



Jubilee College State Park

Jubilee College State Park is an Illinois state park located 6 mi (9.7 km) west of Peoria, Illinois. It contains **Jubilee College State Historic Site**, a frontier Illinois college active from 1840 to 1862.

The entire Jubilee College site is still owned by the state of Illinois. The 90-acre (36 ha) grounds are operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), and the surrounding 3,100 acres (1,300 ha) of open space are operated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Jubilee College Historic Site

Jubilee College

Founding

Jubilee College, and the frontier community that supported it, was founded in 1839 by Episcopal bishop Philander Chase. He named it after his expression of thankfulness and joy:^[2] "If you ask me for the reason why I call my Illinois institution Jubilee College, I answer: That name of all others suits my feelings and circumstances. I wish to give thanks and rejoice...".^[3] Earlier in his career, Chase had founded Kenyon College in Ohio.

This was one of the earliest educational institutions in Illinois, and the earliest educational enterprise by the Episcopal Church west of Ohio.^[3]

Chase strove to isolate the college from the nuisances and temptations of towns or villages.^{[3][4]} He also attempted to keep the administration under his own control, and there were no trustees appointed during his lifetime.^[3] Chase acquired 3,910 acres and

Jubilee College

U.S. National Register of Historic Places

Illinois State Historic Sites



held all structures in his name.^[3]

The cornerstone of Jubilee chapel and schoolhouse was laid on April 3, 1839.^{[3][5][6]} The two-story, Gothic Revival^[7] chapel was consecrated on November 15, 1840.^[3] The L-shaped building design was adapted from an Anglican chapel near London, England.^[8] It is made of native sandstone.^{[8][6]}

The collegiate and theological departments were operational by 1841.^[3] There was an average of about fifty students with three or four faculty members. Until 1852, the tuition was \$100 per year, except for sons of Illinois clergy who could attend for half price and orphans who were educated for free.^{[3][6]} Most students were from Illinois, but some were from Connecticut or other eastern or southern states.^[3] The first graduation was held in July 1847, with five students receiving degrees.^[9]

In 1836, Chase lived about a mile to the east in a home called Robin's Nest, a log cabin "made of mud and sticks and filled with young ones".^{[3][9][5][10][6]} The site originally had other buildings, including a sawmill, a grist mill, a small hand printing press for the periodical "The Motto", a store, a blacksmith shop, a shoemaker's shop, and cottages for teachers and laborers who lived on the property.^{[3][9][11]} The sawmill and flour mill were constructed on Kickapoo Creek, two miles south of the college, and used both steam and water power.^{[6][9]} However, fire destroyed the sawmill and grist mill in September 1849.^[3] In 1857, fire also destroyed the west wing of the main building.^[3]

Closure

After the Bishop's death in 1852, the college closed in 1862. In 1876, the church sold parts of the property and leased out the main property for use as schools.^{[11][3][6]}

In 1926, the Circuit Court of Peoria annulled the charter due to non-performance and ordered the property to be liquidated within two years. The remaining land was publicly auctioned on July 8, 1931. Dr. George Zeller bought the property.^[6] In October 1932, the property transferred to private ownership and eventually to the state of Illinois.^[3]



- ☒ Show map of Illinois
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Location	13921 W. Route 150, Brimfield, Illinois
Coordinates	40°49′26″N 89°47′56″W﻿ / ﻿
Built	1839
Architectural style	Gothic Revival
NRHP reference No.	72000465 (https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/72000465) ^[1]
Significant dates	
Added to NRHP	January 4, 1972
Designated	January 4, 1972

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