

## THE BAZAAR BUILDING (1838-1843)

“The Bazaar was built by Mrs. Frances Trollope, an English lady of good family and fortune (her husband a barrister and her brother a baronet), who, satiated with the pleasures of the society she enjoyed at home, came to America...[S]he came to Cincinnati in 1828 or 1829, and remained here for two or three years, and built The Bazaar on East Third Street.

“The architect describes the design of it as taken in part from the mosque of St. Athanase in Egypt: it is fifty-two feet from the floor of the basement to the top of the battlement, and is formed of three large arabesque windows, with arches supported by four Moorish stone pilasters with capitals, between which are inserted large and beautifully wrought free-stone ornaments, the whole surmounted by a wall supporting, gothic battlements, each terminating in a sphere.



“The walls, ceilings, and even doors of the rooms, were most beautifully decorated with paintings, many of them of a high order of merit, executed from designs and under the superintendence of Mr. Hervieu, an accomplished French artist, a member of Mrs. Trollope's family. The whole affair cost about twenty-five-thousand dollars (\$25,000).”

The building was not only a place to live for the Trollope family, but also a place of business. On the first floor was a coffee house and on the second was a bazaar containing a variety of clothing, trinkets, home ornaments and other items. On the third floor was a ballroom and a salon for art exhibits, lectures, concerts, plays and social affairs. Behind the store was a parlor that is said to have served oysters and ice cream.

However, the customers whom Mrs. Trollope depended on, “would not go so far from their usual places of business, and the goods were wholly unfitted for this market. The Bazaar was therefore an entire failure, and was sold to pay the remaining claims of the builders.”

The Ohio Mechanics Institute acquired the Bazaar in 1838. The building provided “two large halls together with rooms for a library, for the Academy of Natural Science, and accommodation for the family of Dr. Craig, the president of the Institute, and afterwards for Dr. Locke who succeeded him.”

In its very first year in residence, the OMI launched two major events: the first “Citizens and Mechanics Ball” which attracted 700 people was held in the National Theater; and the first Fair displaying “various products of Western artisans” was held in the Bazaar itself. These events “drew the attention of the people to the Institute, and interested them

in it sufficiently to become aware of its objects and advantages. From this time the list of members steadily increased.”

In 1843, however, the OMI moved from the Bazaar into a rented building on Walnut Street. “[T]he removal was decidedly advantageous to the Institute. Classes were organized in Arithmetic, English Grammar, Algebra, Geometry, Book-keeping, and Chemistry, and eighty-two pupils were enrolled.”

— THE GREENWOOD BUILDING (1848-1911)

“The lot at the south-western corner of Sixth and Vine Streets was bought for \$15,000 and the cornerstone of what was to be the Institute's home for sixty-odd years was laid by a Masonic lodge on July 4th, 1848. The trustees made more money available on their personal credit, the building was completed, and the 10th Industrial Exhibition was held there in 1850.

"The following articles were deposited in the cornerstone of the Greenwood building:

The Holy Bible.  
Declaration of Independence.  
Copper-plate of Badge worn in the procession.  
Cincinnati Directory for 1846.  
American Almanac for 1848.  
Copy of the Records of the first meetings of the Institute.  
List of Officers from its first organization.  
Constitution and By-laws of Institute, 1841, 1848.  
Pickering's Political Economy.  
Charter, Constitution and By-laws of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society.  
Strawberry Report of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society.  
Transactions of the Western Art Union.  
Twelfth Annual Catalogue of Woodward College.  
Eleven Medals and Coins of different dates.  
Cincinnati Papers of the day.  
Blank Diploma.  
Specimen of Daguerreotype; Likeness of M. Greenwood, executed by Hawkins.  
List of Members of the Institute.  
Judge Burnet's Address before the Cincinnati Astronomical Society.  
Fair Reports.  
List of Masonic Officers officiating on the occasion.

“[The Greenwood Building] has a front of seventy-five feet on Sixth Street, and ninety on Vine, is of half-gothic style; the walls terminate in battlements surmounted at intervals by tall, cast-iron pinnacles, which increase the apparent height. The peak of the roof is ninety-six feet from the ground, and on its level is built a platform which commands a magnificent bird's-eye view of the city and adjacent country.”

Because of this unique view, the 4th Fire Division located in the nearby Gifts Engine House, posted men on the roof of the Greenwood Building to look out for fires on the Cincinnati horizon. When a fire was spotted, the men rang a



1,549 pound bell donated by the citizens of Cincinnati to alert fire divisions throughout the city. The two buildings were connected by a “speaking tube,” and a “mast and yard arm” was raised high above the building to indicate the fire’s location.

Miles Greenwood served as the first chief of the city’s paid fire department at the Gifts Engine House.

The OMI could finally boast a permanent home, named in honor of Miles Greenwood.



