of an academy in Cheney, and the Northern Pacific donated a site, consisting of about eight acres.⁸

"The Benjamin P. Cheney Academy was built in the fall of 1881 and was completed shortly after the opening of the year 1882. The builder was a Portland contractor, and the material was brought from Portland over the Northern Pacific railroad, which had been finished as far as Cheney about June, 1881. The building was a wooden structure, 36 x 66, with the longer side facing the town. In the inside there was a hall running across the building and dividing both the first and second floors into two schoolrooms each. The building stood as described until 1891, when an addition, 24 x 60, was built at the middle of the rear end of the building, making the ground plan of the structure in the form of a 'T'.⁹ The addition was also of two stories, and was intended to be divided into four classrooms. It was also planned to have a gymnasium in the basement of the addition. But, while the addition was still under construction, a fire started, August 27,

⁸ L. E. Kellogg, editor of the first newspaper published in Cheney, *The Northwest Tribune*, on July 16, 1923, recounted for the present writer his recollections of the establishing of the Cheney Academy. He said: "In the fall of 1878 [1880], following the excitement of the Spokane county-seat election and its removal to Cheney, the new town took on a phenomenal growth. Fraternal orders were instituted, churches organized, the necessity for school advantages recognized, and steps taken to provide for them. The population was mostly recent arrivals, and the continual solicitation for funds during and following the campaign had taxed the financial ability of the people to the utmost. But school facilities must be provided. A meeting of representative citizens was called to meet in *The Tribune* office to discuss the school matter and take necessary steps. Hon D. F. Percival was chairman and L. E. Kellogg secretary. The importance of school advantages was fully discussed, and, as usual, a committee was appointed to solicit funds although it was apparent that the people were not able to raise sufficient funds to build a school building to accommodate the growing demands of the town.

"Hon. Alex Abernethy was present at that meeting. Mr. Abernethy was associated with the land department of the Northern Pacific railway and personally acquainted with Benjamin P. Cheney, one of the directors of the N. P. Mr. Abernethy suggested that some substantial aid might be obtained from Mr. Cheney, and the secretary, upon motion, was directed to communicate with Mr. Cheney. Accordingly, the secretary wrote Mr. Cheney. Some time after this Hon. J. W. Sprague, general supervisor of the Northern Pacific railway, had official business in Cheney, and he said he had received a letter from Mr. Cheney on the subject of a school building, and expressed the opinion that he thought Mr. Cheney would honor his pride by furnishing the means to build a school edifice that would stand as a monument to his memory. Some further communications were exchanged, resulting in the announcement that Mr. Cheney had placed the sum of \$10,000 in the hands of General Sprague for a school building at Cheney."

L. E. Kellogg was born in Ashtabula, Ohio, August 3, 1850. He was educated in the common schools and spent one year at Grand River Institute, Austenburg, Ohio. He arrived in Colfax, Washington Territory, in June, 1877. He has been auditor of Douglas County, receiver of the United States land office in Waterville, and postmaster at Waterville. For several years he was engaged in newspaper work in Washington. He now resides in Wenatchee.

⁹ *The Biennial Report of the Trustees of the Normal School*, 1892, page 3, gives the dimensions of the addition as 40x60 feet.

1891, a short while before the opening of school, which destroyed both the unfinished addition and the main part of the school building. The fire occurred about one o'clock in the morning. Officially, it was declared that the fire started on the northeast side, in a heated mortar bed, which was too close to the wooden basement wall."¹⁰

The first board of trustees for the academy, organized in 1881, consisted of the Reverend George H. Atkinson¹¹ of Portland, Congregational minister; D. F. Percival,¹² business man of Cheney, and General J. W. Sprague¹³ of Tacoma, official of the Northern Pacific railroad. Articles of incorporation were adopted on September 24, 1881, and filed with the records of the Spokane County auditor on October 1.¹⁴

10 Engel, George: *Reminiscences*, Ms. The building was under construction in November, 1881. The *Palouse Gazette*, November 25, 1881, recorded the death of a workman who was injured while working on the academy building. In the issue of the same newspaper for April 7, 1882, the following item appeared: "According to *The Tribune*, the opening exercises of the Cheney Academy occurred last Friday" [March 31]. It is presumed that these exercises were public, for all other available records point to April 3 as the opening school day.

