

The day we bought the Greek campus

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In the late 1940s it was apparent that more space was needed to accommodate the expansion in student body and programs. The following steps were taken.

1. Hill House, which was built as a student hostel, was completed in 1953
2. The Science building to accommodate the expanding science programs was completed in 1966
3. In 1964 (?) a building one room deep and 10 stories high, across the east edge of the campus next to the French Lycee school was planned. The ground floor was to be open so that it would not obstruct circulation on campus. Digging the foundations at one point actually began.
4. A tower, a 10-12 story building to replace the not-so-well-built section at the back of the Palace where the accounting offices are, was planned to be built at the same time. The tower was to have a small footprint and was to be built on stilts so as to leave open the ground space for circulation and outdoor campus space.



Suddenly the opportunity came to buy two Greek schools, where the Greek campus is now located. We first needed approval to use the money given to us for construction on the main campus, for purchasing the Greek schools instead. The Board Of Trustees approved the proposed shift on July 16, 1964. As the the money involved was United State PL 480 funds, allocated by the Agency for International Development (AID), permission from AID had to be secured. That was readily obtained. We then had to overcome two other difficulties before the purchase could be completed: a) The owner, the Greek Community lead by Mr. Pierakos, wanted hard currency, which AUC did not have, and could not legally have paid, in any case. b)



We were not sure whether AUC was eligible to buy property under the prevailing laws of that time. Fortunately, Mr. Pierakos eventually accepted Egyptian Pounds and the Egyptian authorities did not object to the sale.

On the day of the sale, Mr. Fayek Wissa, the accountant, and I had to carry several satchels containing the purchase money, since a check was not legal tender for the transaction. About LE 409,500 in 10 pound denominations had to be counted and transferred in the presence of the official in the registration office. That was done and the final papers for the purchase were signed on March 15, 1965.

