

HISTORY
OF THE
STATE OF DELAWARE

BY
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FROM THE EARLIEST SETTLEMENTS TO THE YEAR 1907

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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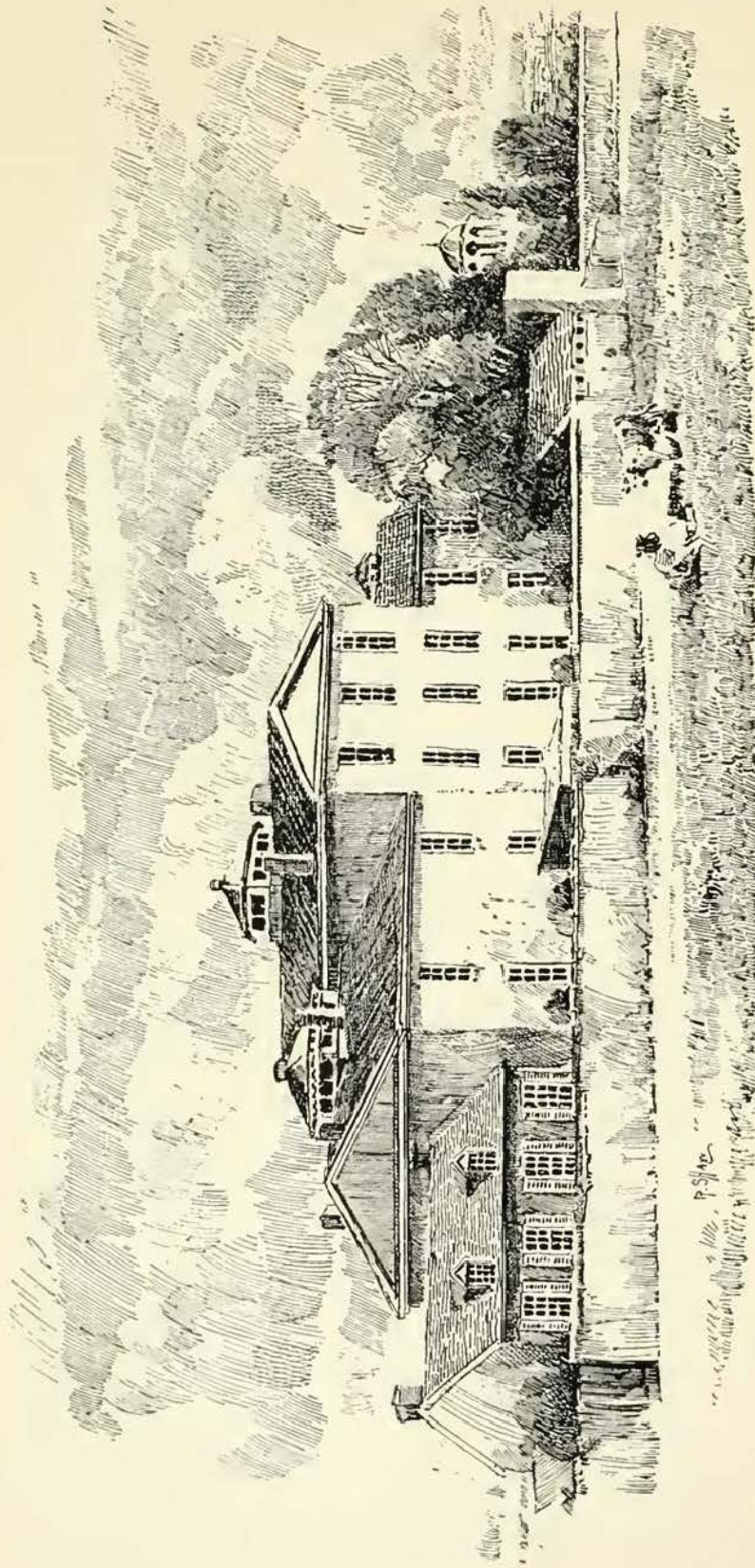
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COUNTY ALMSHOUSE AT WILMINGTON, 1852 TO 1887.

authorizing the Levy Court of New Castle County to borrow \$70,000 for that purpose.

The authorities of the City of Wilmington, after conference with the Levy Court of the county, donated the "Basin Lot," on Market street, between Tenth and Eleventh streets, for a site for the new court house, and on August 22, 1879, the contract was awarded for the erection of the new court house on that site. The building was completed late in the year 1880, and on January 20, 1881, the county records were removed to the new building, and the first session of court was held in the new building in February, 1881. The contract price for the court house was \$66,203, but the total cost of the building, grading, equipment, furniture, etc., was \$112,605.33.

