

**O.V. Catto**  
**Board of Managers, Institute of Colored Youth**  
**Minutes, 1855-1866**  
**Transcribed from records of the Institute for Colored Youth**  
**at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College**

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At a stated meeting of the Board held at the Institute 1 mo. 17. 1859 [...]

The Committee to consider of and report to the Board the name of a person to fill the vacancy occupied by the resignation of Robt Campbell reported that they considered it inexpedient that another teacher should be appointed for the High School to fill the same position occupied by Robert Campbell but they had united in recommending that a teacher should be chosen in the capacity of Assistant and proposed the name of Octavius V. Catto- a graduate of the last term, who is willing to accept the situation at a salary of \$150 pr an for one year. On consideration the report of the Committee was united with and Octavius V. Catto was appointed accordingly his salary to date from this day.

The Treasurer is directed to pay the salaries of Martha Farbeaux and Octavius V. Catto on the 1st of each month. [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board held at the Institute 5mo. 16th. 1859 [...]

An application was made on account of Octavius V. Catto for an increase of salary. On consideration it was concluded that his salary should be \$200 pr. an to date from the day he entered upon the service of the Institute. The Treasurer is directed to pay him the additional amount for past services. [...]

The Annual Report is as follows: [...]

Robert Campbell- the former teacher of the languages in the High School having determined to embark on an exploring expedition to Africa for the purpose of ascertaining the best localities for the growth of cotton with the view of interesting the colored people of this country in emigrating thither to form settlements for its culture, and to open commercial relations with other countries, resigned his position in the Institute in the 12th mo. last. He was a useful and energetic teacher and with his mind fully devoted to the work would no doubt have continued a valuable aid to us. His place as teacher of the Languages has been satisfactorily filled by our Principal, who has been relieved from the care of several of the Junior classes by the appointment of Octavius V. Catto— a graduate of last year as an assistance teacher. This arrangement has proved satisfactory thus far and we believe the reputation of the school will be fully maintained. [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board held at the Institute 5mo. 21. 1860 [...]

The annual report is as follows:

To the Institute for Colored Youth

It is gratifying to the managers to be able to come before the association on this occasion with a very favorable report of the condition of the Institute. Our teachers— all of the colored race— have proved themselves during the past year, as heretofore, competent both by their acquirements and assiduity to the important duties which devolve upon them—and the pupils by their general good conduct and diligence will compare favorably with any school of white children with which we are acquainted. Most of them have made good progress in their studies, and a fair proportion of their number very creditable advancement in those branches which appertain to a High School; and although in this respect we are still below the mark at which we aim, yet we believe that by the conscientious and intelligent labor of our teachers, in their several departments, a solid foundation has been laid upon which, with the Divine blessing, a fair superstructure may be built; and some of our pupils have fairly demonstrated that we have in the class of children for whose benefit this institution was established, the material which promises not to disappoint the hopes which their friends have formed of them. The whole number of pupils in the Institute at the close of the term just completed was 108, of whom 44 were boys and 64 were girls viz. in the male department of the High School, under charge of the Principal- Ebenezer D Bassett and his assistant Octavius V. Catto, 30 boys, and in the female department of the same under charge of Grace A. Mapps and her assistant Martha A Farbeaux, 32 girls; in the male preparatory school taught by Jacob S White Jr, 14 boys, and in the female preparatory school taught by Sarah M. Douglass, 32 girls. [...]

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At a stated Meeting of the Managers of Institute for Colored Youth at Institute Building on Lombard St 11 Mo 19. 1860 [...]

The Committee on evening Lectures report they have made arrangements to have a series of Scientific Lectures to be delivered by E. D. Bassett, William Douglass, Dr James H Wilson, Sarah M Douglass, Robt Campbell, Octavius V Catto and Jacob C White Jr: The Introductory lecture was delivered by E D Bassett on 5th day evening. [...]

O.V. Catto applying for a copy of Benedicts Algebra to use as reference as a text Book in the boys school. The Visiting Committee is directed to give an order for it also for a large Dictionary for use in Sarah M. Douglass school, to get such as she may prefer. [...]

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At a Special Meeting of the Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 4 mo 14th 1863 [...]

