



LOCAL + FRESH + AUTHENTIC

Since 1876, our merchants, farmers and makers have loyally served the community and its visitors.

DOWNTOWN HISTORY

Before 1876, the location of the original North Market was the city's public cemetery; "The North Graveyard." This public space at 29 Spruce Street became the North Market. The North Market was the second of four public markets built throughout the city (North, East, West and Central) and is the only remaining public market.

The Central Market, built in 1850 at Town and Fourth Streets as a combination City Hall and public market, was torn down in 1966 to make way for urban renewal and today is the location of Columbus's Greyhound bus station. The building once housing the West Market on South Gift Street is now a Boys and Girls Club. The East Market at Mt. Vernon and Miami Avenues was destroyed by fire in 1947.

In 1948, almost one year to the day of the fire at the East Market, the same tragedy struck the North Market (or North End Market as it was then called). The City of Columbus decided not to rebuild the market but merchants quickly pooled their funds to purchase a war surplus Quonset hut to house North Market. Though the merchants bought the building, the city retained ownership of the Market property.

The vitality of the Market began to wane post World War II as population shifted from the city to the suburbs and the development of supermarkets. The Market was operating on a month-to-month lease with the city. The future was far from secure.

During the 1980's a national, growing recognition of public markets emerged. This enabled Columbus residents to rediscover their market. That idea, along with the fear that the city would tear down the Market to develop a parking lot for the planned Greater Columbus Convention Center, drove the creation of the North Market Development Authority (NMDA). This not-for-profit group of shoppers and merchants was established to "preserve and promote the traditional and cultural aspects of the historic North Market."

In 1988, the NMDA led the Market's recovery by negotiating a long-term lease with the city, effectively eliminating the threat of demolition. In 1989, the NMDA assumed daily operations of the market.

The initial NMDA staff of a Market Master and Executive Director, plus volunteer board members, focused on the possibility of rehabilitating the Quonset hut. Physically bursting at the seams and on its last legs, however, the building was financially impractical to renovate.

The NMDA spearheaded a capital campaign to finance renovations to a nearby historic warehouse building. The Market's new home would be 60 percent larger than the Quonset hut with room for new merchants. After raising \$5 million, the NMDA began construction in January 1995. In November 1995, the new North Market opened with 25 merchants.

In 2016, the City of Columbus and North Market created a plan to solidify North Market in perpetuity by developing the property's surface parking lot. The City launched a RFP process to find the right developer for the project. The North Market Mixed-Use Development Project moved forward after the RFP process yielded development partners The Wood Companies and Schiff Capital Group. Rockbridge Capital and Edwards Companies were later added to the development team. Groundbreaking on the innovative project is slated for 2022.

HOW BRIDGE PARK CAME TO BE

In 2019, in partnership with developer Crawford Hoying, the North Market announced the building of a new North Market at the Bridge Park community in Dublin, Ohio. A brand new not-for-profit group, the Ohio Public Market Authority (OPMA), was created to encapsulate the market's growth to once again bring a system of public markets to central Ohio.

North Market Bridge Park officially opened for business in November 2020 with a limited preview: four initial merchants. The remaining merchants continued to open one-by-one as they completed construction over the course of the next 12 months. By the time the brand new public market celebrated its first anniversary, it was nearly at capacity with seventeen merchants in operation.

THE MARKETS TODAY

Despite the challenges of enduring a global pandemic, the two markets are now thriving. Today, NMDA and OPMA operate two distinct destinations that serve over two million guests each year, are consistently ranked as top public markets in the country and continue their missions to provide an authentic Central Ohio experience that highlights the diversity and vibrancy of our community, both economically and culturally by promoting and incubating "best-in-class" local, independent businesses.

Rick Harrison Wolfe, Executive Director + CEO
North Market Development Authority
Ohio Public Market Authority