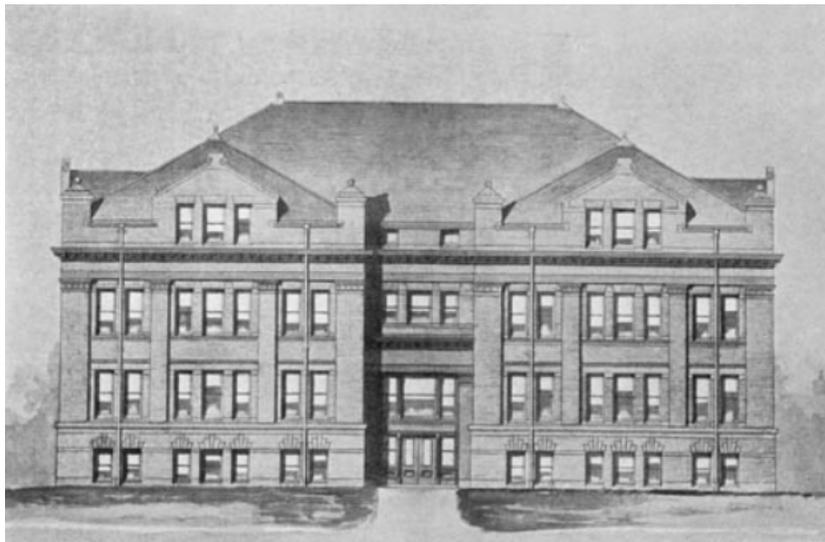


In September, 1905, the first discussions were held leading to the construction of Old Science Hall. At the Monday, September 11 Bloomsburg State Normal School Board of Trustees meeting, Principal Judson Welsh reported that with the largest enrollment in school history of over 550 students there was an urgent need for more class rooms and more or larger school buildings. Two days later the Trustee Committee on Buildings and Grounds toured the campus to decide on viable options for new construction. At the September 18 board meeting the committee made two suggestions for additional class room space: build a wing on both sides of the Auditorium (Carver Hall), or erect a three-story building, 60 feet by 80 feet in size, on the athletic field north of the Auditorium. This would mean placing a new field on land to the east along with constructing the building, at a total estimated cost of \$25,000. An architect from Wilkes-Barre was asked to create a sketch and plans for the new building that he was to submit to the committee, at which time they would be able to make a recommendation to the board on a course of action.

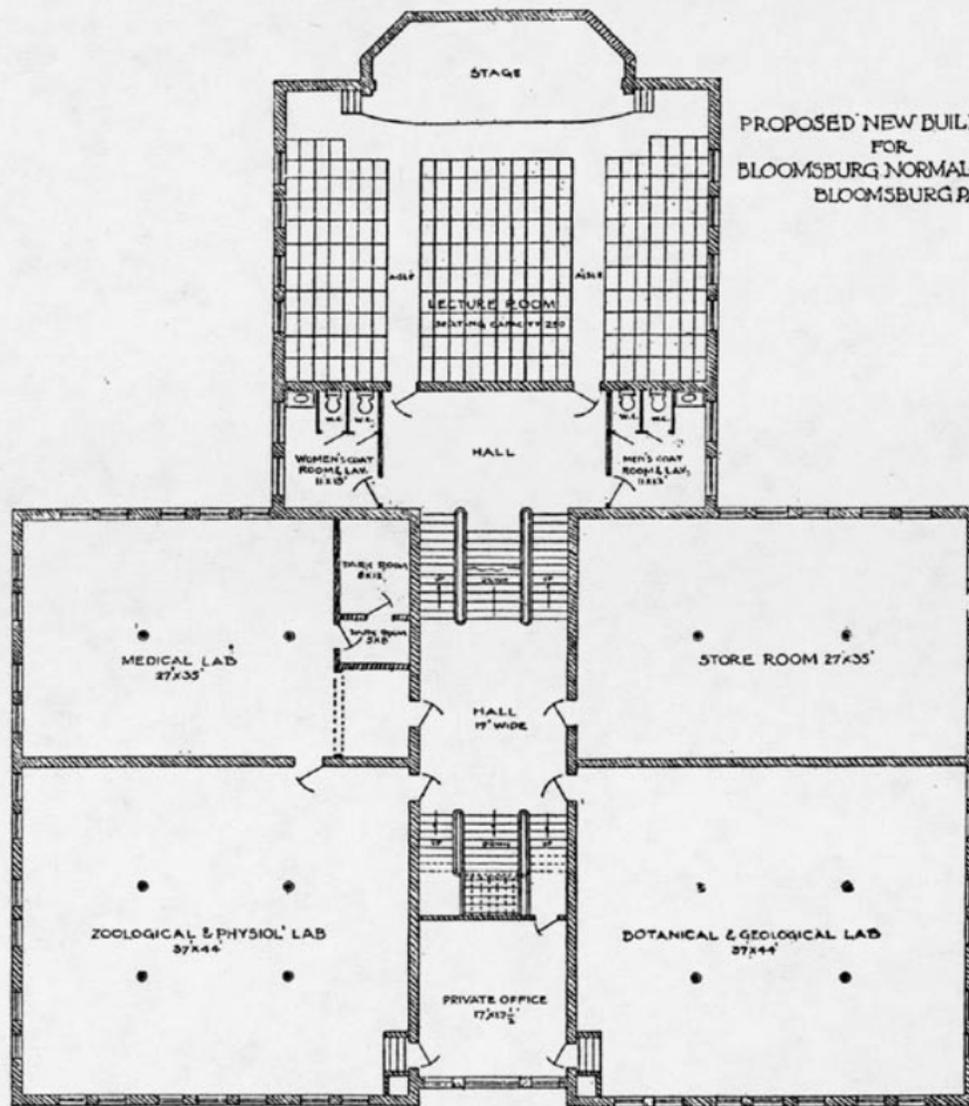
The sketch of the new normal school building
by Wilkes-Barre architect F. L. Olds