11 George Henry Atkinson, pioneer educator and missionary of Oregon and Washington, was born in Newburyport, Mass., May 10, 1819. In 1843 he was graduated by Dartmouth, and three years later completed his course in the Andover Theological Seminary. He married Nancy Bates in 1846, was ordained February 24, 1847, and the following October Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson left for Oregon via the Sandwich Islands. For forty years Mr. Atkinson was engaged in religious work in the Northwest. He was pastor of the Congregational church in Oregon City for fifteen years and of the Portland church for several years. In 1872 he became general home missionary superintendent for both Oregon and Washington, a position which he held until his death. During his many years in the Northwest Mr. Atkinson found time to write extensively on the resources of the country. He made several trips to the East, and addressed many prominent bodies. His interest in education is attested by the fact that he was a trustee of Tualatin Academy, Whitman College, Cheney Academy and Fidalgo Academy. He founded Steilacoom Academy. He was the first school superintendent of Clackamas County and was subsequently superintendent of Multnomah County schools for two terms. He died in Portland on February 25, 1889. For an extensive account of his life see the following book, compiled by Nancy Bates Atkinson: *Biography of Rev. G. H. Atkinson*, D. D. F. W. Bates and Company, Portland, Ore., 1893.

12 Daniel F. Percival was born in Bangor, Maine, November 16, 1839. Mr. Percival's father was a lumberman, and his son was brought up in the business. He enlisted in the Union army in 1864, was present at the fall of Richmond and the surrender of General Lee, and was discharged in 1865, when he engaged in merchandising in St. Joe, Mo. On May 1, 1866, he started across the plains with an ox team, arriving at Bozeman, Mont., on Sept. 1 of that year. Two years later he went to California, where he engaged in business in San Diego for two years. He then went to Portland and engaged in the lumbering business. In 1872 he went to Rock Creek, Washington, and entered the stock-raising business. He served as county commissioner of Stevens County in 1874 and 1875, and was a member of the territorial legislature from 1876 to 1880. In 1881 he moved to Cheney and entered the real estate and brokerage business. He established a private bank, and in 1889 organized the First National of Cheney, serving as its president. Mr. Percival served for five successive terms as mayor of Cheney. He was president of the board of trustees of the Eastern Washington Insane Asylum at Medical Lake for eight years, and served his community and state in many other capacities. It was he who introduced in the legislature of 1879 the bill to separate Spokane County from Stevens County. He died in 1907.

13 John Wilson Sprague, soldier, was born in White Creek, N. Y., April 4, 1817. He was educated in the common schools and attended the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy, but was never graduated. After leaving school he became a merchant, and in 1851-52 he was treasurer of Erie County, Ohio. At the beginning of the Civil War he was made captain in the Seventh Ohio volunteers, became colonel of the Sixty-Third Ohio in 1863, and was appointed brigadier-general of volunteers on July 30, 1864. He received the brevet of major-general, United States volunteers, March 13, 1865. At the close of the war he declined a lieutenant-colonelcy in the regular army. In 1870 he came to Washington Territory, having been made general agent and superintendent of the Northern Pacific railroad, which offices he resigned in 1882. Afterwards he was engaged in various enterprises, and for five years was president of the National Bank in Tacoma. The town of Sprague, in Lincoln County, is named in his honor. For an account of his death and a brief sketch of his life see the *Spokane Weekly Review*, December 28, 1893.

14 Spokane County Auditor, B-2, Misc.

"The trustees, General J. W. Sprague, Rev. Dr. Atkinson, and Hon. D. F. Percival, met here on the 15th inst. [December, 1881] to complete the organization of the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy. General J. W. Sprague was elected president, Rev. Dr. Atkinson secretary and Hon. D. F. Percival treasurer. The board examined the academy building, which is nearly completed, and pronounced it a substantial structure, with large working capacity and all modern improvements necessary to the health and comfort of the pupils. Several hundred dollars have been saved through the liberality of Henry Villard,¹⁵ president of the Northern Pacific railroad, and General J. W. Sprague, general superintendent, in transporting material free of charge over the O. W. R. & N. and N. P. lines. The trustees of the academy and the directors of the Cheney public school met and discussed educational interests. The trustees of the academy assured the board of directors that it was their desire to carry out the views of Judge Cheney and make this a first class institution of learning, and would do all in their power to promote our educational interests. They believed, with proper effort, that the academy could be opened in a few weeks, and meantime it is the intention of the trustees of the academy and the school directors to make some arrangements for the future that will be entirely satisfactory to the public."¹⁶

