THE LIBRARY READING ROOM
As it Appeared Soon After the Society Occupied the New Library Building at the University of Cincinnati in 1930.
Many of the leaders who opened Ohio to settlement and promoted its orderly development in a political system were quite aware that they were making history on a grand scale. Within a generation they were attempting to preserve the records of their achievements by establishing an historical society in the state.

Thirty-four years after the first settlement on Ohio soil, an act of the Ohio Legislature incorporated the Historical Society of Ohio. The date is February 12, 1822. Those named in the act were Jeremiah Morrow, Ethan Brown, Benjamin A. Ruggles, David K. Este, Edward King, John M. Goodenow, Philemon Beecher, Ralph Gronger, and Thomas H. Genine. Sad to tell, the Society died a-borning.

But less than ten years later, when the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio held its first meeting in the Court House at Columbus on December 21, 1831, the gentlemen named above were invited to join the new society. The Ohio General Assembly had passed the act of incorporation on February 11, 1831. Present for that first meeting were the Honorable John C. Wright, the Honorable E. Lane, Gustave Swan, Dr. J. P. Kirtland, and Arius Nye, Esq.

Meeting at the same place ten days later, the Society elected Benjamin Tappan, president; E. Lane, first vice-president; Rev. William Preston, second vice-president; Alfred Kelley, corresponding secretary; T. P. Wilcox, recording secretary; John W. Campbell, treasurer; Gustavus Swan, S. P. Hildreth, Edward King, B. G. Leonard and J. P. Kirtland, curators. Thus began the Society that is celebrating its 125th birthday this year.
COLUMBUS

High Street Looking South, 1846. The Society met first (1831) at the Court House (on the left), and occasionally at the Neil House (large building on the right).
Thereafter, for a time, annual meetings were held regularly, with occasional meetings between. One or two items of business may be of interest: members were requested to bring to the meetings "any fact relating to the civil and natural history of the State and of the several counties thereof, especially of the earlier settlement, which they may deem worthy of preservation . . ."

From 1838 it became evident that participation and interest were hard to sustain. Sporadic meetings were followed by long lapses. For instance after three meetings early in 1841, nothing occurs in the record until the annual meeting of 1844 at the Neil House in Columbus. Then, a very bad symptom, delinquent membership dues for the previous four years were forgiven.

Another gap of four years was followed by a meeting at the Neil House, this one without a quorum. The date may account for the poor attendance. It was only two days before Christmas, 1848. But this excuse must be taken with caution; people were not much pre-occupied, for the feast during that period was only quietly observed. On the day after Christmas, however, the Society came to a momentous decision. Here it is, as reported something over two years later:

"The disadvantages of the location at Columbus having now become fully apparent, it was resolved to change the place of meeting for the transaction of business, to remove the books and archives to the more populous city of Cincinnati, and to unite it with the Historical Society of that place."

Thus it came about that the Cincinnati Historical Society, formed in August 1844, merged with the elder Society, and twenty-eight Cincinnatians transferred their membership in the merger.

A resurgence of energy followed the move. William D. Gallagher, poet and essayist, was elected president and thirteen additional meetings were held in 1849. The first Saturday of each month was designated for a regular meeting. But this ambitious schedule could not be sustained, so far as can be learned.

Actually, the minutes end abruptly in 1850 and are not resumed again until 1868. What is known of the Society during those years must be gathered from newspaper items and later accounts. It is known that in 1849 rooms were being rented for forty dollars a year, but their location is unknown. The report

of Mussey and Campbell already referred to comprises two columns on the front page of the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette* for that date and reviews the affairs of the Society for the previous two years. They are two years "which will be long remembered as the period of that fearful pestilence [the cholera] which struck down alike manhood in its strength, youth in its pride and beauty, and infancy in unconscious simplicity and innocence." Yet the Society had kept going, the well-known Edward D. Mansfield being president. There were 160 members, 1000 volumes, and expectations of being given a house.

Those expectations, however, were not realized, for on May 24, 1852, the members met in their "new rooms in the Cincinnati College," on the east side of Walnut Street, between Fourth and Fifth. There they housed the library and held their meetings for a few years prior to the Civil War, encouraged by the aid of Peyton Symmes, George Graham, Osgood Mussey, John D. Caldwell, A. R. Spofford, Manning F. Force and others.

