

# Critiques of Three Completed Library Buildings

THE FOLLOWING PAPERS by Dr. McGaw, Mr. Adams, and Dr. Tate were presented at the meeting of the ACRL Buildings Committee, January 31, 1952. Dr. Muller has written an introduction to these papers.

By ROBERT H. MULLER

## Introduction

*Dr. Muller is director of libraries, Southern Illinois University.*

IN PLANNING A NEW library building, much can be learned from the experiences of those occupying other library buildings. If librarians are satisfied with certain features in a building, they are under professional obligation to communicate their satisfactions; if they are dissatisfied, they are under even greater obligation to warn their colleagues and architects not to make the same mistakes. Without such communication, library building design will show little progress over the years. Librarians and architects must try to resist the tendency to copy traditional patterns as well as patterns that depart from tradition until they have had an opportunity to determine as objectively as possible whether the particular pattern selected has met with satisfaction in the crucible of day-to-day operations and long-range requirements.

The greatest obstacle to frank communication concerning library building design is the very human tendency to hide one's mistakes. Librarians and architects can hardly be blamed for their reluctance to publicize shortcomings in planning since their professional reputation might be affected. It is, therefore, preferable to have library buildings evaluated by those who did not have a major share in the planning of the building under review.

The three library buildings of institutions of higher education reviewed on the following pages meet this requirement to a considerable extent. Although the critiques were written by the librarians now occupying the respective buildings, the authors did not participate in all the stages of planning. At

M. I. T., the "program" had already been drafted when the present Director, Vernon D. Tate, was brought into the picture; at the Woman's College Library of the University of North Carolina, Librarian Charles M. Adams was consulted after the design of the exterior had been settled; at the University of Houston, Librarian Howard F. McGaw was not appointed until the library building was practically finished. To be sure, a completely objective evaluation would require a team of disinterested observers brought in from the outside for a sufficient length of time, who would not be afraid to step on anyone's toes and would not feel under any obligation whatsoever to protect personal or institutional reputations.

Despite their personal and institutional involvements, the authors have achieved a remarkable degree of objectivity and frankness and have formulated their recommendations in clear-cut fashion for the benefit of other institutions of higher education.

Two of the buildings were completed in 1950 and one (the University of Houston Library) in 1951. The cost of construction plus equipment ranged from about \$1,200,000 to about \$3,500,00 per building. Two buildings are of modular design, providing a high measure of horizontal flexibility. Contemporary exteriors and modern air-conditioning characterize M. I. T. and the University of Houston, whereas the North Carolina Woman's College followed the Georgian style of architecture and did not provide for cooling and dehumidifying of air.

The institutions selected for review represent a variety of institutional patterns. The University of Houston is a young municipally controlled university of large enroll-

ment, including many graduate students; its present book stock is relatively small, and the library system is highly centralized. M. I. T. is a privately controlled institution for education in the sciences and engineering, with a very high proportion of graduate students; the library system is decentralized, and the new building is largely devoted to the humanities and a part of the social sciences, as well as facilities for research and library administration. The North Carolina Woman's College is a state-supported college, largely for undergraduate education of women. Each institution planned a library for its particular needs, which would indicate that no one library building pattern fits all institutions equally well.

The degree to which new library buildings have proved satisfactory in practice has occasionally been reported on in the past. Such reports were made, for instance, for the library buildings of the University of Colorado,<sup>1</sup> St. Bonaventure College,<sup>2</sup> Columbia University,<sup>3</sup> Harvard's Lamont Library,<sup>4</sup> Princeton University,<sup>5</sup> and for a group of 35 college library buildings built between 1937 and 1947.<sup>6</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Ellsworth, Ralph E. "Colorado University's Divisional Reading Room Plan: Description and Evaluation," *College and Research Libraries* 2:103-109, March, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> Herscher, Irenaeus. "Friedsam Memorial Library," *Library Journal* 70:22-23, Jan. 1, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> Cooperative Committee on Library Building Plans. *The Second Princeton Conference*, June 12-14, 1946, p. 68-72.

<sup>4</sup> Cooperative Committee on Library Building Plans. *The Michigan Conference*, December 2 & 3, 1949, p. 44-47.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9-11.  
<sup>6</sup> Muller, Robert H. "College Library Buildings Self-Appraised," *College and Research Libraries*, 9:221-226, July 1948.

