

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY APRIL 7



Lewisburg Female Institute was originally incorporated by an act of the Virginia General Assembly on April 7, 1858, but it is unclear whether this school ever opened. In 1874 renewed efforts by Lewisburg citizens resulted in the creation of the Lewisburg Female Institute, which later became Greenbrier College for Women.

CSO: SS.8.23, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (*The Greenbrier Independent*, May 30, 1874)

1. Is the article promoting or obstructing the establishment of a female seminary in Lewisburg? What arguments for/against the establishment of the school does the author make?
2. What claim does the author make about the establishment of the seminary and the local farmers?

Think Critically: Why is it important to recognize and explore women's history? What challenges remain for women today? How can understanding history help us to overcome them? Did societal expectations of women prevent them from obtaining equal educational opportunities in the 1800s? Explain.

The Greenbrier Independent**May 30, 1874****More About Schools!**

Again we desire to call the attention of our people to the importance of establishing a first-class school at this point. We dwell upon this subject, not because we desire to weary the patience of our readers, but because we want to arouse the people of this community to a proper appreciation of the exigencies of the case. We have the ability, and lack nothing but the determination to establish, at once, a female school of a very high order. A suitable building can be procured on reasonable terms, which is amply large for present purposes, and can be enlarged as occasion may require. We see no reason why Lewisburg may not have a female school, equal, in every respect, to any school in the city of Staunton. We have a refined, cultivated community, where religious and social qualities are of as high order as can be found anywhere. We have a healthy climate, unsurpassed by any in the world. An institution of this character will prove a great advantage to the whole county, and not only to this but the adjoining counties of Pocahontas, Nicholas, Fayette, Raliegh [sic], Monroe and Summers. The people of these counties would certainly prefer sending their daughters to a good school at this point, to sending them to Staunton or Richmond.

Then, it will be a great advantage to all classes of persons in our community. Independent of affording an opportunity to educate our children at home, it will open a home market and prove a source of revenue. Let a large boarding school of one hundred or a hundred and fifty ladies start, and our farmer friends, in this vicinity, will at once find a good market for their potatoes, butter, cheese, eggs, &c., &c. Our merchants will be extensively benefitted; money will become plentiful, and, in fact, everybody will realize some benefit. With these prospects, can we longer remain idle. The question is not "can we afford to do it," but it is, "can we afford to do without it." Can we afford to let the community suffer for want of such enterprise as is necessary. Let the school, of course, be disconnected from the Free School system - not to interfere, however, with the public schools. The public schools are necessary, and will serve the purpose for which they are intended, but this school, as a matter of course, if established, must be for the benefit of those who desire to give their children the advantage of a better education than can be taught in the Free Schools. And those persons who desire to provide these advantages for their children should take a deep interest in the matter.

A public meeting was held in the Courthouse on Thursday evening last, having for its object the consideration of the scheme to establish a Female Seminary, of a high grade, in Lewisburg. It was numerously attended and much interest was manifested. Pointed and forcible speeches were made by Capt. R. F. Dennis, Rev. M. L. Lacy, Rev. P. B. Smith, Hon. Samuel Price and Col. J. W. Davis. We are encouraged to believe that the matter has now assumed a shape that will lead to a proper solution of the subject. The speeches were warm and earnest and the interest manifested by all present, both from town and country, gave evidence that the right feeling has been awakened. Let those having the matter in charge press the advantage gained.