On November 21, 1905, a special meeting of the Board of Trustees was held to give final approval to the blueprints and specifications for a new science building on the Bloomsburg State Normal School campus. Originally submitted the preceding month, the plans were for the basement and first and second floors of a brick building with terra cotta trimming, 109 feet by 68 feet with a two-story annex in the rear containing two large lecture halls. At that time the Committee on Buildings and Grounds felt the plans should be adopted and the necessary funds raised for construction. The President of the Board of Trustees stated that ample provision should be made for the students, and Principal Judson Welsh told him the school was now so overcrowded the students could not be given what they were paying for. The Board voted to erect a science building on the athletic field, and asked that Mr. Olds, the architect from Wilkes-Barre, complete the plans, which were finished in November. On the 21st the trustees authorized the building committee to find contractors to submit bids for the work, and the finance committee to investigate securing a loan to pay for the construction.

The original plans for Science Hall submitted in October, 1905
Note the differences from today in how the building was originally laid out.

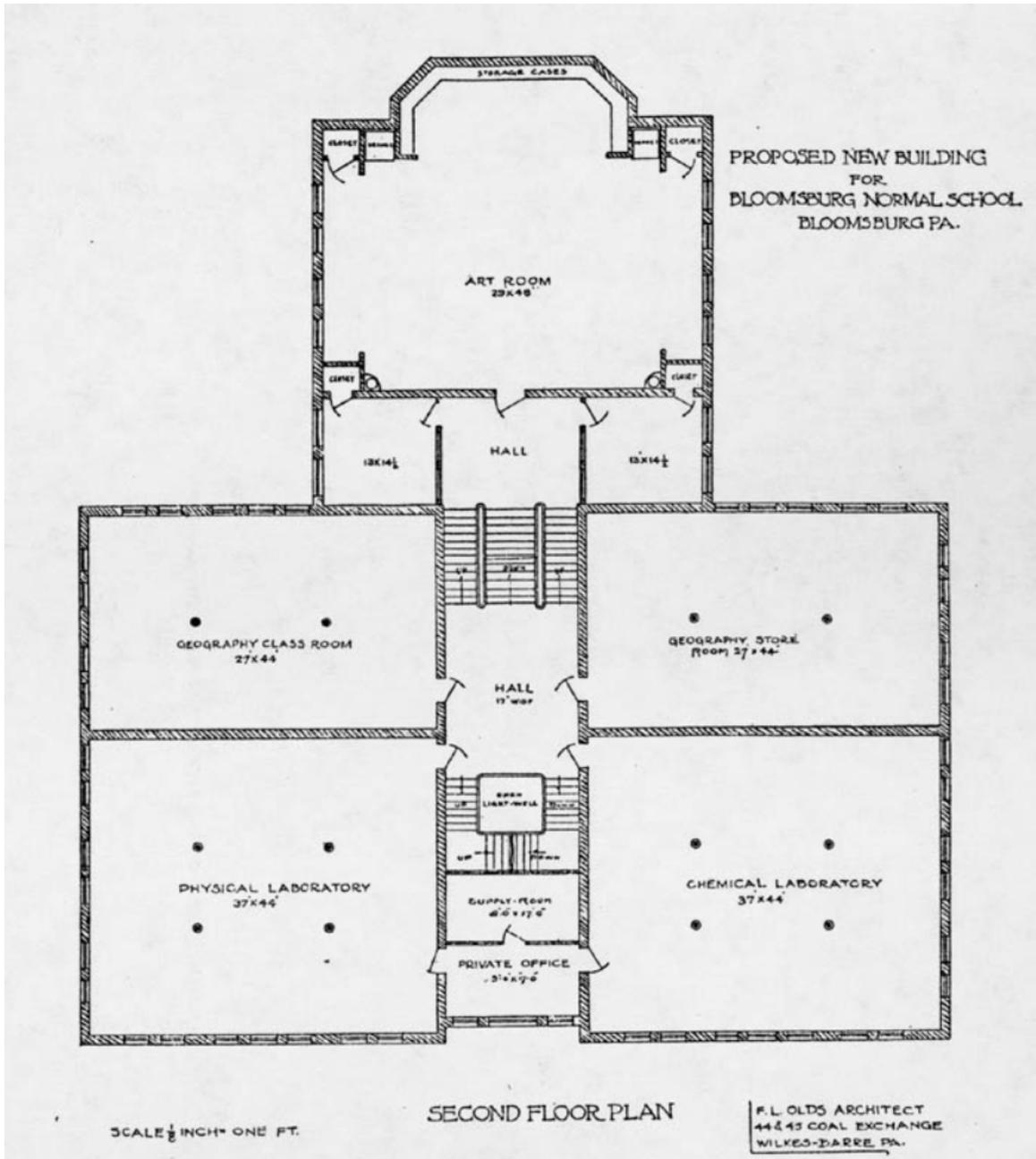
PROPOSED NEW BUILDING
FOR
BLOOMSBURG NORMAL SCHOOL
BLOOMSBURG PA.



SCALE $\frac{1}{8}$ INCH = ONE FT.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

F. L. OLDS ARCHITECT
44 & 45 COAL EXCHANGE
WILKES-BARRE PA.



On January 23, 1906, the Bloomsburg State Normal School Board of Trustees officially awarded the contract for the construction of the new science building. Bids for the construction work had been submitted the preceding month, with the lowest one from the firm of Bennett and Woodnutt coming in at just under \$53,000, or nearly \$1.1 million in today's money. The contractors were from Williamsport, and at that time were in the process of completing work on the Tustin Mansion on Market Street, later the home of the Bloomsburg Elks and now the Bloomsburg Regional Technology Center. The trustees hoped to reduce the \$53,000 bid amount still further, and so a special committee was formed to meet with the contractor to modify the specifications to the building. By January 23 the negotiations resulted in a final bid of \$51,656.37 which was accepted, along with the plans and specifications previously submitted by architect Frederick L. Olds. The special committee was charged with supervising the erection and