Buildings Committee of the Association of College and Reference Libraries sponsored a meeting on July 19, 1950 at the Cleveland Conference of the American Library Association, at which the library buildings of Illinois State Normal University, Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, Denison University, and Southeast Missouri State College were critically discussed, but the proceedings were not published; one of the speakers at that meeting, who shall remain anonymous, expressed the following view: "I do not know how others who participated in the panel feel about having a printed report of the minutes. It seems to me that in such discussions we are likely to share with fellow-librarians details of construction or operating faults that it would be unwise to publicize in print, and it might be better to have no publication of the report of the meeting."

At the 1951 Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association, the ACRL Buildings Committee sponsored an open discussion on the library buildings of the North Dakota Agricultural College and Bradley University, the proceedings of which were also not published, largely because publishing facilities were not available.

It was fortunate that the three speakers at the open meeting of the ACRL Buildings Committee during the 1952 ALA Midwinter Conference in Chicago permitted publication of their critiques. Their generosity and cooperation has made this publication possible. It is hoped that other librarians will profit from their frankness.

By HOWARD F. MCGAW

## The M. D. Anderson Memorial Library

*Dr. McGaw is director of libraries, University of Houston.*

**N**O MATTER WHAT THE COST of a library building, no matter how many hours have gone into its planning, no matter how thorough and conscientious the building committee and the architects, the chances are that the completed structure will have faults—most of them minor, but some of them seri-

ous. No exception to the above statement can be made in the case of our new library at the University of Houston.<sup>1</sup> We moved into this building during the Christmas holidays of 1950, and were so relieved at abandoning the old quarters—which were less than a fourth the size of the new ones (to say nothing of their lack of efficiency and attractiveness)—

<sup>1</sup> See pages 134-5 for type of building, statistical data, etc., and floor plans.

that we were certainly in no mood to be critical. But just as in the case of the proud new homeowner who, after having lived in the dream house for a year or so, discovers that this and that should have been done differently, so our staff, as the glamour months passed by, gradually came face to face with certain shortcomings.<sup>2</sup>

Lest there be any misunderstanding, we want everyone to know what a splendid building we have, and how proud we are of it, but we believe that an obligation to the library profession, and to architects of library buildings, compels us to be perfectly frank and to point out what we would do should the fanciful opportunity be afforded us of redesigning our facilities. You will not accuse us, then, of being unappreciative of the generosity of our donors and of our administration, but rather you will be grateful, we trust, that in planning your own new building you will be able to profit from our experience.

#### *Special Facilities*

1. On the left side of the main entrance-way there is a ramp for the use of wheelchair borrowers. A waist-high wall hides the ramp from view and gives a balanced effect to the front of the building. With as many crippled G.I.'s as are likely to be on university campuses for some time to come, other institutions would do well to consider the incorporation of such a facility in their new buildings.

Two mistakes that others can avoid, but which were somehow made in our case, are, first, designing some of the doors of such width that they will not accommodate the larger wheelchairs; and, second, failing to provide a ramp at the loading dock—not for wheelchair patrons but for the use of the audio-visual staff, who need to cart their various pieces of equipment to different parts of the campus and back again.

2. Book-return chutes for use when the library is closed were not provided for in our building. We really should have two of them: one at the front entrance and the other at the side of the building near the library parking lot. In the latter case the student, if he is in his car, and if he needs only to return

his books, can drive into a special area of the parking lot and, without getting out of his car, deposit his books in the chute. It would now be too expensive for us to arrange for a book-return chute in the front of the building since this was not planned for from the beginning, but one near our loading dock can be built at relatively little cost—a gravity-type chute which could be made to enter the building simply by the removal of a pane of glass from a window on the ground floor, and which would terminate not far from the electric elevator and thus connect with the loan desk on the main floor.

3. We would also recommend a driveway approach to one of the entrances to the building so that in rainy weather library users could be dropped off or picked up beneath the shelter of an overhanging roof. The lack, in our building, of a public passageway from the loading dock into the library is a definite drawback.

