

FLEET CAR OFFICE



Fig. 1. The Fleet car office and garage, with the Stores building in the background. [Author Photo, AP-57]

In the days before the last great expansions of the University, the operation of the fleet of vehicles used by University employees was a small enough job that it could be run out of the old service building on University Avenue, and the cars kept on the lots adjacent to that building. This lasted throughout the 1950s. But the land at University and Charter Streets became needed for academic expansion and the fleet grew so large that it could not be administered in that small space.

Consequently, in 1963 the University moved the auto fleet operation to a large parking lot on College Court. To house the administration of the operation they installed a trailer at 1006 College Court. This new arrangement lasted eighteen years. But the size of the fleet continued to grow. In addition to the size pressure, the trailer that housed the fleet car staff was increasingly unsuitable, since it was uninsulated, and had no indoor plumbing or electricity.¹

The issue was dealt with first when the regents in December 1980 voted to acquire a .6 acre property on North Murray Street. This plan was part of a larger campus development plan developed with the city of Madison. It was not until 1982 that this property was finally secured. The University made an even trade with the city, the University's College Court property for the city's Murray Street parcels. The University immediately developed the property to be used as the fleet car lot. The city within a few years allowed the College Court property to be developed as housing. The old trailer from College Court was moved to the new Murray Street site, still without plumbing. Efforts by John Brown, the director of fleet car operation, were finally rewarded in 1986 with the construction of a new fleet car facility at 10 North Murray Street. The building is a one story wood frame 26 by 20 feet, sheathed in wood siding and contains an office, storage and a bathroom and lounge. The contractor was S. I. and Son for \$23,468. In 1989 a small garage was added to the north side of the building for additional storage and some car parts. As the area of Murray and Regent Street becomes more attractive to developers, the fleet facility may eventually be moved again.²

1) University Directories; interview with Paul Brown, spring 1995.

2) *Regent's Minutes*, September 9, 1976, IV-2, December 5, 1980, July 16, 1982; Fleet Car Facility Rebid in papers of John Brown director of fleet car operations, Wanner to Brown, March 17, 1986, Department of Administration budget letter, office of Patricia Hillestadt.