But the country was vastly disturbed by the coming conflict, financial needs became acute, the Society was in debt for rent. Consequently all books and pamphlets of the collections were packed in boxes and deposited in the Public Library at the Mechanics' Institute Building, corner Sixth and Vine Streets. There they remained during the turbulent war years and for some time thereafter.

Then on Saturday, May 23, 1868, when only four active members remained of the old Society, a meeting was held that elected Robert Buchanan, president; Manning F. Force, corresponding secretary; Charles E. Cist, recording secretary; John D. Caldwell, librarian. Nine others were elected to corporate membership: Eugene F. Bliss, Enoch T. Carson, Robert Clarke, C. G. Comegys, Julius Dexter, Lewis E. Mills, John M. Newton, Henry Probasco, and Horatio Wood.

In the rooms of the Horticultural Society another meeting was held three weeks later. These rooms were in the Pike's Opera House Building on the south side of Fourth Street between Vine and Walnut. "J. Dexter was appointed a committee to report to the next meeting on the subject of rooms for the Society." Thus that perennial problem emerged again. At the next meeting, held in Mr. Bliss' school room (Number 5, College Building), offers were received from the Horticultural Society and from the
Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio

CINCINNATI COLLEGE BUILDING in 1857
East Side of Walnut Street, Between 4th and 5th. The Society was Housed Here at Two Periods, one Beginning in 1852, the Other in 1871.

Literary Club, which was housed at the northwest corner of Fifth and Walnut in the Apollo Building. The committee, with two additional members, was instructed to try the City Building as another possibility.

At the same meeting Mr. Dexter said that he had seen the library in storage, that it consisted of 1,738 volumes and 2900 pamphlets, adding that “the collection is very heterogeneous ... and that the whole library is terribly dirty.” Subsequently it was reported that 350 to 450 of the rarest volumes had been stolen from storage. Such was the low estate of the library in 1868, when John M. Newton set out to clean and catalogue it and to arrange it in new quarters, the Literary Club’s offer having been accepted.

A brighter period now began, with regular meetings, enlivened by papers, historical discussion and reports of acquisitions. At a meeting in October, 1869, Robert Clarke gave an entertaining account of “Cincinnati’s First Library” with very humorous treatment of that cause célèbre, the claims of the “Coonskin Library.” From May 1868 to December 1869, there were fourteen meetings and 46 members. Yet, said Manning Force, in response to 211 circulars sent out asking for gifts of books and papers “hardly half a dozen contributions were received.”
Yet the library was certainly growing, for Mr. Dexter, librarian, complained of cramped quarters and asked for relief. Consequently, in the Spring of 1871 the Society found itself again at the Cincinnati College, this time with a rent of two hundred dollars a year, the first year free. Actually, the rent continued free during the entire time of the Society's occupancy. In April of that year the new quarters were opened for inspection, after an expenditure of $509.33 for refurbishing. A large number of persons visited the rooms.

On October 26, 1871, a resolution was passed extending sympathy to the Chicago Historical Society for the irreparable losses incurred in the recent fire; and six weeks later Mr. Dexter reported that he had offered duplicates in the Society's collections to Chicago.

In the Spring of 1872, Mr. Dexter, who was now giving his full time to the library, announced that the collections had already overflowed the new quarters, that additional space on the fourth floor had given temporary relief, but it was evident that larger quarters would soon be needed. The condition somewhat later was described as actually dangerous. A library consisting of 4,623 books, 12,500 pamphlets and many manuscripts was in jeopardy. Wood-carving had been introduced as a branch of instruction at the College and a picture-framing workshop was operating directly under the rooms of the Society. Three thousand dollars of insurance was all very well but the loss of the collections would be irreparable. It was advisable to move. Two years later Mr. Dexter suggested a place in the country as preferable and named Mount Auburn as a "suitable locality."