4. Within a few steps of the loan desk we have an elevator and a dumb-waiter. Our experience (in an open-stack library) shows that the dumb-waiter is never used except for only a few books (a half dozen or less) at a time, the elevator being able to accommodate our needs for all other purposes. If a dumb-waiter is to be used, we would recommend one of a size large enough to hold a book truck. (Our 250-pound capacity book lift is sufficiently spacious for this purpose but since the shaft openings are at waist level rather than at floor level, book trucks cannot be used.) If this type cannot be afforded, we would recommend spending only as much money as might be required for the installation of a 25-pound capacity book lift (if such can be found on the market).

5. Of the 119 carrels in the library, twenty-four are of the enclosed type. A much larger proportion would have been desirable. The waiting list is long and the turnover of holders is low. On the other hand, the number of the open-type carrels is more than sufficient to supply the demand.

6. One of the accommodations of our new building which is very popular with students is a room on the main floor which has been equipped with six typewriters. Any student may use one of these machines simply by signing up for it at the loan desk. It would be more desirable, however, if one or two small rooms were available for this purpose

<sup>2</sup> Fortunately for me, my connection with the University of Houston dates only from September of 1950, by which time the library building was practically finished; therefore I was unable to contribute my share of the mistakes.

on each floor. The library would not necessarily have to furnish the typewriters, and the rooms need not be soundproof.

7. Just off the student lounge on the ground floor we have five public telephone booths; but for a month or two after we moved into the building there were no such facilities on the other floors. Then we installed a portable booth on the third floor—a location which provides much more convenient service to students on the top two floors.

#### *Air-Conditioning System and Lighting*

8. As long as the library's air-conditioning system is working satisfactorily, the General Reference Room and the Auditorium are comfortable enough. But when the system gets out of adjustment, the people who have to use these rooms wish that all the windows were not of the permanently closed type. Our recommendation, then, is that unless you can be given a guarantee of complete satisfaction with the air-conditioning system in your new building, specify the type of windows that can be opened.

9. The best air-conditioning system cannot operate very effectively if too many handicaps must be overcome. Until a few months ago there were two 500-watt incandescent light bulbs in the ceiling fixtures of my office, and at times the room would get so warm that I would not only have to shed my coat but turn on an electric fan. The situation was remedied by replacing the 1000 watts of incandescent lighting with 320 watts of fluorescent lighting. The portable fan is no longer needed, and the illumination is quite sufficient.

Most of the building is equipped with incandescent lighting, the exceptions being the General Reference Room, the foyers, the Bibliography Room, and the Loan Desk area. From the point of view of both comfort and economy, we would favor 100 per cent fluorescent lighting.

#### *Relationships*

10. When the auditorium and the Audio-Visual Center were being planned, one thing was overlooked, or its importance was minimized, and the proper relationship between the two facilities seems to have been reversed. In the first instance, I refer to the lack of a dressing room, which is badly needed when

the auditorium is used for dramatic performances, etc. (One of the Audio-Visual Center rooms is used for this purpose—an arrangement which is quite unsatisfactory from the point of view of inventory control.) In the second place, the auditorium should have been turned around, so as to place the projection room, and not the stage, in juxtaposition to the Audio-Visual Center.

11. The library's General Reference Room has one large set of doors, and these doors open into the lobby, at the other end of which are the doors of the auditorium. This arrangement, from the aesthetic point of view, provides an attractive, balanced effect. But from the functional point of view it would have been more desirable had the exit from the General Reference Room been placed opposite the loan desk. Then, at times when the reference librarian is away from her desk, the exit could be supervised by the Circulation Department.

12. Our Bibliography Room, which houses the public card catalog, periodical indexes, etc., is just behind the loan desk—the two areas being walled off and separated by a door. When we first moved into the building it was necessary for us to keep the door open at all times; otherwise students in the Bibliography Room could not, without taking a number of extra steps, get assistance from staff members in the Circulation Department. By cutting the door in half and mounting a shelf atop the bottom half, thus forming a Dutch door, we were able to keep students out of the staff area, but still provide convenient bibliographical service. (Incidentally, the top half of the door, since it would have served no purpose in our case, was not re-hung; the bottom half is all we need.)

13. On the roof, just outside two of our fourth-floor seminar rooms, there are exhaust vents from the air-conditioning system which are so noisy that an instructor and his students cannot carry on a discussion if the windows are opened. The location of these facilities in respect to each other should be taken into account.

