CHAPTER VI.
HISTORY OF ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE.

I. THE FOUNDING.

For some years before the formal opening of Elizabethtown College, there was felt a need in eastern Pennsylvania for a school where the children of the members of the Church of the Brethren might have opportunities for a more extended education than it was possible to get in public schools, and at the same time make it possible for them to remain loyal to the Brethren Church, chiefly along the line of non-conformity to the world. It was furthermore decided to extend the privileges of higher education to such members as would obtain the same at State institutions unless afforded by schools in the church of their choice where they would be surrounded by a Christian environment, free from atheistical and other influences that tend to make shipwreck of their religious life. Withal there existed many good schools so far as intellectual training was concerned, but upholding wrong ideals and tolerating, if not fostering, pernicious features such as intercollegiate athletics, hazing, students' fraternities, class rushes, etc. Those interested in the school were moved by a lofty purpose which may be concisely stated thus: to found and establish a school where Christian education was obtainable under the fostering care and in the interest of the Church of the Brethren. This purpose, more formally stated in the Constitution, adopted by the Board of Trustees and friends of the school was as follows: "The object of this school shall be such harmonious development of the physical, mental, and moral powers of both sexes as will best fit them for the duties of life and promote the spiritual interest of its patrons. While under the control and management of the Church of the Brethren and primarily intended for the education of our own child-
ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE.

Memorial Hall.  Alpha Hall.
ren, the school shall be open to all such as desire to avail themselves of its privileges.”

In response to a widely-extended written call issued by J. G. Francis, of Oaks, Pa., to meet at Reading, November 29, 1898, to discuss the advisability and feasibility of starting a new college in eastern Pennsylvania, there met in the Church of the Brethren in Reading on said date twelve Sisters and twenty-two Brethren. The meeting was called to order by Brother Francis and the following organization was effected: Elder John Herr, of Myerstown, Moderator; Elder G. N. Falkenstein, of Germantown, Secretary. After devotional exercises conducted by Brother Wm. Howe, of Norristown, the object of the meeting was stated by the moderator. Brother Francis then read some correspondence from a number of prominent Brethren expressing favorable sentiment for a school in Eastern Pennsylvania and tried to show the need of a school in our District that was of a higher standard. Brother Francis then moved that we in the fear of God proceed to establish a school in Eastern Pennsylvania. This motion was seconded by Bro. F. F. Holsopple, of Parkerford, Pa. At Elder Falkenstein’s suggestion this motion was not put to a vote in order that there might be a fuller discussion of this important movement. Brother Francis then argued the necessity of a school by presenting statistics of members’ children at other schools, chiefly schools outside of our church, and said there was need of facilities for preparing ministers in our church. Elder J. H. Longenecker, of Palmyra, said that he was in favor of education, but our State District was not united on this question and this was shown by the small representation at this meeting. He said that much prejudice exists against higher education in our Church. Elder H. E. Light, of Mountville, expressed himself favorable to the movement of starting a school. He said we do not have too many schools and cannot educate too much, but our children need to be educated in our own schools and especially in a school that is loyal to the Church. There was considerable pressure in the meeting to decide at once upon the building of the proposed school. Brother Francis read a paper from
Ephrata inviting the school to locate here. Brethren E. B. Lefever and Samuel Kulp, of Ephrata, were representing the people of that town and stated a number of advantages that the place offered for the new school.

This meeting had both a forenoon and afternoon session, and after considerable discussion, a motion was passed that a committee of five be elected by ballot to take preliminary steps for finding a location for establishing a Brethren school in this District and report at a future meeting. The committee elected by ballot was as follows: John Herr, J. H. Longenecker, H. E. Light, G. N. Falkenstein, Elias Lefever. The meeting instructed this committee to decide a time and place for the next public meeting. This committee organized by electing John Herr, Chairman; G. N. Falkenstein, Secretary.

The locating committee appointed by the Reading meeting underwent some important changes. The chairman, John Herr, resigned on account of ill health. In his stead the committee elected S. H. Hertzler, of Elizabethtown. J. H. Longenecker also handed his resignation to the committee, but the reasons seemed insufficient to grant it. The committee agreed to meet at Mountville on March 6, 1899, the object being to visit school sites. Four members of the committee met there and organized as follows: Chairman, H. E. Light; Secretary, G. N. Falkenstein; S. H. Hertzler and E. B. Lefever being the other members present. Mountville, Columbia, Pottstown, Ephrata, Norristown, and about a month later Elizabethtown, were visited by this committee. Permission was given by Elder S. R. Zug, of Mastersonville, to have a public meeting of the Brethren interested in this movement in the Brethren Church in Elizabethtown on April 5, 1899. All churches of the District were notified of this meeting on March 23. The meeting convened at the time and place stated at 9:30 A. M. and was opened with devotional exercises by the Secretary. A committee of five Brethren offered the following nominations for officials for this meeting which were ratified by it: Chairman, S. R. Zug; Secretary, G. N. Falkenstein; Treasurer, S. H. Hertzler. Elder Zug made a brief address and then called for the
report of the locating committee which was read by the Secretary. Representatives of the following places presented sites for the new college: Mountville by H. E. Light, Columbia by H. E. Light and B. G. Musser, Ephrata by A. W. Mentzer, Norristown by letter, Pottstown by J. G. Francis, Elizabethtown by F. H. Keller who read a paper from the town council.