The arrangement made by the trustees of the academy and the board of directors of the Cheney school district was a merger, whereby the academy was employed by the school district to teach the children who otherwise would be enrolled in the public school.¹⁷ This merger lasted until 1887, during which time the district taxed itself about ten mills, and the rest of the money was obtained by tuition and contributions by Mr. Cheney. During the period of the merger the affairs of the school were carried on jointly by the two boards. The merger became unsatisfactory be-

¹⁵ Henry Villard, president of the Northern Pacific railroad from 1881 to 1883, was born at Speyer, Rhenish Bavaria, April 10, 1835. He was educated at Speyer, Munich, and Wurzburg. He landed in New York on November 18, 1853. In 1856-57 he edited the *Volksblatt* at Racine, Wis. In 1858 he reported the Lincoln-Douglas debates, and in 1860-61 he was reporter for the *Associated Press* at Springfield, Ill. During the Civil War he was a reporter on military affairs, and in 1866-67 he went to Europe as war correspondent for American newspapers. From 1876 to 1883 he was actively engaged in the railroad business. In 1881 he gained control of the Northern Pacific and was elected president. That same year he also bought the New York *Evening Post* and the *Nation*. In 1883 he resigned the presidency of the Northern Pacific, but re-entered the directorate in 1887-88. He died on November 12, 1900. For a comprehensive account of his career see *Memoirs of Henry Villard*, two volumes. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston and New York, 1904.

¹⁶ Newspaper clipping found in the *Papers of D. H. Felch*. Mr. Felch was the first principal of the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy. The clipping is dated December 23, 1881, but there is no clue as to the newspaper in which it was published. It is supposed that the item was clipped from a Cheney newspaper.

¹⁷ Walter, Louis: *Reminiscences*, Ms.; letter of F. V. Hoyt to writer, October, 1922.

cause many persons believed that the Congregational church was dominating the academy.¹⁸ The academy opened on April 3, 1882.

Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin P. Cheney and other prominent officials of the Northern Pacific railroad visited Cheney in September, 1883. Their coming was the occasion for a gala day in Cheney. A special committee on arrangements was appointed, and placards, conveying the following information, were distributed:¹⁹

"Upon the arrival of the train with Mr. Cheney citizens are requested to close their places of business and retire to the academy. School children participating in the reception will meet at the academy at one o'clock. The committee of arrangements and school children will escort Mr. Cheney to the academy, preceded by the band. On account of the uncertainty as to the exact time of the arrival of the train with Mr. Cheney, teachers will retain children at the academy until notified by the committee. The committee expresses the hope that every citizen will join in the reception."

Mr. Cheney's visit, judging from the newspaper account, was highly successful. Under a Cheney date line, September 18, 1883, *The Oregonian* carried the following story:

"The grandest and most imposing ceremonies ever witnessed in this section have just been concluded. The occasion was in honor of Benjamin P. Cheney of Boston, one of the directors of the Northern Pacific railway, for whom our town is named, and who is the founder of the B. P. Cheney Academy here. Mr. Cheney arrived on a special car at eight o'clock,²⁰ accompanied by his most estimable wife; Robert Harris, one of the directors of the Northern Pacific railroad, and vice president of the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad; General Kane, brother of the famous Arctic explorer, and other prominent railroad men.

"The party was met at the depot by about two hundred students of the academy, brass band and citizens of Cheney and surrounding vicinity. The town was beautifully decorated with flags and evergreens, and across one of the principal streets was suspended the motto in evergreen letters, "Greeting to B. P. Cheney." All business was suspended. Mr. Cheney and friends were escorted to the academy by the band, students and a large crowd of citizens. * * * *

18 Walter, *Reminiscences*, Ms.

19 From the *Papers of D. H. Felch*.

20 This hour does not agree with the hour set in the placard quoted above. It may be that eight o'clock is a misprint, and that three o'clock was meant. The figures three and eight are easily confused. In the news story the hour was indicated by a figure.