#### *Space*

14. The fact that our Technical Services Division is already beginning to feel crowded points to the necessity for providing the members of this division with very generous space assignments. Fortunately, in our case, the

modular-type construction of the building will permit the Technical Services Division to expand into the present quarters of the Business Administration Library, at no more expense than cutting through a couple of inches of plaster in order to form one or two passageways. This, of course, will involve shifting the Business Administration books to another part of the library, but such is the flexibility of the building's arrangement that no serious problem is presented.

15. In view of the fact that instructional departments will be expected to make greater and greater use of audio-visual facilities, we would urge that estimates of space requirements for the university's audio-visual program be figured with this trend in mind. A shortcoming of our own new building is that the Audio-Visual Center is inadequately provided for.

16. When we moved into our new quarters, we spread out all over the building. That we should do so was the intention from the beginning, but "hindsight" has suggested that we might have taken over the first three floors only, reserving the top floor for future expansion. This kind of arrangement would entail considerable shifting of books during the expansion process, but such inconvenience would be offset by the fact that perhaps for several years no supervision or maintenance would need to be provided for on the top floor, and both staff members and library users would be spared a countless number of extra steps.

### *Safety*

17. In order to comply with fire regulations, three of the doors at the rear of the library building must be kept unlocked from the inside. On each of these doors we arranged for the stenciling of a conspicuous sign, reading "FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY." Despite the sign, however, we were bothered quite often by students who left the building through these doors. After putting up with this for a few weeks we stenciled beneath the first sign a still more conspicuous one, which reads: "WARNING! THIS DOOR IS CONNECTED WITH ALARM SYSTEM" (the opening of any one of the three doors sets off a buzzer near the loan desk; and a light flashes on to indicate which of the three doors has been opened). But we find that even this arrangement does not stop

some students. We are planning, therefore, to install on each door a lock-releasing mechanism inside a little box the front panel of which (made of glass) must be broken before the mechanism can be reached.

18. Inspections by fire marshals doubtless vary in strictness from city to city and state to state, but in our case we were told that the draperies in the auditorium (which is classed as a public assembly hall since outsiders frequently use it) had to be fire-proofed. We recommend, therefore, that this situation be investigated before you purchase your draperies.

19. Since stepping off a loading dock could possibly result in a broken leg, or even a broken neck, and since it is not inconceivable that sometime, should proper precautions not be taken, somebody might have this experience, we ordered a gate made. Having to open and close it is a nuisance, of course, for the janitor and the delivery men, but better have the nuisance than run the risk of just one serious accident.

### *Miscellaneous*

20. In the stone border around the top of the building there are carved the surnames of sixty famous men-of-letters—names that are representative of all literary periods and all nationalities. Since the names do not appear in alphabetical order, and since to check on the possible omission of a favorite author would necessitate a trip around three sides of the building, it is highly unlikely that anyone will ever take the trouble to compare this group of names with a selection of his own choosing. But one day we were inspired to copy the names from the border and to alphabetize them, with the idea of having the list published in the campus weekly. It was then that we noticed that such eminent writers as Emerson, Balzac, Milton, Dostoevski, and Tolstoi had somehow been overlooked. In view of the inclusion of characters as little known as Anacreon and Camoens, and as undeserving of pre-eminent rank (by comparison with Emerson, Milton, etc.) as Longfellow and Wilson,<sup>1</sup> the omissions are evidence that more care needs to be exercised in compiling such a list.

21. Some of our staff members have indicated that the asphalt tile in the service

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish author, best known by his pseudonym, "Christopher North."

areas offers too little resiliency for comfort. Considerable strain would have been avoided for these people, who must be on their feet so much of the time, had cork, rubber tile, or some other covering been used. Rubber tile is used in the lobby, Bibliography Room, General Reference Room, and on the patrons' side of the loan desk, but not on the staff side of the desk, nor in the Technical Services Division, etc.

22. Even the choice of equipment in the restrooms is a matter on which the librarian should be consulted. For one thing, he should definitely specify for the toilets a nickel-plated or similar-type tissue dispenser. A dispenser on which it is possible to draw or scratch will inevitably invite pornographic decoration. Only a few of the men students on each campus are responsible for this type of "art," but if their creativeness can be curbed by the presence in the restrooms of booths and hardware with only non-markable surfaces, the library staff and the institution's administration will be spared needless embarrassment, and the maintenance department needless trouble. We are happy to report that our own facilities must have been selected by a person or committee who had the above considerations in mind.

