

The Headquarters

During its first fifty years and beyond, the business and editorial office of the Society was at Columbia University in one of several locations.

THE MOVE FROM NEW YORK TO PROVIDENCE

The move of the office of the Society from New York to Providence was connected with three problems of the Society, office space, library, and finances.

The Society library had begun through journal exchanges. There was sufficient activity that the office of Librarian was established in 1892. Journal exchanges were a major source of library material. It was a reference library and its volumes were available on loan to members of the Society. Publishers of books up until World War II regularly provided two copies of books, of which only one was needed for review. A catalog of the library appeared regularly. See [A] for more detail.

The library was housed in Low Library of Columbia University on terms quite favorable to the Society. By 1950 it had grown to about thirteen thousand items, of which two thirds were bound periodicals. Its value was estimated to be at least \$50,000. The offices of the Society, where the work included membership records and the handling of manuscripts for publication by a staff of four, were also in Low Library. Both the Society and the University felt the shortage of space that the arrangement engendered as each grew. The employment of the first executive director in October 1949 created an additional demand for space.

The Society was short of funds. A Committee on Additional Revenue, under the chairmanship of J. L. Walsh, reported to the Council of 26 December 1946. Among its recommendations was the suggestion "that the Council study the possibility of selling the library, or a substantial part thereof, to obtain capital and reduce clerical work." A motion to that effect failed. This was not the first time that the Society had declined to sell the library. It was stated that a year or two earlier it had declined to sell it to Columbia University.

To solve this complex of problems, the thought arose of bargaining with Columbia over the library on one hand and the office space on the other. A house on West 117 Street owned by the University was a piece of space under consideration. The Trustees had already authorized a committee to study the problems and the Council took the position that it should be a joint committee of the Council and the Trustees. It consisted of T. H. Hildebrandt, chairman, Arnold Dresden, J. R. Kline, Marston Morse, P. A. Smith, and Warren Weaver.

Negotiations with Columbia proceeded. At the same time, the Council of 28 October 1950, subject to the approval of the Trustees, authorized the executive director to solicit bids for the library. Should bids in excess of \$57,000 be received, the Executive Committee was authorized to choose for the Council among them, giving due regard both to the bid and to the prospect of effective use of the library. Otherwise, the Executive Committee was to report to the Council. The Trustees of 21 November 1950 voted however to postpone action on the Council recommendations, though it appeared that Columbia might not be interested in the purchase of the library and might well not have sufficient space available to meet the needs of the Society.

The Council went on record in favor of the purchase of a building, not necessarily in New York, adequate for all the offices of the Society.

At the meeting of 13 January 1951 the Trustees agreed to consider the offer of assistance of Columbia in finding space near the university and to explore further the opportunity of establishing the offices of the Society at or near Brown or Yale University, these two proposals being more favorable than others that had been presented. The possibility of moving west of New York was also to be studied.

The Trustees authorized the executive director to prepare a prospectus for the sale of the library. The Executive Committee considered the five bids received in response. The Committee recommended to the Council that the Society accept the bid of \$66,000 from the University of Georgia, this bid both being the highest and meeting the requirements of the Council. Columbia had bid on only parts of the library. The Council accepted the recommendation of the Executive Committee and the Board approved. In giving its approval, the Council asked the Librarian to consider the policy of continuing exchanges with other societies, as for the benefit of *Mathematical Reviews*.

At the same time the Executive Committee recommended to the Council that the headquarters of the Society be established in Providence in a building known as the Delta Upsilon House at 80 Waterman Street to be leased from Brown University. The Council and then the Trustees approved. The move took place in the week of 17 September 1951.

The first \$50,000 received from the sale of the library was put into endowment. The remaining \$16,000 was made available for the expenses of transfer of offices to Providence, with the understanding that over a period of five years equivalent funds were to be added to the Library Proceeds Fund.

THE RENTED LOCATIONS

The Society headquarters stayed at 80 Waterman Street from 1951 to 1956. During 1955 the Society considered a property at 190 Hope street which was in the estate of Miss Elizabeth M. Chace. The will specified that if the property was sold then Brown University was to have the opportunity to buy it. The asking price was \$50,000. An agreement was reached whereby Brown University purchased the property. The sale price appears to have been \$45,000. The Society was then to purchase the property from Brown and authorized the purchase. In the meantime the Society leased the property and moved in. While owned by Brown, the property was exempt from local taxes. The legislature passed a tax exemption bill in favor of the Society but the governor vetoed it. The Society continued to lease from Brown until a tax exemption of \$75,000 was obtained in April 1959. Then the Society purchased the property for \$45,000. After 1962 it was used briefly for storage though both inefficient and a fire hazard. The property was sold to Brown in 1965 for \$50,000.