Manning F. Force had been elected president in 1870 to succeed Robert Buchanan, and thus began eighteen years as head of the Society. Other officers at that time were: W. H. Mussey and S. E. Wright, vice-presidents; Lewis E. Mills, corresponding secretary; Horatio Wood, recording secretary; Robert Clarke, treasurer; Julius Dexter, librarian; E. F. Bliss, E. T. Carson, George McLaughlin, J. M. Newton and W. H. Venable, curators.

With the change of administration there came specific plans for owning a house. A building fund was established by agreement of ten members to make annual contributions for ten years, the sums ranging from a hundred dollars to ten dollars. But no im-
mediate solution was in sight for Mr. Dexter's difficulties, shortage of space and the fire hazard.

During the next decade, as the Society enjoyed a time of moderate prosperity, promoted chiefly by the energy of Mr. Dexter and Mr. Bliss, buildings and building sites were examined in various parts of the city. These included a lot on upper McMicken belonging to the University of Cincinnati and a house at the southeast corner of Broadway and Arch.

During this period, too, the Society acquired many of its most desirable possessions and published several books that still display good historical scholarship. For example, our John Caspar Wild watercolors were announced in 1880, and the Zeisberger diary was published in 1885. But that is another story, told elsewhere in this number of the Bulletin.

Early in 1885, patient effort received its reward. The Society found its house. It was the William R. Ramsey residence at 115 W. 8th Street (107 Garfield Place after 1894). On April 29 a resolution was passed enabling the treasurer to convert into cash various funds, including, of course, the building fund accumulated since 1870. The price was $30,000 of which $10,000 was in cash from the treasury and the balance borrowed at "a rate not to exceed 5%." The hard-earned deed is dated July 2, 1886.

New energy and new members came with the change of scene. Mr. Bliss was elected vice-president, having resigned as treasurer
and being succeeded in that post by his friend Albert H. Chatfield. At about this time (1886) Miss Elizabeth Haven Appleton re-signed as librarian and was succeeded by Mrs. Catharine W. Lord. Miss Appleton, after two years as Mr. Dexter’s assistant had become librarian in 1879. Anticipating the Cincinnati Centennial of 1888 plans were being laid two years in advance for suitable recognition of the event. The Hon. A. T. Goshorn was chairman of the General Centennial of the City.

In the spring of 1888 Marietta celebrated its own centennial ... Our Society sent a committee to attend the event and Judge Force, president, telegraphed greetings to the Marietta Centennial Committee. When Cincinnati’s turn came, the landing at Yeatman’s Cove a hundred years before was celebrated at the rooms of the Society by an evening reception, December 28. Mrs. Louise N. Anderson reported for the Reception Committee that “Hon. Rufus King read an interesting paper. Simple refreshments were served. A number of additional corporate members was the outcome ...”. At the annual meeting on December 3 of that year Eugene F. Bliss had been elected president to succeed Judge Force.

For the next ten years Mr. Bliss, as president, devoted himself to the Society with remarkable industry and success. Gifts and bequests of books and money from various benefactors added quality to the library and solidity to the financial basis. Some of these benefactors and their gifts are recorded in this Bulletin. Here let me mention in passing: the Elizabeth H. Appleton fund, contributed by friends and pupils of Miss Appleton’s soon after her death in 1890; and the Rufus King Collection of 1,600 books drawn “from the library of the late Mrs. Margaret Rives King ...” in 1898.

At the meeting of November 5, 1898, the Society adjourned in sorrow over the death of its devoted member, Julius Dexter. Mr. Bliss, who was Mr. Dexter’s intimate friend, “made feeling remarks on the loss to the Society.”

In 1899 there came a momentous decision, this time in the administration of Joseph Wilby, who became president that year. Preliminary talk began of removing the library to Burnet Woods Park and of occupying space in the new library building of the University of Cincinnati. By November 10, an agreement was adopted between the Board of Directors of the University and the
JULIUS DEXTER, 1840–1898

Friend of the Society. "Among all the Institutions in Which he Was Concerned, the Historical Society Easily Held First Place" — Eugene F. Bliss.
Society which began a long period of residence in the Van Wormer Library Building. Actual occupation did not take place, however, until November 1901, delay in completing the new building being the cause. At the annual meeting of that year Mrs. Lord, librarian, reported that the collections comprised 16,996 bound volumes and 64,016 pamphlets. Evidently the task of moving these had not been negligible.

