Chapter One

Part II: Campus Development

By the spring of 1875, the main, and for many years the only building of Indiana State Normal School (ISNS) had been completed. On May 17, 1875, the faculty and students met in the chapel (now Gorell Recital Hall) for the first time. The building was later named after John Sutton, the first president of the Board of Trustees. It was praised by State Superintendent James Wickersham, who visited for State recognition on May 21, 1875, as "unquestionably the best building of its kind in the United States." The first session included a total of 225 students -- 29 in the classical preparatory program, 113 in the regular normal course, and 80 children in the model school. [http://www.archive.org/stream/catalogueofoffic1875indi#page/14/mode/2up]

Magnificent as the outside of the building was, the inside was not yet completed and the furniture had not arrived. In the weeks before the school was to open, the women of the town had been called upon to donate their time making carpets and bedclothes. Jane Leonard later recalled that during the first days of the school, "do the best we could, the house would seem bare and empty." This would have been particularly true for the boys who for a few weeks "bravely slept on the floor."

These reminiscences suggest the economically challenging first years of the institution. Forty years later the Trustees described this period as one of "depression and discouragement," when they were unable to attract students in sufficient numbers and when state funding was not what was hoped for. Trustees paid bills from their own pockets, on one occasion bidding on school property that was being sold at a sheriff's sale. During these lean years, even the faculty could not depend upon a regular salary. Finally though, after "heroic efforts, brighter days dawned, Dame Fortune smiled
and ‘Dear Old Normal’ with beating drums and streaming banners, marched on to victory.”

In spite of economic difficulties, the Trustees were able to develop Sutton Hall and the campus. From the beginning, Sutton Hall contained administrative offices, the chapel, class rooms for both the normal school students and a model school of elementary students, social rooms, including parlors and reception rooms, study rooms, the book store, the library, the dining hall and residences for the Principal, the Preceptress, male and female students, and faculty who resided there to oversee students. [http://www.archive.org/stream/catalogueofoffic1875indi#page/n3/mode/2up](http://www.archive.org/stream/catalogueofoffic1875indi#page/n3/mode/2up)

The school’s first catalog could boast that this magnificent building was “WARMED BY STEAM AND LIGHTED BY GAS THROUGHOUT” The Trustees minutes show continued attempts to equip the building with the latest in modern conveniences. By the end of the century, they had installed water closets with an updated system of running water and waste water disposal, incandescent lights, telephones (though not for individual students), and an elevator “for the girls.” At first, the male students were housed on one side of the building, but in 1894 a men’s dorm and model school building was constructed.

The campus landscape also took on a new, more impressive appearance. In its earliest days the campus lacked polish and security and was a place where neighboring cattle came to graze. The Trustees hired a gardener, and trees and flowers were planted. Rules were developed and posted to keep out animals and other unwelcome visitors, hedges and fences erected to encourage them to stay out, and a policeman hired to enforce the posted rules. (The first policeman was Mr. Allman (WP) hired in April of 1894). The faculty and the student body pitched in on Arbor Day to plant ivy and trees. By the turn of the century, the Normal School had the appearance of a thriving institution of higher learning with a lovely, secure campus.