Two other articles of equipment in the restroom may be considered here: the faucets and the soap dispensers. Our experience, in other buildings, with the spring-release, push-type faucet has not been satisfactory. Either

the water is released in such a trickle as to yield an altogether insufficient amount; or it gushes out all over one's sleeves. We are fortunate in having the good old-fashioned conventional type here.

Lastly, the soap dispenser. Our preference, after experimenting with other styles, is for the type which was installed here: liquid soap in a glass bowl, releasable by a plunger. The obvious advantage is that the source of supply is visible. If one container is seen to be empty, a person can easily step to the next one. Contrast this with the situation where the container is within view but is opaque, or where the container is behind a wall. Preference for the liquid-type rather than the lather-type soap is based on our experience of almost invariably obtaining a sufficient amount of the former with the expenditure of less effort than is required to obtain an insufficient amount of the latter.

The decisions made here are rather inconsequential when compared with those called for by the hundreds of weighty and complex problems confronting a building committee, but it is the attention given to just such details that can often make the difference between a library which students like to use, and one which they tend to avoid.

Again let us emphasize the point that our building has all of the fine features and the special accommodations one would expect to find in a modern library.

#### STATISTICAL DATA AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Four-story T-shaped building. Modular construction.<sup>1</sup> Air-conditioned throughout. Gift of the M. D. Anderson Foundation.

Construction begun, 1949; completed, 1951.

Cost of building (including equipment): \$1,500,000.

Square footage (excluding areaways and utilities tunnel): 92,700 sq. ft.

Dimensions:

Over all: 213 feet wide by 191 feet deep;

Central section: 113 feet wide by 176 feet deep;

North wing (Auditorium): 52 feet wide by 77 feet deep;

South wing (General Reference and Reading Room): 52 feet wide by 110 feet deep.

Present book capacity (estimating 100 volumes for every running foot of double-faced range): approximately 150,000 volumes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The modular unit is 4' 5" square (approximately 19½ sq. ft.); the typical bay contains 20 units, the entire area measuring 17' 8" by 22' 1" from column centers. Ceiling heights, except in the auditorium, general reading room, and foyer, are 8'.

<sup>2</sup> This low figure is accounted for by the fact that the University of Houston was founded only eighteen years ago. By 1967, when the enrolment is expected to reach 30,000, we will doubtless have outgrown our present quarters.

Present audio-visual-aids capacity:

1,008 motion-picture films;

720 filmstrips;

18,720 slides;

4,620 phonograph records.

Present seating capacity (excluding staff areas, offices, and law-school classrooms): 1,540.

Construction materials:

Exterior: Cordova shell limestone and Tennessee marble;

Interior: Oak, walnut, leather, fabric, Missouri marble, and plaster; rubber- and asphalt-tile floors.

Special facilities: Coat room; first-aid room; student lounge; staff lounge and kitchenette; typing room; sound-proof preview room; two sound-proof listening rooms for recordings; eight microfilm booths; eleven seminar rooms; 119 carrels (including twenty-four of the enclosed type); acoustically-treated auditorium for lectures, films, etc., equipped with 225 upholstered chairs with collapsible tablet arms.

A 20-page, illustrated brochure, prepared at the time of the formal dedication of the building, is available through interlibrary loan arrangements.

By CHARLES M. ADAMS

## The Woman's College Library The University of North Carolina

*Mr. Adams is librarian, Woman's College, University of North Carolina, Greensboro.*

THE NEW LIBRARY BUILDING at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina was completed in the summer of 1950. The following comments are a composite commentary of opinions and reactions of faculty, particularly present and former Faculty Library Committee members, and of members of the Library Staff on the new library building based on a little over a year and a half of use.

The acceptance of a Georgian style of architecture compatible with one of the oldest dormitories which is adjacent, was early established and agreed on by the architect and the Trustee's Committee. The librarian came into the picture with respect to matters relating to organization of space within the building for working purposes. The alignment of trustees and administration advising on the exterior materials and design with the architect and the librarian with the interior

working spaces does not appear to be uncommon. Walter Gropius, a father of contemporary architecture and Chairman of the School of Architecture at Harvard, was invited by a group of the faculty to visit the campus before the final drawings were completed and deliver a lecture on architecture. He warned us against the acceptance of this type of alignment in our planning, saying the exterior and interior must be developed together and be integrated. But he also pointed out that no architect can advance too rapidly in changes of architectural form beyond the acceptance of the majority in a community. One top administrator of the University on his first trip through the completed building (before any furniture was installed) commented that he never would have approved of the building if he had realized it was to have been so "modern" on the interior.

