

From the Archives

True Colors

The Nichols diploma, which is proudly displayed on your wall (or is perhaps tucked away somewhere) didn't always look that way. And the College's colors were not always green and black. This was all brought to mind, thanks to a recent gift to the Nichols Archives.

Contributed by
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In June, Dudley Hill neighbor, Jayne G. Cacchiapuoti, generously donated an 1878 Nichols Academy diploma for a Nellie M. Bartlett. At that time, the Academy served as a private prep school and also as a public high school for the town of Dudley. Unlike many modern-day high school and/or college diplomas that typically run from about 6" X 8" to 8.5" X 11", Bartlett's is a grand 16.5" W X 14" H. Affixed to it is a golden seal that has "Nichols Academy Mass" around the circumference border and the Latin phrase "Palma Non Sine Pulvera" in the center. Apparently this phrase from the Greek poet Horace was common on 19th century diplomas and has been translated as, "The prize [or palm of victory] not without dust." More loosely, it means "No reward without effort," a rather appropriate choice for a school or college diploma.

Bartlett's diploma joins another, even larger archives that was issued in 1895 to Bertha Estella Whiting (1877-1956). (Whiting lived on the Hill, on Center Road in Dudley and is buried in Corbin Cemetery, not far from the home she grew up in.) Whiting's diploma has the same seal as Bartlett's, but with an interesting addition - her seal has orange and black ribbons attached. Frankly, I had never given any thought to what the Academy's colors were, assuming they even had any. But the ribbons made me wonder... were orange and black the Academy's colors? There was nothing about school colors in



Dr. James L. Conrad's wonderful history, *Nichols Academy: The Spring on the Hill, 1815-1931*. Fortunately, some research in the archives provided a likely answer. A report on the Academy's basketball team in the February 1904 *Academy Bell* (a regularly published, but short-lived newspaper, reporting the news from the Hill) noted that, "The members of the [Academy] team have received new outside jerseys. They are black with an orange N on the front, making a very neat appearance of the team on the floor." That would seem to answer the question. However, it should be noted that an advertise-



ment for a bound volume of the *Bell* in the same publication describes the finished work as, "Richly bound with Artist's Cloth in Academy Colors [emphasis added]; title in gold, and reproduction of the school bell tower on front cover in gold" for \$1.00. We have two copies of this bound volume and they look pretty much as represented, except for the fact that the front and back covers are black and yellow/gold, not orange. Be that as it may, I'm going with black and orange as the Academy's "true colors!"