

# AOCS headquarters, then and now

The 1945 office inventory list for the American Oil Chemists' Society (AOCS) was short. It consisted of one typewriter, a four-drawer file cabinet and an old shoe box filled with circulation records. The furniture in that first national headquarters at 35 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois, was borrowed. There were 950 members served by one full-time staff member, Lucy Rogers Hawkins, and two part-timers.

Today, the recently completed headquarters in Champaign, Illinois, accommodates 28 full-time employees plus an executive director, a darkroom, library and an NCR computer which handles membership, subscription and accounting records. There is room for more staff should AOCS programs expand in the future. Long-term plans include the addition of an education director on staff; more short courses, research conferences and symposia; and an expanded monograph program.

In the early days of the society, unofficial "headquarters" moved as officers changed. The society arrived at a semi-permanent "home" in 1925, when J.C.P. Helm took over as secretary-treasurer. For the next 15 years, most society activities were coordinated from Helm Laboratories in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1940, Swift & Co. donated desk space at its Chicago stockyards plant for the editor of *Oil & Soap*, and John P. Harris of West Virginia Pulp and Paper offered the society administrative space in his offices at 35 E. Wacker Drive in the Pure Oil Building.

However, as the society had grown from nine founders in 1909 to more than 900 members by the mid 1940s, the need for permanent staff and headquarters increasingly became apparent. In 1944, the Governing Board approved creation of a permanent staff. In March 1945, the first national headquarters was established in Room 1414

of the Pure Oil Building. Hawkins, previously designated as associate editor, became the society's first executive secretary.

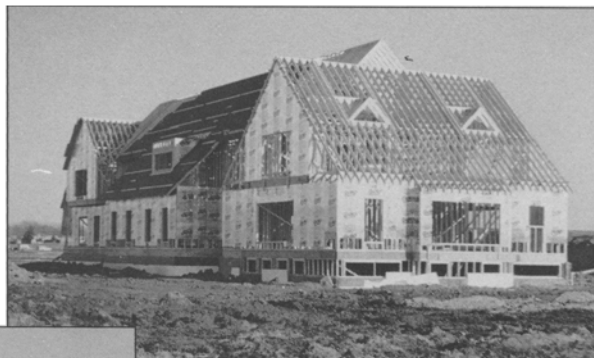
In 1969, the society's Ways and Means Committee considered a move to more permanent headquarters. High rent, high employment costs and lack of space in Chicago were cited as reasons for moving. The following year, the committee recommended the headquarters be situated on or near a campus of a major university where important research work was being conducted on the chemistry and biochemistry of fats and other lipids.

Several locations were considered but the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign emerged as a likely site, particularly when the former headquarters building of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) became available.

On April 26, 1970, the AOCS Governing Board approved a



Foundation work on December 3, 1986



Framework completed, March 2, 1987



Roofing completed, siding under way, May, 1987

## Dedication

resolution ratifying a contract for AOCS to purchase for approximately \$216,000 a 64-year lease at \$1 per year for the use of the building. Under the lease, control of the building would revert to the University of Illinois in the year 2034. In July 1971, AOCS opened its offices at 508 South Sixth St. in Champaign. James Lyon, formerly NCTE treasurer, became AOCS executive director with a staff of 10 persons.

During the past 16 years, staff numbers increased with the creation of *Lipids*, a new monograph program and the addition of a technical director. Clerical and data services staff grew to handle a larger membership—currently 4,003—and more meetings, including world conferences.

By the early 1980s, AOCS began to outgrow its space. Meanwhile, the University of Illinois expressed interest in buying the lease. "We had the opportunity to act," Lyon said. A site committee, com-

posed of E.G. Perkins as chairman, Timothy Mounts, Karl Zilch, Tom Smouse and Lyon, explored ways to solve the space problems. "We considered a number of options, including renting other space, buying another facility, adding on to the old space or building a new headquarters," Lyon said.

On June 19, 1986, the AOCS site committee and University of Illinois representatives reached a tentative agreement for the university to buy the lease on the building and land at 508 S. Sixth St., Champaign. This was approved by the AOCS Governing Board by mail ballot and by the University of Illinois' Board of Trustees July 10, 1986. AOCS accepted a University of Illinois offer for \$450,000 for the lease. The offer included a stipulation that AOCS move by Aug. 1, 1986. In 21 days, the AOCS staff relocated to temporary quarters in a historic building under restoration in downtown Champaign.

In September 1986, the Governing Board approved plans to construct a new headquarters building on 1.5 acres in a new development in southwest Champaign. Construction began in November 1986. The new headquarters, a two-and-a-half story, 12,000 square foot, colonial style building, cost approximately \$670,000 to construct. Total project cost, including land, construction, landscaping, furniture and relocation was approximately one million dollars. Nearly half of the money to pay for the building was raised with the sale of the lease on the former headquarters building; an additional \$300,000 was raised through member and corporate pledges to the AOCS Foundation. A 20-year mortgage is providing the remainder of the cost.

AOCS staff moved into the nearly completed building during August 1987. Final touches to the interior and to landscape were completed by mid-October.

## Procter & Gamble



salutes

AOCS 

American Oil Chemists' Society

Procter & Gamble salutes the American Oil Chemists' Society on the dedication of their new building. We look forward to a continued and productive relationship with the Society as we work together toward excellence in fats and oils science and technology.