The circular columned entrance of the library in white Georgia marble, the heavy brass doors, the imported Italian marble on the walls of the vestibule with brass trimming and stair-

rails, and the oak paneling of the lobby are much admired, and attracts many visitors. Behind this front the architect and the library staff were permitted an almost free hand to plan as functional an interior as possible (with the one important exception of air conditioning to be mentioned later).

The need for reading room and work spaces was more important than book storage. The idea that this space should be as flexible as possible to take care of changing demands in library service was also a prime consideration, and experience had taught us that we should have a building which should be easily expandable. These considerations led us to study very carefully the possibilities of modular design. In addition, bringing the ceiling heights down, three floors could be obtained in the same cubic space that would have allowed only two in the more traditional type of construction although the building would not be so efficient for book storage as for work and reading.

The Trustees Building Committee, the Administration and especially the architect would not listen to the introduction of air conditioning into the building. Up to that time no State building in North Carolina had air conditioning and it was still looked on as a fad and unnecessary luxury. Backed by the advice I received at various library building conferences, I did convince our building committee and the architect (although apparently not too well) that fresh air at least by some means other than by windows was a necessity for reading areas with low ceilings. Last summer, one of the hottest on record, we tested the building for summer heat. Despite good roof insulation, and the use of Koolshade screening on the western exposure, the building was disagreeably hot and stuffy. The fresh air or forced-air system installed did not cool the building at all in the evenings, and it usually cools down in the Carolina Piedmont every evening. Turning on the system at six in the morning when it was cool and fresh outside, had little effect on the building by opening time. There are, moreover, complaints during these winter months of drafts. There is fresh air for the reading rooms, but the vestibule and lobbies are very poorly ventilated, and the listening rooms are particularly uncomfortable in summer. The

forced air ventilating system has definitely not proved successful for us.

On the inside curve of the front entrance, in the space that would traditionally have niches with statues, two outside display cases have been built in which have proved very effective. We also had cases built in the Vestibule and the Lobby. The cases are rather formal and require considerable ingenuity to adapt to the type of material in the library. I have found little in library literature on exhibition equipment to help the librarian or the architect in planning these areas or facilities for a college library. The old museum type of case for exhibition of rare books is about all that is readily available. The problem of display and exhibition facilities for college libraries should receive more study. It would pay off not only in increased interest in the library and its collection but would also be a real saving in hours of time of some staff member struggling to display effectively books in cases designed to guard trophies.

An exhibition work room was provided which is much appreciated by the staff. There is storage space there for paper, the "Mitten" letters we use, and other miscellaneous materials helpful in exhibition work. There is a drawing board for lettering, running water for various purposes, and a long counter for spreading out materials. The staff room has proved a little small. The adjacent seminar room is available for parties but during inter-session periods and during the summer months, when the college cafeteria is not open, most of the staff members bring their own lunches and it gets a bit crowded. The secondary office and work room for the librarian, which came somewhat by accident into the plans, is a real convenience and a blessing when one wishes to escape from constant interruptions which a place so near the main lobby affords. I much prefer this front location. Faculty feel much freer in dropping in to see me than when I was guarded in the back of the old building by a couple of other offices.

The hard terrazzo floors have not proved so noisy as expected nor so slippery. The staff has found them somewhat tiring, but most of us have changed our footwear to conform to the condition. A rubber mat has



been rolled out behind the Loan Desk where the staff members on duty are continuously on their feet. No faculty or students have complained of the floors. The terrazzo floors are attractive and very easy to maintain although we would have preferred the less expensive rubber tile.

Rather than the usual complaints on the lighting we have received many compliments. Except for an occasional flickering of tubes just before they go out, the fluorescent lights are liked. The Building and Grounds Department weeps that the added light bill for the library is nearly breaking them, but they seem to forget we have a building three to four times as large as the old one to light.