At the afternoon session, Elder George Bucher called for information by what authority this meeting is called. J. G. Francis stated that it originated in his mind. The Secretary, G. N. Falkenstein, spoke of the sentiment for a school throughout the District. The meeting then was declared open for further discussion of the following questions: first, Shall we have a school? second, What kind of a school do we want to establish? A number of speeches were made on these questions. George Bucher said: “I am in favor of a Brethren school on Gospel principles, but it must be subject to the Church and located in a loyal congregation.” S. H. Hertzler said if some schools are improperly managed, we need one that is properly managed. After further discussion George Bucher moved that we have a school. This was seconded by Elder Jesse Ziegler, of Royersford and passed unanimously. The next question to be decided was What kind of a school shall it be? S. R. Zug said “coeducational for young people.” George Bucher said “for the old ones too. We want a higher school. A college to compare favorably with any in the country. A safe school.” J. G. Francis said: “We want a school in which the Bible is the text book, also offering scientific and classical courses.” L. M. Keim said: “The new school shall have an agricultural department.” Jesse Ziegler favored this also. G. N. Falkenstein said a commercial department was also needed. After further discussion G. N. Falkenstein moved that we establish a school of such a character that compares favorably with any of our schools including Bible, academic, and collegiate departments,—a school to be at the same time a home and a church. The motion was passed by the meeting.

The meeting then decided that a committee of ten be
appointed to be fully authorized to select a site for the location of the school. This committee consisted of H. E. Light G. N. Falkenstein, S. H. Hertzler, George Bucher, Jesse Ziegler, S. R. Zug, J. G. Francis, Abram Royer, Benjamin Hottel and William Oberholtzer. The committee named was also to draft a Constitution and By-laws for the new school and present the same at a future meeting. The committee decided to meet at District Meeting for organization on April 20. The organization resulted as follows: Chairman, H. E. Light; Secretary, G. N. Falkenstein; Treasurer, S. H. Hertzler. All towns offering sites were to place their proposals in the committee's hands not later than May 10. Meantime the offer of Lititz was to be investigated.

The locating committee met again at the Annual Conference at Roanoke, Virginia, May 24, 1899. Of the committee of ten the following were present: H. E. Light, S. R. Zug, George Bucher, S. H. Hertzler, G. N. Falkenstein, and J. G. Francis. William Oberholtzer resigned. H. B. Holhinger was elected in his stead. After devotional exercises and the purpose of the meeting having been stated, it was moved and seconded that sealed offers for the new school be read, and that a majority of the committee be required to decide its location. There were only two offers presented; namely, Ephrata and Elizabethtown. The advantages offered by these places were considered with reference to the following points: drainage, railroad facilities, money, church, water. Three ballots were cast without any decision. The places voted for were Mountville, Elizabethtown, and Pottstown. Following some speeches made in favor of Pottstown and Elizabethtown it was unanimously voted to locate at Elizabethtown. The following subcommittee was appointed to prepare a Constitution and By-Laws for the school: G. N. Falkenstein, Jesse Ziegler, J. G. Francis. The committee decided that the next public meeting shall be at Elizabethtown on June 7.

The committee on Constitution and By-laws met at Royersford, Pa., June 1 with all present. This committee recommended that the name of this school be Conestoga College. After a day's work, the work of the committee was com-
The locating committee met at Elizabethtown, June 6, at noon, the following being present: H. E. Light, Chairman; G. N. Falkenstein, Secretary; S. H. Hertzler, Treasurer; S. R. Zug, George Bucher, Jesse Ziegler, Abram Royer and J. G. Francis. A formal protest was received from Ephrata in regard to locating the school at Elizabethtown and an informal protest was made in behalf of Pottstown. It was then moved and decided to reconsider the location. It was also decided not to admit new offers for the school unless open to all upon due notice. Three minutes' time was allowed each representative for presenting each site. H. E. Light spoke in favor of Mountville, S. R. Zug for Elizabethtown, Abram Royer for Ephrata, and J. G. Francis for Pottstown. On the third ballot eight votes were cast in favor of Elizabethtown.