The Board being informed that Octavius Catts expenses owing to his residence not being at his father's are inconveniently burdensome in proportion to his salary, agreed to

appropriate Fifty Dollars to him for the present year (1863), which amount our Treasurer was directed to pay to him. [...]

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4 Mo. 29th. 1863. [...]

Octavius Catto in a note received by the Board from him expressed his gratitude to the Managers for their donation of fifty dollars. [...]

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[5 mo 1863]

Annual Report of the Managers of the Institute for C.Y. [...]

There were nine public lectures given in the course this season at the Institute Building— all by colored lecturers— as follows; viz.

James H. Wilson MD "The Uses and Abuses of Water"

Jonathan C. Gibbs M.A. "The New Era."

John B. Reeve M.A. "The Christian Scholar & the Heathen Classics."

Frederick Douglass "Our New Relations and Duties."

Octavius V. Catto , "The Genius of Alfred Tennyson."

Jacob C. White Jr. "War."

Wm J. Alston, "Do the Holy Scriptures favor ignorance or Oppression?"

Anthony L. Stanford, "The Five Gateways of Knowledge."

E.D. Bassett "The Atmosphere" (illustrated by experiments) [...]

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At a Special Meeting of the Managers of the Institute held 10 mo. 5th. 1863 [...]

Information was received that our Mathematical Teacher Octavius V. Catto has been offered a situation as Principal in a school in Brooklin on very advantageous terms but partly on account of his attachment to this institution, and partly for other reasons he is willing to remain with us provided his compensation is increased from its present amount to \$500.00 pr. annum. After a few interchanges of sentiment upon the subject and a personal interview with him, it was believed to be to the interest of the Institution to accede to his proposal; And the Clerk is requested to inform him that such was our conclusion. The increased salary to begin on the 1st instant. [...]

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At a Stated Meeting of the Managers of the Institute for Col Youth held 11 mo 16th 1863 [...]

The Treas inform that in paying salary to O.V. Catto a question arose whether he should pay monthly 1/12 of \$500 or that Sum less 1/12 of the \$50 advanced, and that he had paid the former sum without abatement subject to the decision of the Managers. On consideration, the managers approved of the payment and direct that the same sum be paid to O.V. Catto monthly. [...]

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At a Stated Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 5th mo. 10th. 1864 [...]

It seeming desirable that the Address recently delivered at Concert Hall at the time of our Annual Commencement by Octavius V. Catto entitled "Our Alma Mater" should be made public in a slightly modified form. It was agreed to have one thousand copies printed in neat pamphlet form; to have the oversight of which Charles Yarnall, M. C. Cope and John E Carter were appointed. [...]

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At an Adjourned Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 5th mo 1864 [...]

The Annual Commencement was this year held in Concert Hall, the room heretofore used having proved much too contracted for the numbers who desired admission. The plan was also adopted of issuing tickets of admission which were furnished gratuitously to all respectable applicants, and some of them were sent to prominent citizens likely to feel an interest in the exhibition. Much good was thought to result from this plan, both in promoting greater quiet and order in the hall, and by giving a better opportunity to the white friends of the Institute to observe its progress. The essays and recitations were thought to be equal to former years. A pleasant feature in the proceedings to the Managers was the reading of an Essay entitled "Our Alma Mater" by Octavius V. Catto, a teacher in the Institute. It contained a brief narrative of the establishment and growth of the Institute with an outline of the proposed extensions and improvements. [...]

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At a Stated Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 9 mo. 13th. 1864 [...]

The Committee having charge of the printing of the Address of O.V. Catto that in accordance with the direction of the Board they have had 1000 copies printed at a cost of \$65.00. Of these there have been distributed by the Alumni and Teachers of the Institute about 400 copies, and by the committee assisted by one or two of the Managers about 100 copies, leaving about 500 on hand; these it is proposed to have distributed chiefly through the Alumni desiring them to have personal interviews with the recipients when practicable. [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board of Managers of the institute for Colored Youth held 12th. mo. 13th. 1864 [...]

The subject of the salaries now paid for our teachers having claimed our serious consideration it was believed right in view of the greatly increased cost of all the necessaries of life to raise the salaries for the coming year to the several amounts

specified below, viz. E. D Bassett, \$1200 per annum including salary as librarian, O.V. Catto, \$600, Grace A Mapps \$500, Sarah M. Douglass, \$500 and John Q Allen \$473.50 said increase to commence on the 1st of 1st. mo. 1865 with the understanding that at the end of the year a return shall be made to the present rates unless it be thought undesirable at that time by the Board. [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board held 4th. mo. 11th. 1865 [...]