"Hon. D. F. Percival delivered the address of welcome in a brief but appropriate speech, after which Mr. Cheney was introduced amid great applause. Mr. Cheney related some of the incidents of his visit to the Pacific coast, but said this occasion was the most pleasant of all. He concluded by saying that when the academy should be found insufficient to accommodate the demand he would make it larger. * * * * *

Appropriate remarks were made by Dr. G. H. Atkinson, Rev. Father Eells,²¹ W. R. Andrews and others. The party were all evidently much pleased with their visit, as were the citizens, who feel grateful to Mr. Cheney. They were all interested in the display of vegetables and grains at the railroad office and were much pleased with the town of Cheney. * * * * * The day will long be remembered as the most pleasant in the history of Cheney."

Meager information that is available, coupled with the recollection of a few persons who lived in Cheney during those years, tends to show that the academy was kept in operation with varying success until Washington Territory became a state. During that time five principals served the school.

D. H. Felch,²² the first principal, remained with the school for about two years. Trouble of some sort arose, and he withdrew. The Reverend F. V. Hoyt succeeded him and was principal for three months in the winter of 1883-84.²³ James W. Dow

²¹ Cushing Bells, missionary to the Indians of Washington Territory, was born in Blanford, Mass., February 16, 1810. In 1834 he was graduated by Williams College, and three years later he finished his studies at the East Windsor Theological Institute. He was ordained October 25, 1837, and on March 5, 1838, he married Myra Fairbank. In August, 1838, the Bellses arrived at the Whitman Mission, and in the autumn the Reverend Cushing Bells, with Elkanah Walker, located a mission at Tshimakain, now called Walker's Prairie. The following February work was begun at the mission and continued until June 3, 1848. For the next several years Mr. Bells was engaged in educational work in the Willamette valley. He obtained a charter for Whitman Seminary from the Washington Territorial Legislature in the winter of 1859-60. He became president of the board of trustees, and for two years was principal of the seminary. He organized the first Congregational church north of the Snake River and East of the Columbia, at Colfax, in 1877, delivered the first Fourth of July address in the Walla Walla valley, and preached the first Protestant sermon in Walla Walla. In April, 1882, he moved to Cheney and built a house, which is still standing. He had previously organized a church in Cheney, February 20, 1881, in a hotel over a barroom. This church, the first in Cheney, started with a membership of nine. The Rev. Mr. Bells contributed \$500 to the building of the Cheney church, which was dedicated December 18, 1881. He organized many other Congregational churches in the Inland Empire, and bought bells for many of them. He died February 16, 1893. See Bells, Myron: *Father Bells, or the Results of Fifty-Five Years of Missionary Labors in Washington and Oregon*. Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, Boston and Chicago, [1894?].

²² Daniel Henry Felch was born in Groton, Mass., September 19, 1856. He was graduated by Bowdoin College in 1874. He read law, spent a year in the Harvard law school, and was admitted to the bar in 1880. He then came West and established himself at Cheney. He was principal of the Cheney Academy for about two years, starting April 3, 1882. He died March 5, 1920. He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Ruth Felch Ford.

²³ Frederick V. Hoyt, now a farmer of Usk, Wash., was born in Meridian, N. Y., May 24, 1858. His parents were natives of New York State. Mr. Hoyt was educated at Olivet College and at Yale Divinity School, receiving the degrees of A. B. and B. D. He came West in 1882, arriving at Cheney August 4. He married Mary C. Buch on August 12, 1886. They have one son, Arthur B. Hoyt, of Usk.

was principal from April, 1884, to June, 1886.²⁴ Mortimer M. Carraher was principal from 1886 to 1889.²⁵ B. G. Cheney, a distant relative of Benjamin P. Cheney, was principal during 1889-90, the last year the academy was in operation.²⁶

During the several years the Cheney Academy was maintained money to defray the expenses of operation came from three sources: tuition, district school taxes and contributions by Mr. Cheney. It is not known that any official records bearing upon all the details of this matter are now extant, and the statements of those who participated in the activities of the academy, made nearly forty years afterward, are contradictory in some respects. This, however, is not to be wondered at. Whether or not tuition was charged in the beginning, whether or not Mr. Cheney's donations stopped with the original gift, it is a fact beyond dispute that a note of an annual tuition fee of \$30 is recorded in the *Report of the United States Commissioner of Education* for 1882-83.²⁷ As the Cheney Academy was not opened until April 3, 1882, it is apparent that it could not have continued long without charging tuition, else the record would not be shown so soon in the reports of the United States Commissioner of Education. Tuition rates for the term beginning August 24, 1885, were advertised as follows: Primary, \$6.50 per term; common English, \$9.50 per term; higher English, \$10.50 per term; languages, each extra, \$2.00 per term.²⁸ Provision was made whereby lessons in instrumental music might be obtained from competent teachers in town.