The committee then adjourned to view several sites about Elizabethtown, after which they met at the home of S. H. Hertzler at 2:30 P. M., where the citizens' committee also met the locating committee. Many speeches were made in favor of two sites, one at the east end of town and the other at the west end. After some balloting which did not decide the location, many warm speeches were made and the matter was left undecided until the public meeting on the following day. The committee then took up the report of the committee on Constitution and By-laws. The name proposed by the Committee on Constitution and By-laws provoked considerable discussion. The name Mack College was presented by J. G. Francis. George Bucher opposed this name on account of it being the name of a man, but liked Conestoga College. H. E. Light thought that Conestoga College was too local a name for the school. Jesse Ziegler presented the name East Penn College. A motion to adopt the last name failed to pass. Finally the name Conestoga College was passed by the locating committee. There were slight changes made in the statement of the object of the school, but in the main the Constitution and By-laws were adopted by the locating committee. On Wednesday morning, June the seventh, the locating committee had another session prior to the public meeting which convened at 9:30
in the Brethren Church. Devotional exercises were conducted by George Bucher. The minutes of the former public meeting having been read, the decision of the locating committee as to the site of the new school was announced. The Constitution and By-laws were also presented for the consideration of the meeting. After an extended discussion on the name question, the meeting decided to adopt Elizabethtown College instead of Conestoga College as the name for the proposed college. Each section of the Constitution and By-laws was then taken up and after considerable discussion it was adopted. The meeting proceeded to elect trustees, Brethren and Sisters voting by ballot. The following persons were nominated by the locating committee to serve as trustees; from Lancaster County, S. H. Hertzler, J. H. Rider, H. E. Light, George Bucher, C. R. Gibble, I. W. Taylor, T. F. Imler; from Berks County, P. C. Nyce; from Montgomery County, Jesse Ziegler; from Lebanon County, F. L. Reber; from Chester County, Nathan Hoffman; from Philadelphia, T. T. Myers, G. N. Falkenstein; from Maryland, L. R. Brumbaugh, J. Y. King; from Dauphin County, M. R. Henry, John Landis. While the votes were being counted for trustees, George Bucher moved to insert a clause in the Constitution and By-laws prohibiting instrumental music. The meeting, however, decided to leave this matter in the hands of the trustees. The By-laws were then read and adopted and the tellers made the following report of the election of trustees: for three years, G. N. Falkenstein, Jesse Ziegler, S. H. Hertzler; for two years, J. H. Rider, Nathan Hoffman, M. R. Henry; for one year, P. C. Nyce, T. F. Imler, and L. R. Brumbaugh. It was then decided by motion that the trustees be authorized to call a meeting of the contributors whenever deemed necessary.

After adopting the Constitution and By-laws as a whole unanimously, the meeting closed at five o'clock. The committee on location, Constitution and By-laws was then formally discharged and the meeting closed with devotional exercises. The writer is indebted to Elder G. N. Falkenstein of Elizabethtown for the minute details setting forth how Elizabethtown College was founded, he having been
Secretary of all the committees and of the three public meetings that were held until the school was formally established.

Elizabethtown had two good locations for the school but the spot where the newborn college was finally to rear its walls was on a beautiful elevation at the eastern end of the borough on the farm of Brother B. G. Groff, a businessman. The deal for ten acres of land as a nucleus for a campus was made by Royer S. Buch. He secured the land for the college at $150 per acre by the following proposition: Royer S. Buch and his brother J. Harvey Buch guarantee to pay for 1/3 of this tract, their father Addison Buch guarantees another third and B. G. Groff donated the remaining third. This original tract was increased later by the purchase of four acres from Bro. Groff.

The first board of trustees held its first meeting at Pottstown at the home of Nathan Hoffman on June 16. The organization of the board resulted as follows: President, Jesse Ziegler, of Royersford; Vice President, T. F. Imler of Lancaster; Secretary, G. N. Falkenstein of Germantown; Treasurer, S. H. Hertzler, of Elizabethtown. Elder Imler soon resigned and Brother J. H. Rider, a hardware merchant of Elizabethtown, was elected Vice President in his stead.

On September 23, 1899, a charter was secured. The incorporators were: S. H. Hertzler, J. H. Rider, S. P. Engle, J. H. Eshleman, Jos. G. Heisey, all of Elizabethtown. The trustees at once set out to raise funds for the erection of a building. The ground was broken for the first school building on July 10, 1900.

Arrangements for a Faculty preceded the erection of the first building. Elder I. N. H. Behm, of Lordsburg, California, was elected the first head of the school with the title of Principal. Elder G. N. Falkenstein, Secretary of the Board of Trustees, appeared second on the Faculty as published in a blue sixteen-page catalogue issued in August, 1900. Miss Elizabeth Meyer, of Bareville, was the first lady in the faculty and had charge of the lady students.

November 13 had been set and announced as the time for the dedication of the first building, since called Alpha Hall, but the building was not completed by that time. Neverthe-