Accompanying the report of the Principal of the Male Department was a schedule of the lectures delivered at the Institute the past winter, —they have been ten in number, upon the following subjects, viz.

Physical Education,	By Jas. H. Wilson, M.D.
Mechanical properties of the Atmosphere/illustrated by experiments,	By E.D. Bassett
Climatology,	By John B. Reeve, A.M.
"Shall we return Southward?" ,	~ Wm. J. Alston
Chemical Action (illustrated by exps.),	~ E.D. Bassett
Education, an Element of Success,	~ Anthony L. Stanford
Our new duties & responsibilities	~ John M. Langston, A.M.
Life	~ John Q. Allen
Relation of Animal to Vegetable Life	~ J.C. White Jr.
Young Men in English Literature	~ Oct. V. Catto

The lectures were all colored men, three of them Graduates of the Institute. [...]

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At a Stated meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 12th. mo. 12th. 1865, present 9 members [...]

The following proposal was received from the Committee on Discipline and Instruction, viz.,

"The Committee on Discipline and Instruction recommend that at the opening of the next School Term Octavius V. Catto be advanced to the grade of Teacher and that to his department be assigned the study of Arithmetic, Algebra and English Grammar, with one or two other branches, perhaps natural philosophy and Chemistry as upon further conference between the Principal and the committee may be though proper,"— which was upon consideration assented to by the Board and the subject referred back to the Committee for their further action. [...]

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**Board of Managers, Institute of Colored Youth  
Minutes, 1866-1884**

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At a Stated Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 4th. mo. 10th. 1866, present ten members [...]

The Committee on Discipline and Instruction reported that they had purchased seven of Guyot's Physical Maps. They also reported a very valuable donation of chemical and philosophical apparatus from our friend Alfred Cope. The Committee recommending that Octavius V. Catto be advanced to the full standing of "Teacher of Mathematics and English Grammar in the Boys' High School" the recommendation was united with by the Board and he accordingly appointed. [...]

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At a Stated Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 3rd. Mo. 12th. 1867: present 7 members [...]

The Committee to whom was referred the subject of salaries reported that they were prepared to recommend that O.V. Catto's should be raised to \$800.— Mary I. Patterson's to \$500.— John Q. Allen's to \$500.— and that James . F. Needham's salary should be fixed at \$400.— the report was acceptable to the Board and the recommendations adopted. [...]

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At a Stated Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 4 mo. 13th. 1869, present 10 members [...]

From the usual monthly reports of the teachers now received and read it appears that the number of scholars enrolled in all the departments is 218 and the average attendance is 198.87. The Principal, E.D. Bassett mentions in his report that he has been nominated by the President of the United States as American Minister Resident and Consul General at Hayti and that from information received from Washington there is little doubt but that he will be confirmed and appointed by the Senate. After careful consideration of this important subject and a personal interview with him the Managers came to the following conclusion, viz;— In case E.D. Bassett should receive the appointment to release him from his engagement to give at least three months notice previous to leaving;— To promote Fanny M. Jackson to the position of Principal of the Institute and to have charge of the Library, at a salary of \$1200. per annum and the free occupancy of the house No. 921 Shippen St for her own residence;— And to promote Octavius V. Catto to the Principalship of the Male Department at a salary of \$1200. per annum. The further care of the subject including the regulation of the studies under the new arrangement and the selection of another teacher should such additional force be required was referred to the Committee on Discipline and Instruction: M. C. Cope and John E. Carter were requested to cooperate with the committee. [...]

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At a Stated Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth held 5th. mo. 11th. 1869, present 8 members [...]

The Committee to carry into effect he conclusions of the Board in reference to the changes in the corps of teachers resulting from the recent appointment of E.D. Bassett as

Minister to Hayti, reported that E.D. Bassett has been released on the first of the present month, Fanny M. Jackson appointed Principal of the Institute and Octavius V. Catto, Principal of the Male Department. They also reported that Lucretia C. Miller had been engaged to assist temporarily in the Girls' High School. This was approved by the Board and her salary fixed for the present at \$200. per annum. [...]

