

FOUNDING AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE

The official history of the Stevens Institute of Technology began on April 15, 1867 when Edwin Augustus Stevens bequeathed a block of land adjoining the family estate at Castle Point, Hoboken, N. J., \$150,000 for the erection of a building, and \$500,000 as an endowment, for an "institution of learning." He died in 1868 and his will provided that within two years after his death, his executors should erect a building so that within three years after his death, they could establish the institution he had in mind. Although not explicitly stated in his last will and testament, it was known that Stevens had planned to establish an institution that would be devoted to the advancement of the "mechanic arts." The executors decided that the new institution should be a school of technology and an act incorporating the Stevens Institute of Technology was approved by the state legislature February 15, 1870.

Shortly after Stevens' death, his executors retained Mr. R. M. Upjohn, the prominent architect of Trinity Church in lower Manhattan, to draw plans for the institution's building (which has been named the Edwin A. Stevens building and dedicated in 1987). During the summer of 1870, Professor Henry Morton, the Chairman of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania and the secretary and editor of the "Journal of the Franklin Institute," was appointed the first President of The Stevens Institute of Technology. The first class of Stevens, consisting of 21 students, entered shortly thereafter.

E. A. Stevens, the founder of the Institute, was, at his death, the surviving member of a family of prominent inventors. Col. John Stevens, his father, built a private steamboat in 1804, three years before Fulton's "Clermont" was plying the commercial waters of the Hudson River. Another Stevens ship, the "Phoenix," was the first steamboat to venture onto open ocean in 1808. Around 1830, Col. Stevens built the first locomotive and railroad track in America. Robert L. Stevens, Edwin's brother, invented the elongated cannon shell, the T-rail, and, with his brother, conducted studies of armor-plated battleships around 1841, many years before the Monitor-Merrimac battle in the Civil War.