

Asheville Normal and Collegiate Institute ^[1]

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Asheville Normal and Collegiate Institute

by Ann S. Wright, 2006



"The Normal and Collegiate Institute and campus, Asheville, N.C.c1910. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

^[2]Asheville Normal and Collegiate Institute was an outgrowth of the Home Industrial School, an elementary school started in 1887 by Louis M. Pease and his wife. The Peases directed the school, and Florence Stephenson was its first principal, holding the post for 30 years. From the beginning, the school emphasized home training and religious instruction for girls and young women in addition to regular academic work. Within a few weeks of opening, it was filled to capacity, with 75 boarding students and 45 day pupils. High school grades were added later. With the improvement of the public school system, the elementary grades were gradually phased out, and the high school department was discontinued in 1930.

In 1892 the campus was expanded and renamed the Asheville Normal and Collegiate Institute, with the goals of providing higher education for young women from the southern Appalachians and of training teachers, particularly for rural schools. Thomas Lawrence was the first principal of the normal school and served in that role until 1907. Pease House opened on the campus in 1908 to serve as a home for girls under the age of 12 "who cannot be trained in homes of their own"; the girls were taught by seniors from the normal school. Pease House operated until 1925.

Edward R. Childs directed the school from 1907 to 1916, when John E. Calfee took over and presided over a period of rapid institutional growth. In 1921 the Asheville Normal and Associated Schools consolidated the Presbyterian missionary schools in the area; it included Asheville Normal, Home School, and Pease House on the central campus in Asheville and the Farm School for boys in Swannanoa. By 1926 the school had evolved from a two-year normal school into a four-year teachers college. In 1931 the name was changed to Asheville Normal and Teachers College.

In 1940 the Presbyterian Board of Missions withdrew its support of the college. The Asheville ^[3]community attempted unsuccessfully to take on the financial burden of operating the school. Asheville College, as it had been renamed, closed at the end of the term in 1944. The campus was taken over for use by Memorial Mission Hospital, and school records were transferred to the Farm School (now [Warren Wilson College](#) ^[4]).

References:

Cordelia Camp, *A Thought at Midnight* (1959).

Mary Kestler Clyde, *Flashbacks to Dawn: Eye Openers in Preparatory School, Circa 1914-1922* (1983).

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Authors:

[Wright, Ann S.](#) ^[9]

Origin - location:

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