The following was adopted as the Annual report to the Corporation, viz;— [...]

Several changes have occurred in the corps of teachers during the year. Ebenezer D. Bassett, the Principal, after a service of about fourteen years in the Institute, having been appointed United States Minister Resident and Consul General at Hayti was released by the Board on the first of the present month and Fanny M. Jackson late Principal of the Female Department appointed Principal of the Institute. Octavius V. Catto late Teacher of Mathematics etc. in the Boys' High School was appointed Principal of the Male Department, and Lucretia C. Miller a graduate of the late Senior Class, Assistant Teacher in the Girls' High School. In the Ninth Month last John Quincy Allen, Teacher of the Boys' Preparatory having received an advantageous offer to take charge of a school in Albany N.Y. was encouraged by the Board to accept the appointment. Since his departure the duties of the Teacher of that Department have been performed by James F. Needham, Richard E.D. Venning taking the place previously occupied by J.F. Needham as Assistant in the Boys' High and Preparatory Schools. [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board of Managers held 9th. mo. 14th. 1869, present 6 members [...]

The following report was presented by the Committee on Discipline and Instruction which was accepted and the action of the committee approved, viz;— [...]

That the studies of Natural Philosophy, Anatomy & Physiology and Chemistry (including Chemical physics) be regularly pursued during the middle and senior years, the first under the care of O.V. Catto, the second under S.M. Douglass and the third under Fanny M. Jackson. [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board 2nd. mo. 8th. 1870, present 6 members [...]

Permission was granted to OV Catto to be absent on next 5th Day, the 11th. inst to attend the annual commencement of the Boys' Public High School in this city. [...]

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At a Stated Mtg of the Board held 5 Mo 10. 1870 present 5 members [...]

The Teachers Monthly Reports were read, from which it appears that one boy has been suspended on account of impertinent behaviour to the Principal: the reports from the girls High School & from the Boys Preparatory, both allude to the poor attendance of the

pupils, which seems to be common at this season of the year. OV. Catto refers disapprovingly to the decision of the Board relative to Corporeal punishment. [reference to the minutes of the previous month which state that "The Committee on Discipline and Instruction recommend to the Board that hereafter no bodily punishment be inflicted on any of the pupils attending the Institute under the approval of the visiting committee shall first be obtained in each case"] [...]

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At a Special Mtg of the board held 8mo 17th 1870 [...]

The meeting was called by the Committee on Discipline & Instruction to take action upon the position of Octavius V. Catto, who having been offered the post of Superintendent of Colored Schools at Washington D.C. wishes his resignation as principal of the Boy's department to be accepted at once, without a compliance with the rule which requires three months notice to be given.

Upon consideration the Board came to the conclusion, that if a suitable successor can be obtained, so as to open the school at the usual time, without serious detriment to its interests, they are willing to accede to Catto's request; but if such arrangement is found to be impracticable, the Board are of the judgement that the three months agreement will have to be complied with.

The following were appointed a Special Com. to have conference with OV Catto and our principal; and also to use their best exertions to find a capable successor to the principalship of the Boy's Department & to call a meeting of the Board when it may seem desirable; viz. Philiss C. Garrett, Benjamin Coates, and William Evans. [...]

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At a Special Meeting of the Managers held 8mo 29th 1870 [...]

Octavius V Catto being present informed the Board that he had no wish nor intention to violate his contract with them contained in the three months agreement; and if no successor was obtained he should open the school as usual on the 5th proximo.

The Board upon consideration decided to advance his salary to \$1400 per annum. [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board, held 1mo 17. 1871 [...]

O.V. Catto reports an average attendance of 46 from a roll of 48 pupils [...]

The request from O.V. Catto for permission to drill a class in our school building, who are preparing for examination for the position of public school teachers, was granted." [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board held 5 mo. 16. 1871 [...]

Temporary leave of absence was granted to O.V. Catto, to visit Washington, to aid in the systematizing of a course of instruction for the Colored Schools there; [...]

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At an informal meeting of managers, convened without call, at the Institute building, 10th. mo. 11th. 1871 present M C Cope, P.C. Garrett, B. Coates, S. Emlen, J.E. Carter, G. Vaux, F.R. Cope, J.B. Garrett, T.M. Evans.