At the turn of the century, as enrollment rose to 1400, two floors were added to the building. However, “Capacity Outgrown” had become the cry, as John Louis Shearer, the current superintendent said. In 1909, the OMI sold the Greenwood Building for \$420,000, and in 1911 moved into the OMI Building at Walnut, on the Canal (Central Parkway).

Bookmark -  
Commemorating  
the cornerstone  
ceremony held  
on July 4, 1848

## — THE OMI BUILDING (1911-1989)

At the turn of the century, as enrollment rose to 1400, two floors were added to the building. However, “Capacity Outgrown” had become the cry, as John Louis Shearer, the current superintendent said. In 1909, the OMI sold the Greenwood Building for \$420,000, and in 1911 moved into the OMI Building at Walnut, on the Canal (Central Parkway).

Of this period, Shearer wrote, “Now came the most trying years of my life. A fund of \$500,000 was our goal and the task of gathering this sum fell to my lot. Our first gift came from Susan Davitt, our janitress, amounting to fifty cents and the last in the promise of \$500,000 from Mrs. Mary M. Emery on July 16th 1908.” Mary Emery had decided to finance the new building in memory of her husband, Thomas J. Emery. The building was to be equipped with an auditorium with seating for 2,200 people, named the Emery Auditorium in his honor.

A Building Committee was established to supervise the work consisting of Harvey E. Hannaford, Charles J. Livingood and John L. Shearer, and detailed plans for the new building were laid out. Shearer wrote, “I was to sketch the general arrangement of departments and class-rooms, Mr. Hannaford, as architect, was to provide general construction plans and have all supervision, and Mr. Livingood, looking after the financial end. Mrs. Emery manifested the keenest interest in every detail and practically supervised the arrangement and furnishing of the Auditorium. She made many additional gifts for improvements and enlargements during the process of construction. On three features she was particularly generous: the Auditorium, the Roof Garden and the Industrial Museum.”

The 1911-12 school year got off to a bumpy start since the building was not yet ready to handle the influx of students. Washrooms and elevators were not finished, and there was no light or heat. Some students were turned away because their courses could not be taught. Even so, enrollment remained high with 1,571 day students and 993 night students.



Meanwhile, the Emery Auditorium hosted the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra until 1936. Leopold Stokowsky, conducted the inaugural concert there on January 6th, 1912 and commended its unparalleled acoustics. The Auditorium was also used for convocations of students, public lectures, and other cultural purposes.

The Industrial Museum showcased the Emery Collection and included artifacts from the 19th century Industrial Expositions. Timothy C. Day’s coin collection was also displayed in the museum.

The OMI’s Roof Garden provided the fruits and vegetables used to feed faculty and students. Meals were prepared in an elaborate kitchen where courses were taught in cooking, canning, and food processing. The Roof Garden also offered entertainment and concerts for the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood.

The OMI Building housed the Institute for most of the 20th century, through its merger with the University of Cincinnati in 1969.

As baccalaureate students grew in number, new connections were forged with the surrounding community. Construction technology students created a new park in Over-the-Rhine, and the meridian of Central Parkway sometimes served as the public display area for "senior projects," including race cars!



Today, the OMI Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its classrooms and laboratories have been transformed into more than sixty apartments constructed in keeping with the original design of Samuel Hannaford & Sons' Architects.

The Emery Auditorium awaits its own restoration and renaissance.

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Excerpted from Shearer, John L. *A Brief History of the Ohio Mechanics Institute*. Cincinnati: OMI, 1928.

See also Clopper, Edward N. "A History of the Mechanics Institute, Cincinnati, 1823-1953." *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*. 11.3 (1953) 1-15.

#### THE VICTORY PARKWAY CAMPUS (1989 - )

The OMI College of Applied Science merged with the University of Cincinnati in 1969. At that time, the college was housed in the OMI Building on Central Parkway, but talk of a new campus had already started in the early 1960s, when the college was still a private institution.

In the 1970s and 1980s, search for a new home began in earnest. Various plans were envisioned over the years: constructing a building for the college on the University of Cincinnati campus, renovating the existing building, obtaining a wing of Hughes High School. None of these came to fruition.



Finally, in 1987, another opportunity to acquire a new home appeared. Xavier University sold its Edgecliff campus to a private developer planning to build river view condominiums. The developer was interested in reselling a large portion of the land along with the three existing college buildings.

The Edgecliff campus, built in 1935, first housed “Our Lady of Cincinnati College,” a liberal arts college for women, run by the Sisters of Mercy. In 1970, the college became co-educational under the name Edgcliff College, and in 1980 it was purchased by Xavier University.



A fourth building was added to the original Edgecliff campus to house specialty laboratories, as well as the college's woodshop. The remodeled campus features high bay areas, modern computer facilities, electronic and chemistry laboratories, spacious drafting rooms and an impressive library. The entire project cost \$15 million.

As OMI-CAS begins its 175th anniversary year, the college looks forward to the groundbreaking for a new auditorium building in January 2003.