School was maintained for three terms of twelve weeks each, and special inducements were held out to those contemplating

²⁴ James W. Dow, real estate and insurance dealer of Chewelah, Wash., was the third principal of the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy. He was born in Leicester, N. Y., April 19, 1850. He took a classical course in Oberlin College. He came to Cheney April 7, 1884. On August 24, 1897, he married Miss Anna Pollett.

²⁵ Mrs. Imogene Carraher of Seattle, widow of M. M. Carraher, submitted the following information to the present writer on April 29, 1922: Mortimer M. Carraher was born in Quebec, Canada, April 8, 1853. A few weeks later his parents moved to Connecticut, thence to Dubuque, and subsequently to Sioux City, Iowa. Mr. Carraher was educated in the common schools and received his diploma from the normal school at Cedar Falls, Iowa, in 1879. In 1884 he was awarded a diploma by the Northern Indiana Normal. In 1885 Mr. Carraher came to the Pacific Coast with a G. A. R. excursion party. He visited in Seattle, then with relatives in Spokane, and finally settled in Cheney, and became principal of the Cheney Academy. June 15, 1887, he married Imogene Bybee of Cheney. In 1889 the family moved to Seattle, and Mr. Carraher entered the real estate and loan business. He became prominent in civic and fraternal circles in the city, and was a prominent member of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce until his death on October 7, 1919.

²⁶ B. G. Cheney, attorney at Montesano, Wash., was born in Maine on April 19, 1860. He was educated at Bates. In 1885 he married Jennie E. Barton. Mr. Cheney arrived in Cheney, Wash., in September, 1889, and served as principal of the Cheney Academy until it was closed the following spring. In May, 1890, he became a resident of Montesano, Wash., where he has since lived. He has served as clerk of the court, city attorney and mayor of Montesano.

²⁷ *Report of the United States Commissioner of Education*, 1882-83, p. 514; *ibid.*, 1888-89, vol. II, p. 1053. Walter, *Reminiscences*, Ms. Letter of James W. Dow to writer, Nov. 17, 1922; letter of F. V. Hoyt to writer, October, 1922; letter of B. G. Cheney to writer, 1922. These letters are on file in the library of the State Normal School at Cheney.

²⁸ *The Northwest Tribune*, July 30, 1885.

teaching to attend. The board of directors in 1885 was the same as when it was organized in 1881.

In 1886 tuition fees were advertised as follows: Primary (three lowest grades) \$5 per term; intermediate (the next three grades), \$7 per term; common and higher English, \$9 per term; languages, each extra, \$2 per term. It was announced that free-hand drawing would also be taught incidentally, without extra charge.²⁹

The last term of school held in the academy opened on January 6, 1890. Scientific, business, literary, elementary, and primary courses were advertised. These courses were offered on a tuition basis.

At no time did the curriculum of the academy advance far beyond the bounds of an ordinary grade school. In 1883-84 work was offered to the eighth or ninth grade.³⁰ During the next two years the course of study was still somewhat indefinite, classes being arranged according to the inclinations of the pupils.³¹ High school subjects offered during those years included elementary algebra, plane geometry, physics and Latin.³² In 1888-89 "there was offered a general review of the grade subjects along with high school subjects. * * * * * As near as I can remember there were no very mature pupils in the school."³³

The first commencement exercises of the Cheney Academy, described by a contemporary in the extravagant language which characterized country journalism a few decades ago, were held in the Cheney Congregational church on June 15, 1888. Four pupils were awarded diplomas by the principal, M. M. Carraher, one of whom, Ralph Hendricks, is now a prominent physician of Spokane. The group attending the exercises passed a resolution of gratitude for the efficient service given by the principal and his faculty to the academy and to the community.³⁴

With the transfer of the county seat to Spokane Falls after the election in 1886, the Cheney Academy, like the town of Cheney, entered upon a period of decline.³⁵ At about the same time local dissensions forced a dissolution of the merger between the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, August 19, 1886.

³⁰ Letter of F. V. Hoyt to writer, October, 1922.