The managers came together this morning in consequence of the murder of our esteemed principal of the Boy's School, Octavius V. Catto, yesterday afternoon; resulting from feelings growing out of the municipal election.

F.R. Cope and J.B. Garrett were appointed to attend the Coroner's inquest, to obtain all information in their power relative to the murder, and if it seem desirable to represent the board in assisting to bring the murderer to justice; and they are left at liberty to employ legal counsel if though advisable.

The schools were all adjourned until Second day the 16th. inst., and Richard T. Greener was appointed to take the temporary charge of the Boys' High School.

Then adjourned  
Wm Evans, Sec

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At a stated meeting of the Board held 10 mo. 17th. 1871 [...]

The com. to print the annual report, informed that it was in the hands of the printer, but owing to the death of O.V. Catto some information was not received from the teachers in time for its presentation to-day.

The memoranda made at an informal meeting of managers on the 11th. inst. were directed to be recorded, and the action of the managers therein contained, was approved.

The committee appointed at the informal meeting reported that they had attended the preliminary inquest upon the body of O.V. Catto, and from information gained from various sources that a thorough attempt was being organized by the proper authorities to bring the murderer to justice, they were of the judgment that no action on the part of the Board was necessary. Upon consideration the committee was released from further duty.

It being felt that it would be proper to prepare for permanent record a minute respecting our late colaborer in the cause of education, Octavius V. Catto, Marmaduke C. Cope, Francis R. Cope and Philiss C. Garrett were appointed to assist the clerk in the preparation of such a minute. [...]

The following report of the Com. on Discip. & Instruction was read, and the measures therein proposed approved; "The committee having carefully considered the present condition of the school resulting from the recent decease of O.V. Catto, concluded that the interests of the Institute would probably be best promoted by the appointment of Richard. T. Greener as principal of the male department, and by the continuance of the several departments of the school under the care of the remaining teachers for the present. They would also suggest to the Board that it would be well to take immediate steps looking towards the engagement of an additional teacher." [...]

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At a stated meeting of the Board held 11th mo. 21st. 1871 [...]

The committee to prepare a minute respecting the late O.V. Catto reported attention to the object of their appointment and were continued. [...]

The minutes of the Committee on Discipline and Instruction were read from which we are informed that they have not yet made a permanent appointment to fill the existing vacancy in the High School but that they have engaged Wm. H. Josephus to take charge of certain classes heretofore taught by Richard T. Greener and the late O.V. Catto; the understanding being that the arrangement is a temporary one and may be terminated at any time by giving a weeks notice. [...]

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At a stated mg. of the Board held 12 mo 19. 1871 [...]

The committee on the memorial of O.V. Catto were further continued. [...]

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At a stated meeting held 5 mo. 21st. 1872 [...]

The following essay of an annual report to the Corporation was read & directed to be forwarded. [...]

After its opening in the Fall the school was conducted very satisfactorily for about 6 weeks, when the shocking murder of Octavius V. Catto, the esteemed Principal of the Boy's School, made a sudden and sad interruption in the regular order of the school; and though the scholars generally maintained a very quiet and praiseworthy deportment, under circumstances which were well calculated to produce great excitement and feelings of resentment, the Managers thought it would be for the best interests of the school, as well a proper mark of respect for the memory of Octavius v. Catto, that the school should be temporarily suspended, till after the funeral.

Octavius V. Catto who had received his education in this school had been engaged in it as a teacher for a period of over twelve years during which time the Managers had learned, not only to highly estimate his services as an instructor which his faithfulness and diligence made more valuable every year but to feel increasing respect for his general

intelligence and probity of character; and while they shared with the community at large the feeling of horror which his cruel and unprovoked murder occasioned, they felt with those who had known him more intimately, that a life which promised to be one of much more than ordinary usefulness, had been lost, and that this loss would be especially felt by the school with which he had been so long connected, and which seemed to be the place where his talents and acquirements could be made most advantageous to the community.

Happily, however, the principal assistant in the Boys' School, Richard T. Greener had been with us long enough fully to understand the requirements of the place and as he was thought well qualified to fill it, the Managers promptly appointed him Principal of the Boys' School and William H. Josephus was selected temporarily to teach three hours each day, the studies formerly taught by R.T. Greener. The Managers hope that they may before long find a well qualified teacher all of whose time can be given to the school to take this position. [...]