At the time of this important change in the residence of the Society the officers were: Joseph Wilby, president; Frank J. Jones and William Worthington, vice-presidents; Albert H. Chatfield, corresponding secretary; Gerrit Sykes, recording secretary; Charles J. Livingood, treasurer; Mrs. Catharine W. Lord, librarian; Nathaniel Henchman Davis, Mrs. T. L. A. Greve, Elliott H. Pendleton, Frank B. Wiborg, John F. Winslow, curators. Three years thereafter, Howard C. Hollister became a vice-president and served for fourteen years.

For several months, the old house on Eighth Street was used as a storehouse for extraneous books and papers. Then, late in 1902 it was leased for fifteen years at an annual rent of $800 dollars, with privilege of purchase for $30,000, of which $1000 was paid down. The lessee was M. M. Robertson, president and general manager of the Robertson Sewing Machine Company, at 111 West Seventh Street.

At 1:30 the morning of February 26, 1903, fire broke out in the basement of Pike's Opera House. Soon most of the block on the south side of Fourth Street between Vine and Walnut was in ruins. This included the office of the Robert Clarke Company, publishers, where the Society had on deposit some of its own publications. In consequence, 186 copies of the *Diary of David Zeisberger* (with printing plates), and 248 copies of the *Journal and Letters of Colonel John May*, were destroyed. Insurance was collected to the amount of $500.

Typewriters having now become practical office equipment, one of these machines was rented in the summer of 1905 and an operator was engaged to make a shelf catalogue of the library. This was done under the supervision of the new librarian, Miss L. Belle Hamlin, who had succeeded Mrs. Lord early that year.

A letter dated March 30, 1907, from Mrs. Mary M. Emery offered to rehabilitate the Lytle House, Lawrence Street between Third and Fourth, as a future home for the Society. It was speci-
ELIZABETH HAVEN APPLETON, 1815-1890
First Woman Librarian of the Society, from 1879 to 1886. The Appleton Fund of the Society Was Established by Her Pupils.
fied that she was to have the house put in suitable order for use as a library and to provide an endowment of $25,000, income from which was to be used for maintenance. A few years before, the City had condemned and bought the block of property that is now Lytle Park, some of it, including the Lytle House, over the strong objections of the owners. A hot controversy had ensued, involving, on one side, political interests led by Alderman Michael Mullen, and on the other, a considerable number of citizens interested in preserving historical landmarks. Mrs. Emery’s offer to the Society was most welcome, but the City Council would have none of it. Mullen’s opposition was effective. The city demolished the house and the Society lost another chance for adequate separate housing.

A more obscure, but still important, controversy broke out in 1910. Bugs began breeding among a collection of Indian relics in the library. When these creatures started feeding on manuscripts, Miss Hamlin declared war. She discovered from the Library of Congress that the enemy consisted of two kinds: dermestidae and anthremus musaeorum. Even more useful than the names were the recommended weapons, bisulphide of carbon gas or hydrocyanic gas. Miss Hamlin literally fought it out along those lines all summer and finally exterminated the pests.

M. M. Robertson, after more than ten years as a tenant, bought the Eighth Street house for $30,000; and the funds were placed as a call loan at Irwin, Ballman and Company, as reported on April 5, 1913.

When Mr. Bliss died in 1918 it became clear that his friendship endured, for he left the Society as residuary legatee $75,000. On the date of this announcement, June 7, 1918, a memorial to Mr. Bliss was read by Joseph Wilby. At present (1956) this bequest, with other gifts and bequests, constitutes an endowment fund of a half a million dollars.

With the rising of another generation of young men after the First World War, John J. Rowe, Lucien Wulsin, Frederick H. and William Hayden Chatfield became members. At present Mr. Wulsin is president of the Society and Mr. Rowe is a vice-president. Two members of the Chatfield family are Life members.

Miss Lillian Wuest, now assistant librarian, began her long years of association in November 1919, aiding Miss Hamlin in numerous ways.
Beginning in 1906 and continuing for seventeen years the Society published a quarterly under Miss Hamlin's supervision. Valuable manuscripts from our collections were variously edited and printed, rare books of special interest to this area were reprinted in the series. These quarterlies remain a solid and useful contribution to historical scholarship.