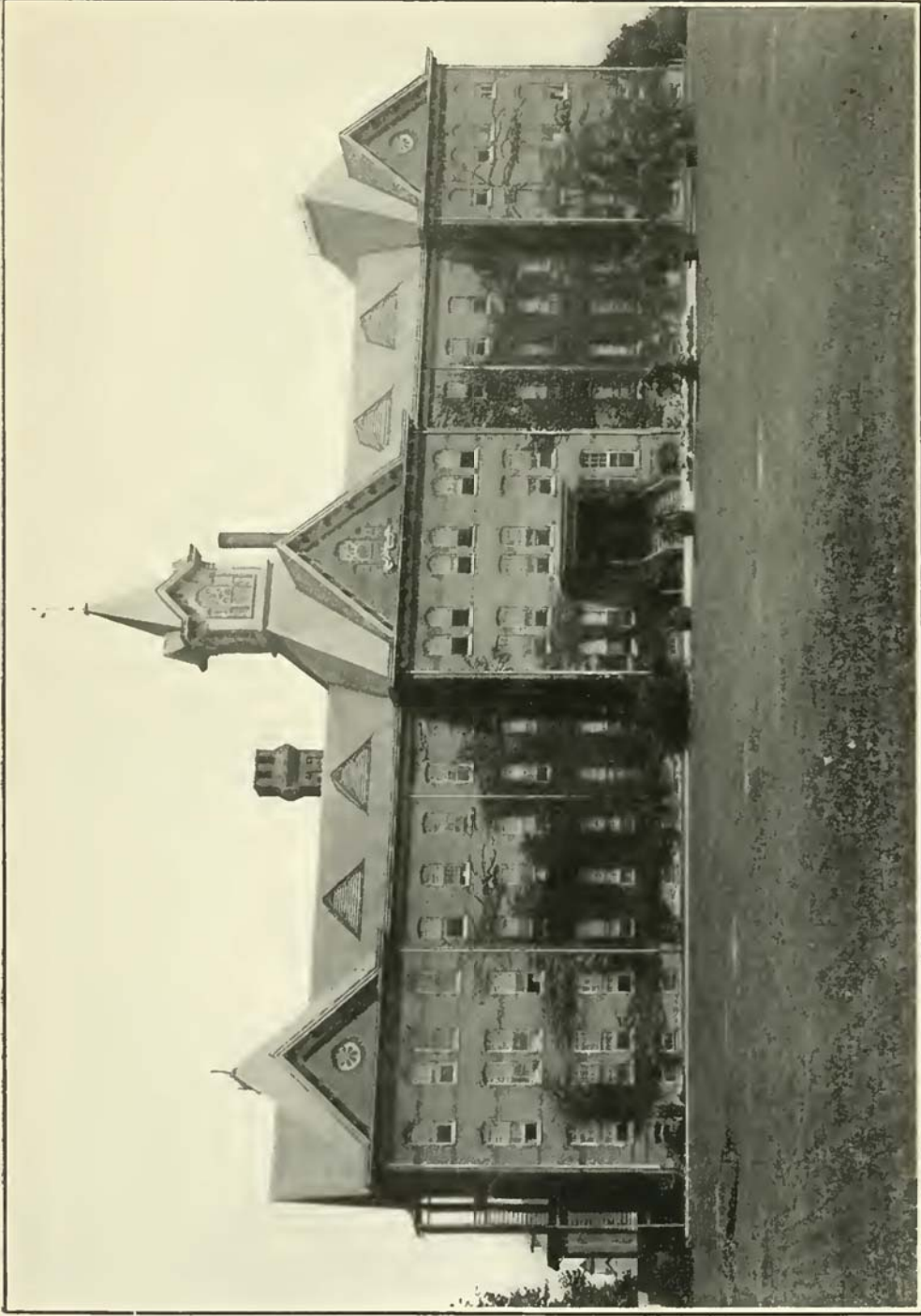
✓ It was not until the year 1785 that steps were taken for a county almshouse. In that year the overseers for the poor of Christiana Hundred (which included Wilmington), purchased a tract of land on the old Kings Road (now Broome street), between Front and Fourth streets, and erected thereon a suitable building for the accommodation of the poor of the Hundred. This movement led to action being taken in 1791 for the building of almshouses for the three counties. The same year New Castle County succeeded to the ownership of the building erected by Christiana Hundred alone, and thereafter it was conducted as a county almshouse. Additional land was purchased in 1829. The original buildings were burned in 1804, and two years later new buildings were erected on the same site at a cost of \$15,000. The insane department was added in 1843, and a hospital building was erected at Fourth and Broome streets in 1848. It was afterwards known as the smallpox hospital.

The second almshouse, built in 1806, was burned down in 1850. New and enlarged buildings were substituted two years later, and continued in use until 1885, when the trustees of the poor of the county moved the almshouse and insane department to the handsome and commodious buildings erected for the purpose on a farm of about 100 acres that had

been purchased in 1882 from Graham Blandy. The new buildings are in New Castle Hundred, on the public road leading from Wilmington to Hare's Corner, and their cost complete was over \$300,000. The plot of ground owned by the trustees of the poor in Wilmington had greatly enhanced in value, owing to the growth of the city. It was turned over to a board of trustees to be sold for the benefit of the trustees of the poor, the proceeds to be used in liquidating the debt created by the erection of the new buildings.

At the session of the General Assembly in 1889, an act was passed providing for the purchase by the State of Delaware of the building or buildings that had been erected for the insane in combination with the county almshouse. A non-partisan board of trustees, to be appointed by the governor, was provided for, and thereafter the institution was to be conducted by the state under the name of "The Delaware State Hospital for the Insane." The management is non-partisan, and the personnel of the trustees has been representative of the best citizenship in the state. Several of the leading physicians of the state have been members of the board. Dr. John J. Black has been president of the board since its inception, and through his wise counsels, seconded by the other trustees, the institution ranks with the best in the country.

Prior to 1793 the matter of levying taxes for county purposes seems to have been entrusted to the justices of the peace, but in the latter year an act was passed providing for Levy Court Commissioners, one from each of the hundreds except Christiana and Appoquinimink, each of the latter hundreds being entitled to two Commissioners. This act continued in existence until within a few years past, except that each hundred has for many years been entitled to one commissioner, the whole body of commissioners being elected from the county at large. This made a body of eleven, on whom was the duty of assessing and levying taxes for county purposes, also taxes necessary for the support of the poor, and incidentally for the maintenance of public roads and bridges.



STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, FARNHURST.