The seminar rooms are much liked by the faculty and we have been criticized only for not having more. Our teachers enjoy holding classes in the library, informally around a table where smoking is permitted and references to books can be made quickly or brought to class. In spite of the poor ventilation the listening rooms are very popular for music recordings, even though extensive facilities are available in our Music School. We have found the listening machines with earphones for language and other diction recordings in the Reserve Reading Room and in the General Reading Room are really disturbing to nearby readers. If this type of service grows, a separate area for listening with earphones will be needed.

The large lecture hall located in the basement has been successful. It has attracted to the library a type of community interest, meeting the concept of recognition as a center of intellectual activity aimed at by the Faculty Library Committee. The hall has been found useful for speech classes, departmental movies, visiting lecturers too academic to attract sufficient audience to fill the College Auditorium seating 3,000 or so. The lecture hall seats 372, and it could have been just a bit larger.

I did not get around to checking with the architect on light switches nor did he give me a chance until after the bids were let and construction commenced. A few changes were allowed, which helped some, but many small inconveniences could have been avoided with only a few hours of careful checking before the detailed blueprints of the electric

wiring were completed.

Neither I myself nor the architect knew enough about the installation of pneumatic tubes. I have found little literature on the subject to help nor did the salesmen who were available in our area give really satisfactory advice. It was only by a series of fortunate circumstances and willing workmen (plus a little extra money) that we did *not* have installed a rather unsightly and inconvenient piece of equipment. Our system is effectively concealed now, is working, and does save much running. I have seen many libraries with pneumatic tubes and other expensive and similar equipment standing out like sore thumbs around Loan Desks and often no longer even in use. It would be helpful if some librarian, who is mechanically minded and aesthetically sensitive, would make a study of the technical problems of pneumatic tubes, book conveyors and such equipment in libraries and their efficiency.

These and other details which did not get into the original plans, I feel result, in part, from a lack of coordination at the blueprint stage between plans for the physical building and the furnishings, equipment and plans for service. Our architect convinced the administration that the State would save itself five per cent in architect fees by just allowing the librarian to lay out and write up specifications for the furniture and equipment. Some library architects realize the importance of coordinating the interior furnishings and equipment with the original plans, but even then they have often called in outside decorators who have had little or no experience in furnishing libraries. The problems of furnishing a library, I feel, require as elaborate professional services as are needed to design a building, and the two professional groups need to work closely with the librarian in the early stages of planning. Although there is abundant literature for librarians and architects on the planning and building of libraries, there seems to be little to guide one in layouts of furniture and on interiors.

The area back of the building was planned for expansion. It is now used for parking. There is, however, a constant criticism, chiefly from faculty, of the necessity of having to walk around to the front of the building to enter. We purposely made only one public

entrance, and, from an administrative view, we still hold to the single entrance. When the landscaping is completed and the new Student Union finished, the side entrance by the lecture hall, leading up through the ground floor to the main entrance, will be of some help.

Some people have missed the easy approach of driving up to the front of the library and dropping off a book or picking up a new one. Some sort of a drive-in service such as large banks and others have adopted might be a feature to be considered in another building or in the addition which is to extend to the rear almost to the street.

The Receiving Room and the Loading Platform were placed on the north side of the building because of the slope of the land in that direction. These areas would have been better located under the Order Department where the land was higher, and after seeing the big bulldozers move most of the earth behind the library for the parking lot, I think the needed excavation and leveling could easily have been done to place these rooms in that more favorable location. The janitors' rooms can also be a bit too noisy (we have had to forbid a radio in these quarters already) and we rather wish they had been placed in such a way as not to be too close to stack areas now used extensively for studying. Trucks arriving, unpacking, etc. are noisy even with the door closed.

The Loan Desk was planned with the idea that professional staff should be present at all times, if possible. It was also hoped that some logical division of work could be organized, so that the professional staff member on duty would not be burdened with routines but free to advise and help students with their

problems. A regular low desk was placed in the center of the Loan Desk counter with space left on one side so that the librarian could easily leave for the Public Catalog, Reference Department, or take a student back into the stacks to help her. The open space in the counter is very useful. The low desk, however, is not so much used as planned although it does break the formality of a long counter. The arrangement of charging files behind the Loan Desk on rolling units has not solved the problem of efficient division of labor. Most of the time the staff members follow through all routines as usual.

The library is controllable, when completely open, at two desks—the Loan Desk on the first floor and the Reserve Desk in the lobby on the second. During summer session, when we have comparatively few students or during August, the second floor front entrance may be locked and access can be made when necessary through the main lobby and by the inside stairway. This arrangement makes it possible for us to maintain only one control desk during periods when the library is in little use.

