

Phoenixonian Institute
Purpose ; Constitution ; Members
The Elevator, 5 July 1867

(Purpose)

Prospectus of the Phoenixonian Institute, San Jose; Organized December, 2 1862 , Incorporated Jan. 5, 1867 (*many sentences omitted*)The Phoenixonian **Institute** proposes a unity of action. We propose to underline the tower of ignorance, by establishing an institution for the education of the children of the State of California, which shall be equal to the best, and which will forever silence those who assert the incapacity of colored men for mental cultivation and literary acquirements.*(many sentences omitted)*. **Our first object is to purchase the property now occupied by the San Jose school, containing an area of about three acres of land. The building is large and well adapted to the purpose of a school. The place is ornamented with some beautiful shade trees, and there are (some fruit trees). There is an artesian well on the premises, which furnishes a bountiful supply of pure water. The lot is completely enclosed, and is free from intrusion.** We wish to purchase and secure this property as a public institution, and not as joint stock company. The amount necessary to make the purchase and improvements, is six thousand dollars. We desire to secure the title by the 1st July, | which can be done for one thousand dollars. We ask the co-operation of every community, and every individual who de sires the unity, the improvement, and the political enfranchisement of the colored American. Any respectable colored person may, by sending the yearly subscription of three dollars, become a member, and be entitled j to all the advantages of membership, and to a seat in the annual convention, the first of which will be held in the city of; San Jose, Wednesday, July 10th, 1867. We also desire the names of contributors, the amount of contributions, and how payable, to be sent to the corresponding secretary—the receipt of which will be duly acknowledged through The Elevator, for the **Phoenixonian Institute.** G. W. Smith, Secretary.

(Constitution)

Article 1.—The name of this organization shall be "The Phoenixonian **Institute.**"

Article 2.—The officers shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Board of School Directors, and they shall be elected for one year.

Article 3.—The first object of this Society shall be the establishment of a school, | which shall be so conducted, as far as possible, to meet the requirements of the whole State ; so that every colored child , in the State may have thorough school advantages.

Article 4.—This association shall also I take under especial consideration the religious and political interests of our people; and may assist in any measure which has for its object the elevation of the colored people of the State of California.

Article 5.—There shall be a library for the benefit of the society and school.

Article 6. —There shall be a meeting once a month for business purposes ; and the President may call a meeting whenever he may think it necessary, but no business affecting the interest of this association shall be transacted at a special meeting, unless the members are duly notified of the meeting at least three days previous, or such action be sanctioned by two-thirds of the members.

Article 7.—The members, by uniting themselves with this organization, pledge themselves not to act in any way to embarrass the plans of the society, and do agree in all matters of public interest to be governed by the decision of the majority.

Article 8.—Any respectable colored person may become a member of this society ; and any member may be expelled by a two-third vote of any regular meeting, for disreputable conduct.

Article 9.—The duty of the President shall be to preside over meetings, sign orders drawn by the Secretary, and look after the general welfare of the society.

Article 10.—The Vice President shall act during the absence of the President, whether temporary or final, subject to the same restrictions, until the annual election ; and he shall also be chairman of the Board of School Directors.

Article 11.—The Secretary shall keep a faithful record of the business of the society ; and shall at each meeting read the minutes of the preceding meeting, to be adopted or corrected by them. He shall draw orders in accordance with this Constitution ; and it is herein provided that appropriations must first be made by the society before orders for money may be drawn.

Article 12.—The Treasurer shall not use the funds of the **Institute** except as directed, but shall deposit the same in any safe place, to be always and continually subject to orders drawn and signed in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

Article 13.—The duty of the Board of School Directors shall be to visit the school, and make a monthly report of the condition and requirements of the same. They shall examine teachers, but they shall not appoint any teacher without

the consent of the Principal. They shall duly [report upon any violations of good order, may remove teachers and expel disorderly scholars, with the consent of the Principal.

Article 14.—That these important provisions may be ever prominent in the minds of the officers, it shall be the duty of officers to read to their successors this Constitution ; and they shall, before taking their positions, pledge themselves to perform faithfully, as herein provided, their several duties.

Article 15.—The votes of members upon by-laws, resolutions, and appropriations, may be given viva voce ; but votes for officers, or the expulsion of members, must be taken by ballot.

Article 16.—The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, shall, in addition to their duties defined by the preceding articles of this Constitution, act as Trustees of all the property of the **Institute**, whether real or personal.

(Members)

Honorary Members :

Rev. W. B. Smith, Philip A. Bell, Rev. E. L. Tappan, Jas. E. M. Gilliard.

Contributing Members from San Jose .

Mrs. Annie B. Cassey, Charles H. Mercier, E. Langhorn, Geo. W. Smith, Martha Floyd, Jas. M. Floyd, R. V. White, Geo. McDowell, H. E. Smith, Henry M. Joseph, Maria L. Joseph, D. N. Davidson, Francis Cornish, Susan Mercier, Madison Green, Miss L. A. Randall, Francis Hawkins, Peter Wagner, George Dingle. Daniel Laugfiorn, Alfred J. White, Lilburn Lopez, P. W. Cassey, William A. Smith, R. F. Shorter , N. E. Speights, Henry Gray, Miss Anna Moses.

Contributing Members from San Francisco: D. W. Ruggles, Mrs. N T . Hickman, J. N. Sampson, G. Smith, ; Andrew Brister, E. Melburn, J. R. Starkey, Mrs. M. Fountain, George Smith, Fisher, Benjamin Judah, E. Scott, George Wysham, Monroe Taylor, Wm. H. Blake, W.H. Smith, Barney Fletcher, John Curry. John Player,

Contributing Members from Sacramento and Strawberry Valley:

W. H. Harper ; Miss Woods

The undersigned citizens do agree to pay the amounts hereby subscribed for the purchase of the property now occupied by the San Jose School, for the Phoenixonian Institute:

W. A. Smith: \$60 (\$30 payable July 1st; \$30 payable Jan. 1st, 1869)

P. W. Cassey: \$40 (\$20 payable July 1st; \$20 payable Jan. 1st, 1868,)

G. W. Smith: \$25 (payable July 1st,).. ..

James Floyd,: \$12 (payable July 1st)

Alfred J. White: \$50 (\$25 payable July 1st; \$25 payable Jan. 1st, 1868)

Mrs. Mary Bevins \$10 cash,

Chas. H. Mercier, \$50 (\$25 payable 1st of July)

Lilburn Lopez, \$20 (payable 1st July)