During many of these years meetings were poorly attended and the Society was in a rather sedentary state, but its affairs were meticulously recorded in printed annual reports dating from 1895 to 1941.

Yet another change of residence for the collections occurred in 1930 when the new library building at the University was completed. There, adequate stack space and a suitable reading room were provided at a rental rate that indicated a happy relationship between tenant and proprietor.

Charles Theodore Greve's distinguished career as an historian, and an officer of the Society ended with his death on September 4 of that year. An appropriate memorial notice mentions Mr. Greve as corresponding secretary from 1904 until his death.

Displays at the library, a meeting in the afternoon and an elaborate dinner at the Queen City Club marked the centennial of the Society, celebrated on February 11, 1931. There were 89 members on the roster. Miss Hamlin, at the age of 84 years, resigned as librarian at that time and was followed by Miss Eleanor Wilby. Other changes came that year. At the annual meeting George Hoadly was elected president to succeed Mr. Wilby, who had resigned the previous June; Charles J. Livingood and Walter A. Draper became vice-presidents. Three years later Mr. Hoadly was succeeded by A. Clifford Shinkle.

Considerable fanfare ushered in the celebration of Ohio's Sesquicentennial in 1938. A caravan like that of 1787–88 made the journey from Ipswich, Massachusetts, to Marietta, Ohio. Cincinnati celebrated for four days in October. The Society participated with displays at the Central Trust and the Fifth Third Union Trust banks. Radio transcriptions of the celebration are deposited in the library.

At the annual meeting of 1942 Beverley W. Bond, Jr. became president and Lawrence C. Bucher, treasurer. Lee Shepard was elected a curator, and the following March (1943) reported to the Trustees that he would edit for the Society a small folder to be
EUGENE F. BLISS, 1836-1918
Generous Benefactor; President from 1888 to 1899.
called the "Fort Washington Bulletin." This publication, actually entitled the Bulletin, was to become in the next few years an eighty page quarterly, well edited and illustrated.

In response to a proposal by Robert L. Black, who had been elected a vice-president in 1943, Keyes Metcalf, librarian of the Harvard libraries, was engaged to make a survey of the Society's collections and operations. Mr. Metcalf's report was received by the Board of Trustees on October 19, 1944. Among other recommendations it was agreed that the collecting range of the library should be carefully defined and that all accumulated material not fitting into the new pattern should be withdrawn and suitably placed elsewhere.

Herbert F. Koch reading his first annual report as recording secretary on December 1, 1944, told of a busy year and a considerable growth in members. Early the next year Miss Wilby resigned, after 14 years as librarian, and Mrs. Makenzie R. McLean was engaged to act as a member of the library staff with Miss Wuest.

When the Trustees met on February 21, 1945, a new rental agreement between the University of Cincinnati and the Society was reported, a somewhat higher rate than previously but entirely satisfactory. Announcement was also made of the appointment of Virginius C. Hall as acting director. Mr. Hall became director in 1946 and Mrs. Alice P. Hook, librarian, joined the staff on January 1, 1947.

After three years as president, Dr. Bond resigned and was elected curator emeritus at the annual meeting of 1945. He was followed in office by Chalmers Hadley, who had been corresponding secretary for the previous fifteen years. With Dr. Bond's administration, and continuing, the Society began to increase in membership and to put into operation the new scheme of collecting. Fresh impetus to growth in membership came again in 1946 from John J. Rowe and his committee, who reported 265 members in September of that year.

Certain changes in the constitution now seemed desirable, consequently a preliminary draft was presented to the Trustees in February of 1946 and a new constitution was adopted at a general meeting in April of that year.

Two innovations that have since become standard procedure were introduced in 1947. The first of our Spring Exhibitions was opened at the Taft Museum the evening of April 18 for members
of the Society, many of whom lent to the exhibit family manuscripts, books and pictures of historical interest to this region. For two weeks thereafter the exhibit was open to the public, attendance being about 2,500. As another innovation we began publishing in October a news letter, with the promise that it would be continued at occasional intervals, if wanted. Up to the present fifteen numbers of the News Letter have appeared.