From 1962 to 1968 the Society was housed in part of Butler Hospital. This was a hospital for the mentally ill. There were entrances and communicating corridors used by both the Society and the hospital, leading to a continuing joke about distinguishing the Society staff from the patients.

From 1951 to 1965, the *Mathematical Reviews* was housed with the headquarters. The later locations of *Mathematical Reviews* have been detailed with the discussion of that journal.

For several years the Trustees had been thinking about building and owning a headquarters building. In 1968 the Society moved to a new building on South Main Street. This was the Heritage Building, where the Society leased two of the four floors and had an option to buy the building. When it came time to exercise the option, at a price of about \$1,700,000 there were several factors to consider. The prospect of being a landlord did not appeal and the possibility of securing a tenant seeming none too sure. The cost seemed high. It was not clear that the neighborhood would be developed in a desirable manner. Consequently the Society decided to build at a cost of about \$800,000.

It should be noted in retrospect that the Society has added to the building it built to the point that it would have filled the Heritage Building with its own operations, that the area of South Main Street has flowered, and that the

market value of the Heritage Building has multiplied. That is, in hindsight it would have been a good buy.

201 CHARLES STREET

The Society built a one story building of about 22,000 square feet at 201 Charles Street in an area of redevelopment in Providence and occupied it on 15 May 1974. In an effort to keep the cost down, the structure was not planned to allow for a second story, a decision that one has come to regret. Subsequent enlargements have included two wings totalling 2700 square feet completed in 1978. The interior has been repeatedly remodeled through the use of modular cubicles to accommodate people more efficiently and assure freedom from distraction in working conditions.

The Society has a tax exemption of \$2,000,000 through 1990.

For a number of years the Society had rented warehouse space for storage of back numbers. From April to October 1981 a two-story warehouse was built for that purpose adjoining the headquarters and connected to it. Office space in the main building has subsequently been expanded by moving certain operations such as printing from the main building to the warehouse.

THE STAFF

The staff of the Society prior to World War II consisted of four persons. There were no titles listed in the budget but the duties were roughly office manager, secretary, accountant, and editorial assistant. However, it was an office in which everyone had to do everything. In particular, these same people together with volunteers were the staff who handled meetings.

Beginning in 1940 there was a staff of three for *Mathematical Reviews*, increasing to four in 1946 and five in 1948.

By 1952, when the general headquarters and *Mathematical Reviews* were all in Providence at 80 Waterman Street, the total staff had increased to 19.

In 1955 with the advent of J. R. Curtiss as executive director, a formal table of organization appears in the minutes of the Trustees. It shows the executive editor and a director of Special Projects reporting to the executive director. There are departments of administrative services, fiscal services, editorial services, and a mathematical sciences service bureau. There was an office manager who supervised departments, planned office procedures and correspondence control, and was in charge of personnel and stenographic services. Administrative Services covered membership services such as membership records, arrangements for meetings, technical editing of the *Notices*, and Trustees' business and office services such as purchasing, printing contracts,

central files, and plant management. The Fiscal Department had an accounting section concerned with bookkeeping, billing, disbursements, and financial reports, and a sales section that dealt with orders and inventory. The Editorial Department took care of the technical editing of scientific publications and supervised printing and publishing of books and journals. The Mathematical Sciences Service Bureau was concerned with administrative and publication projects performed jointly with other mathematical organizations. The staff of 1954-1955 consisted of 24 persons, three in the executive director's office, three in accounting, three in membership, one secretary, four in sales, two in editorial, one on building maintenance, and seven on *Mathematical Reviews*. In addition there were some part-time employees.

When the Society moved in 1962 the number of employees was up to about 82, including *Mathematical Reviews*. When the move was made to the Heritage Building in 1968 there were about 87 employees in Providence and 26 more with *Mathematical Reviews* in Ann Arbor.

In 1973 when the Society occupied its own building, the number of employees in Providence was up to 116 and the number in Ann Arbor was up to 35.

The number of employees budgeted for Providence in 1988 was almost 156 full-time equivalents. It should be noted that more than four were allocated to sale of services, such as composition and printing for others at a price. The budgeted number of employees in Ann Arbor was about 75.

In counting personnel, it was not always possible to distinguish between numbers of actual employees and budgeted positions, though the two numbers were always close, the latter slightly larger.