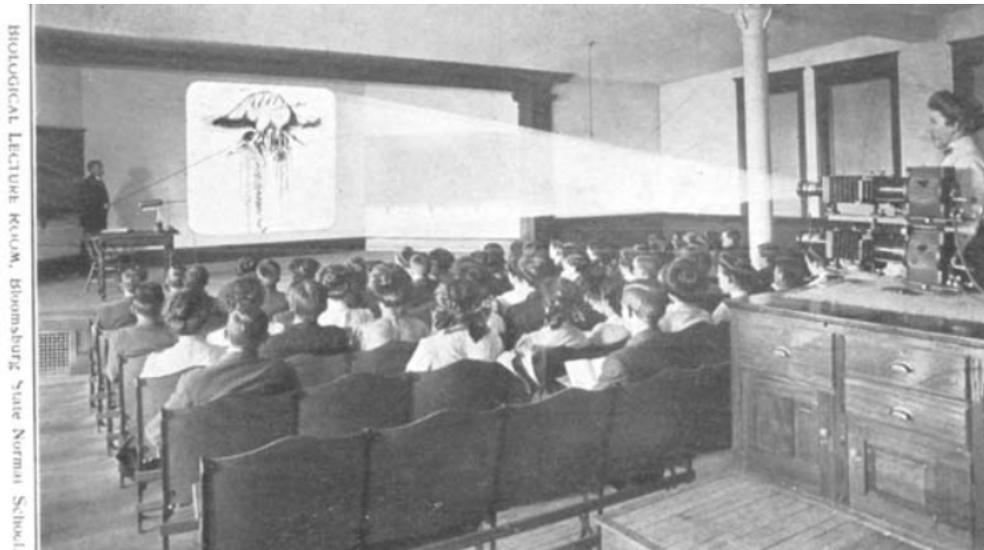
completion of the building and keeping careful watch over all expenditures. At the meeting the Trustees also resolved to issue \$50,000 in bonds to pay for the construction work and equipment to furnish the new facility.

On March 25, 1907, Science Hall, the most modern building that would ever be constructed at the Bloomsburg State Normal School, officially opened at the start of the spring term. A process that had begun at the Board of Trustees meeting in September of 1905 finally reached fruition as classes in Drawing, Geography and Biology were the first to be taught in the new facility. The Art and Biology departments initially moved to Science Hall, with the Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Commercial and English departments following as soon as final construction and furnishing work was completed. Although the hall was equipped on the second and part of the third floors with modern laboratories, the need for additional space on campus was so great that room was made there for non-science disciplines as well. The upper floors had labs, classrooms, and lecture halls, while to facilitate the study of Biology the basement contained rooms holding many varieties of live animals, including small mammals, reptiles, and fish, along with a hive of bees and a breeding case for silk worms. A temporary boardwalk, which was eventually replaced with cement pavement, was set up across the former athletic field for use by the large numbers of students who needed it to reach the new building from the rest of campus. In the spring of 1907 the normal school enjoyed its largest enrollment to date, so the opening of Science Hall had come not one moment too soon.

Science Hall soon after its completion



Biology lantern slides being shown in the large lecture hall on the second floor



BIOLOGICAL LECTURE ROOM, Bloomsburg State Normal School.

**Celebrating a Century of Science Hall:
100 Years of Bloomsburg University's
Oldest Classroom Building**



**The new biology lab in the recently completed Science Hall, 1907.
Note the modern microscopes on each table.**

In 1905 the demands of an ever-growing student body at the Bloomsburg State Normal School put into motion plans for the construction of a new classroom building on campus, one that would provide modern facilities and equipment for the teaching of the sciences. A Wilkes-Barre architect came up with the design for the four-story structure, and in March of 1906 construction began on the former site of the athletic field to the north of Institute Hall, now Carver Hall. Due to fill that had been placed there years before to level the field over 300 pilings needed to be driven down as much as 20 feet to bedrock to provide a stable foundation. Work continued throughout the rest of

1906 and into 1907 to finish the building, and finally by March students were attending classes in one of the most modern facilities in the state. Science Hall included classroom and lab space for the study of biology, botany, chemistry, geology, physics, physiology, and zoology, as well as rooms devoted to art, music, and the two student literary societies.

In the years since Science Hall has undergone a number of changes. In the mid-1930s the open stairways were removed to comply with fire safety laws, and when Sutliff Hall was completed in 1960 the teaching of the sciences was moved to that building. Science Hall was designated for demolition beginning with the 1957 campus master plan, and for 20 years attempts were made to secure the funding to tear it down and replace it with first a dormitory and then recreation space. When this could not be done it was decided to save the building, and in 1988-89 it underwent a complete renovation. Today Science Hall, called "Old Science" since the opening of the Hartline Science Center, houses the departments of Art and Art History, History, and Languages and Cultures, and continues to provide a space for educating the students of Bloomsburg University just as it has for the last 100 years.
