

The following excerpt is taken from *Seeds Scattered and Grown: A History of the Adrian Dominican Sisters, 1924-1933* (Adrian: Adrian Dominican Congregation, 2006), 136-139, reproduced here with kind permission of the author Nadine Foley, OP. To purchase a copy of the book, visit the Adrian Dominican Sister's website at http://adriandominicans.org/misdocs/whats_happening/historybook.htm.

Walsh Hall

At the time that the College was added to the Academy, the increased enrollment on the campus brought about a serious space problem. Sister Noreen McKeough wrote of the situation.

Facilities were needed for music instruction and practice rooms, for student recitals and programs, and for physical education. In the Fall of 1923 Mother Camilla began negotiating with contractors for a building referred to as the Auditorium and Gymnasium Building. After her death in January 1924, the business was carried on by Mother Augustine and construction began that year. It was completed in 1925 and named Walsh Hall, although for a time it was popularly called the Conservatory of Music.²

The main floor of the building was slanted forward in theater style toward the orchestra pit and stage. At the back a spacious balcony connected on both sides with a continuous line of single practice rooms each large enough to hold

2. Noreen McKeough, OP. *Ascent to the Heights: An Informal Account of the Beginnings and Growth of Siena Heights College (1919-1969)*. Unpublished manuscript, 1994. Adrian Dominican Archives.



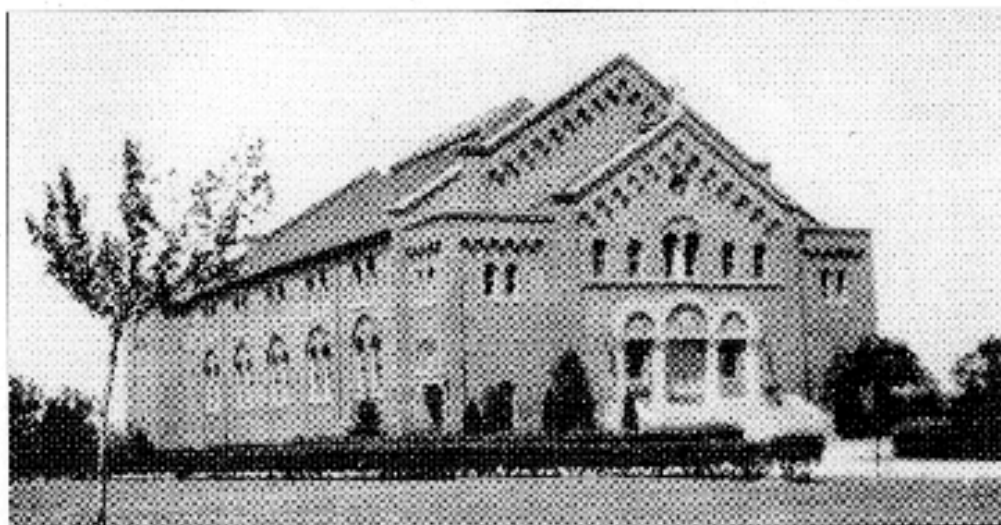
Mother Augustine (right) and Sister Gerald break ground for Walsh Hall

an upright piano for the many music students at both the Academy and College. These rooms connected above and behind the stage with larger studio rooms for the music faculty. These housed concert pianos. The lower floor of the building was a gymnasium behind which were dressing and shower rooms.³

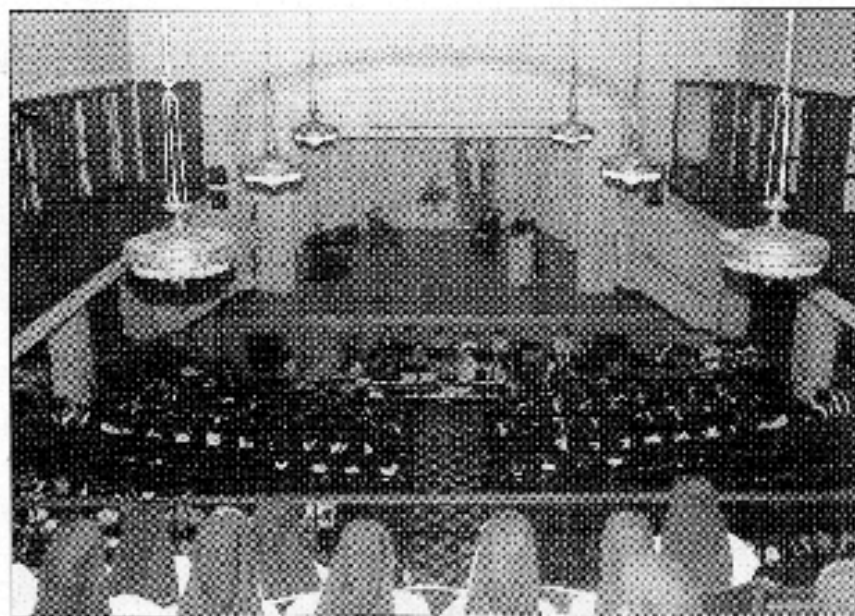
Impressive for its day, Walsh Hall became the scene of student recitals and plays, some written by students themselves. Occasional movies and guest performances by college glee clubs, drama groups, and big time bands provided evenings of varied entertainment. While the facility was still quite new, the Stratford Players from Utica, New York, presented *Julius Caesar* in 1929, the first Shakespearean play in Walsh Hall. Weekly student assemblies were held in the auditorium. Now and then one of the sisters presented an assembly pro-

3. The architects for the building were Donaldson and Meier of Detroit, Michigan, and the builder was a local contractor, Charles E. Dibble.

Seeds Scattered and Grown



Exterior of Walsh Hall



Graduation ceremony inside Walsh Hall

gram on the niceties of social conduct, somewhat disrespectfully dubbed "The Charm School" by the captive audience of uniformed young women.

Over time it became the place where students of both Academy and College heard speakers such as James W. Walsh, historian; Belgian Baroness Adelaide de Bethune, artist; Emmanuel Suarez, Master General of the Dominican Order; Clare Booth Luce, writer and diplomat; Pierre Lenique, OP, Swedish scholar and biographer; Dorothy Day, social worker and activist; Mrs. George Romney, Michigan's First Lady; Doctor Tom Dooley, medical missionary and humanist; Helen C. White, author; and Douglas Hyde, British ex-Communist. While Mother Augustine did not live to hear all of these dignitaries and others who followed them, her love of learning and scholarship would have thrilled to the realization of her dreams for this addition to the life of the Academy/College campus.

Growing Pains

The arrival of college students also caused some tensions in the already crowded dormitories. The high school students who were approaching graduation and looking forward to the special privileges accorded to the seniors now found themselves competing for preferred dormitory and classroom space with the newly arrived college students. The "privileges" that seniors had to relinquish in favor of eight incoming college students in 1922 were: first place in line for all ordinary and extraordinary events; first place in the chapel; places at the head table in the Number three refectory.⁴ Most of the college students

4. Noreen McKeough, p. 9.

5. The ground floor of Madden Hall housed three refectories in addition to those reserved for the Sisters. The first was for the primary school students, the second for the upper grades; and the third traditionally for the high school students.