³¹ Letter of James W. Dow to writer, Nov. 17, 1922.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Letter of W. E. Gamble to writer, April 15, 1923. Mr. Gamble, superintendent of schools at Loomis, Wash., when the letter was written, was a member of the faculty of the Cheney Academy in 1888-89.

³⁴ *Cheney Sentinel*, June 22, 1888.

³⁵ The contrast is shown by comparing the reports of the United States Commissioner of Education. In the report for 1882-83, p. 514, an enrolment of 201 is shown. In the report for 1888-89 the number of pupils enrolled is recorded as 60 (vol. II, p. 1053).

academy and the Cheney school district, and in 1887 W. J. Sutton of Michigan was elected principal of the Cheney public school.³⁶ For three years the academy waged a losing fight with the public school, and was on the point of closing its doors when the admission of Washington to the Union brought a new hope to the academy and to the people of Cheney. Why not offer the moribund academy to the State of Washington on condition that the legislature locate and maintain a State Normal School in Cheney? Provision for normal schools had been made in the Enabling Act. The proposition was accordingly carried to the legislature by Representative Stephen G. Grubb of Cheney, acted upon favorably, and the building and the grounds of the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy became the home of the oldest state teacher-training institution in Washington.³⁷

NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the preparation of this article the writer, because of the lack of official records, has been obliged to rely mainly upon incomplete files of Cheney and Spokane newspapers published during the period under discussion, and to draw upon the recollections of men who participated in the activities of the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy. Two men whose reminiscences have been particularly helpful are Louis Walter and George Engel. Mr. Walter came to Cheney in 1881, and during the subsequent twenty years played a creditable role in the activities of his community and the state. He was appointed president of the first board of trustees of the Normal School, and during the second session of the legislature he was a member of the house of representatives. Mr. Engel came to Cheney in the summer of 1880, while the site was still known as Depot Springs. He has lived in Cheney since then, and for many years has been an employe of the Normal School. In 1922 C. S. Kingston, vice-president of the Normal School, prevailed upon these men to reduce to writing a part of their recol-

³⁶ Interview with W. J. Sutton.

³⁷ "An Act to establish a normal school for the State of Washington, in the city of Cheney, in Spokane County, and for the government, management and control of the same." [Approved March 22, 1890].

"Section I.—That a normal school for the State of Washington is hereby established in the city of Cheney, in Spokane County, ***** *Provided*, That the trustees of the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy shall, prior to the first day of September (1890), eighteen hundred and ninety, donate to the state the building and one block of ground containing eight acres, now occupied by said Benjamin P. Cheney Academy, within the limits of the city of Cheney, and valued at not less than thirty thousand (\$30,000) dollars, and shall convey the same to the State of Washington by a good and perfect title in fee simple, to be approved by the attorney general and accepted by the board of trustees hereinafter mentioned."—*Session Laws, 1889-90*, p. 365. State Printing and Publishing Company, Olympia, 1890.

The building and the grounds were formally accepted by the board of trustees on August 18, 1890.—*Cheney Sentinel*, August 22, 1890.

lections of early Cheney history, and these manuscripts are now on file in the Normal School library. They have been referred to in this article as the Walter and the Engel *Reminiscences*.

Incomplete files of the *Cheney Sentinel* and *The Northwest Tribune*, as well as complete files of the *Palouse Gazette*, have been used. In July, 1923, L. E. Kellogg of Wenatchee prepared for the writer a valuable paper on early Cheney history. Mr. Kellogg was editor of *The Northwest Tribune* when it was moved from Colfax to Cheney in 1880, and for some time thereafter. In the notes of this article the *Papers of D. H. Felch* are cited occasionally. These papers, which had been assembled in the form of a scrap book by Mr. Felch during his lifetime, were made available to the writer by Mr. Felch's daughter, Mrs. Ruth Felch Ford. The story from *The Oregonian* was discovered among these papers.

Material for biographical notes has been assembled from sundry sources. For the sketches of the lives of the principals of the academy information has been obtained from the men themselves or from some member of their respective families. Apart from the sources specifically cited in the other sketches, the writer has drawn upon Jonathan Edwards, *History of Spokane County*; N. W. Durham, *History of Spokane and the Inland Empire*, three volumes; and *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography*.

A file of the *Spokane Times*, a newspaper published in Spokane Falls during the period under discussion, is extant. The Normal School hopes to obtain possession of it within a short time. It should prove a valuable source for the history of Spokane County during the eighties.

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