New members continued to come into the Society during the following years, as the activities attracted interest and a more lively participation. Members of the staff were called on more and more to talk before other clubs and societies on historical subjects. The intelligent public were evidently becoming more aware of our library as an historical source and an ornament to the community. Between this Society and the Ohio (State) Historical Society in Columbus a gratifying co-operation developed, with frequent exchange of information and visits. As a small example, when the State Society took over the Beecher house on the corner of Gilbert Avenue and Foraker Street, Cincinnati, and opened it as a memorial to Harriet Beecher Stowe on June 14, 1949, our Society contributed as a loan to the permanent exhibit a variety of American Negro relics.

Certain changes in the articles of incorporation were now becoming desirable and Mr. Hadley called a special meeting of the Society for November 27, 1950. Resolutions in favor of these changes were passed in accordance with the recommendations of Joseph C. Dinsmore, curator.

One of the several salutary results of having more members each year is growth in the volume of gifts. An increasing number of members, having learned from the Bulletin and otherwise, are able to offer family papers and other relics with a better notion of what makes desirable historical material. Membership dues of ten dollars a year also make possible a larger fund for buying. In addition, $13,112.00 accumulated in Mr. Bucher’s treasury from the sale of books and pamphlets not germane to the newly defined collecting policy.

The society during these years has continued to hold meetings each spring at the Taft Museum where Mrs. Hook and Miss Katherine Hanna, director of the Museum, have set up exhibits pertaining to local and regional subjects.
In 1952, the centennial of Dr. Daniel Drake's death was observed, and our spring exhibit, consequently, was entitled "Doctors and Drugs in Cincinnati." On November 1-3 of that year we conducted a cruise to Louisville for members and friends subscribing to the trip. What with bright weather and the holiday spirit, it was a rare success.

At least one other event of 1952 ought to be set down for the record. It was in October that steam shovel operators excavating for a new building at the northeast corner of Third and Broadway dug into a complex of ancient logs and planking twenty feet underground. This turned out to be the powder magazine of Fort Washington (1789–1808). Representatives of our Society with friends from the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus conducted a careful investigation of the remains, resulting in front page news, articles in the *Bulletin*, an appropriate plaque on the site, and a permanent exhibit of relics in the State Museum.

For the Sesquicentennial of Ohio statehood (1803) we celebrated in the spring of 1953 with the "Buckeye Birthday" exhibition, the publication of William E. and Ophia D. Smith's book, *A Buckeye Titan*, and by co-operating with other organizations in setting up markers on various historical sites in the County.

As we enter the 125th year of the Society's existence, 1956, officers and staff are as follows:

Lucien Wulsin, President
John J. Rowe, Vice-President
Lee Shepard, Vice-President
Joseph C. Dinsmore, Vice-President
Mrs. John H. Skavlem, Recording Secretary
Cornelius J. Hauck, Corresponding Secretary
Lawrence C. Bucher, Treasurer
Mrs. William T. Buckner, Curator
William T. Earls, Curator
Herbert F. Koch, Curator
Mrs. Russell Wilson, Curator
Robt. M. Galbraith, Curator
Beverley W. Bond, Jr., Curators
Joseph S. Graydon, Emeritus
Chalmers Hadley
Virginius C. Hall, Director
Mrs. Alice P. Hook, Librarian
Miss Lillian Wuest, Assistant Librarian

Throughout the minutes and annual reports during all these years a recurrent theme is heard: how and where shall we be housed? In the long interval between that first meeting in the Court House at Columbus and our present quarters in the library building of the University of Cincinnati several buildings were occupied, and one, as has been seen, was owned.

Cornelius J. Hauck, chairman of the committee for a new permanent home, recommended to the Trustees in September, 1954, the establishment of a new building fund. Mr. Hauck inaugurated
the fund with an encouraging donation. It is hoped that one of several plans now under consideration may eventually convert this protracted dream of ownership into a concrete fact.

So, with varying fortune the Society has survived the years. As of today, assurance of its future, in a nervous world, seems reasonably bright. A roster of 900 members, an endowment fund invested in the country's vital industries, an alert staff, and a competent board of Trustees provide the means and energy for performing some of the purposes for which the Society was established 125 years ago.