A test on the flexibility of the building is to come within the next few years. The faculty has approved the study of the curriculum changes needed to begin a General Education program. All the General Education experts who have been visiting the campus this past year have indicated that the services and uses of the library under such programs have more than doubled at their institutions. I think the present building could be reorganized along lines of Divisional Reading Rooms, open stacks could be easily arranged, or other changes made that such programs imply.

#### STATISTICAL DATA AND GENERAL INFORMATION

##### *The Woman's College Library*

Three-and-a-half story building. Modular construction (18' x 18'). Forced air ventilation. Modified Georgian exterior, faced with brick and trimmed with marble. Fluorescent lighting.

Construction begun, 1948; completed, 1950.

Costs: General construction:	\$1,099,116.63		
Stacks	37,360.00		
Equipment	95,641.00		
	<hr/>	Total:	\$1,232,118.18

Ceiling heights: Ground floor	8'7"	Dimensions: Overall 218' x 128' "	
First floor	9'6"	Gross Area: 99,330 sq. ft.; net	
Second floor	8'7"	area 85,939 sq. ft.	
Third floor	8'	Total Volume: 1,107,993 cu. ft.	

Present seating: Reading rooms, stacks and studies	798	
Seminars	106	
Lecture Hall	472	Total 1,276

(excluding offices and staff room)

Stack areas: app. 200,000 volume capacity (with space for added stacks)

Reading Rooms: 30,000 volumes on open shelves

Special facilities: Lecture Hall; sound proof audio-visual seminar and two listening rooms; exhibition work room; 2 seminars; 6 faculty studies; pneumatic tube system; outside covered receiving platform; staff room and kitchenette; outside exhibition cases in portico.

References: *Library Journal*, Dec. 15, 1948, p. 1772-4; *The Pioneer*, Sept.-Oct., 1950, illus.

By VERNON D. TATE

## Charles Hayden Memorial Library

*Dr. Tate is director of libraries, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

THE PATH from blueprint to building is thorny, rocky and not without pitfalls; yet it can be not precisely like but akin to the fabled primrose path, a pleasant introduction to an entirely new world of experience. I have sometimes said in the past that a man could lead a long and wicked life, die, and be sentenced to build a library.

My predecessor as Director of Libraries, Dean Burchard, drafted a "Program for a New Library Building at Massachusetts Institute of Technology" which could well serve, indeed has served, as a model for many kindred studies. The excellent services of the Cooperative Committee on Library Building plans were fully utilized and greatly appreciated. The result was a set of plans for a new building.

In an age of standardization, large libraries remain strongly individualistic. Each is tailored to the needs of a particular group of users. M.I.T., is primarily an engineering,

technical and scientific school with well recognized obligations in the humanities. Its interests as a private educational corporation are in undergraduate and graduate instruction and in research. The library tradition has evolved through the years to include a central library which combines the functions of budget, personnel, book purchase and processing, central reference and circulation and the main book collection and a series of branch libraries.

In planning the new library the branch library system was reaffirmed, and in order to provide suitable and badly needed facilities for the humanities, the building was designed to house the Central, the Economics and Industrial Relations, and the English and History Libraries. In addition certain special facilities were provided, such as a gallery for exhibitions, a music lounge, six small listening rooms seating from four to six and a large seminar room seating 20, housing for the Dard Hunter Museum of handmade paper and early printing, a small projection room seating 50, a laboratory for work in

microfilming and documentation, a room for rare books, and a library lounge complete with kitchen where groups of up to 150 people can meet in pleasant surroundings.

These together with all of the other factors always present in the construction of a large building formed the basic ingredients with which the architect and the building contractors on the one hand and the library and Institute on the other began to work.

The result was a separate building connected by a glass corridor with the main Institute group built in the form of a hollow square, that is to say around a central courtyard, with the main stack at basement level passing entirely beneath the courtyard. This single basement stack is deceptively large and is the full equivalent of a regular four story stack spread out on a single floor. At its south end, the stack rises four levels to serve two floors and two mezzanines. At ground level and above, the library may be considered as four buildings connected at the corners. The west wing, a single high story, contains the main entrance and the gallery; the north wing which is library only on the ground floor carries three additional floors of offices for the Humanities Faculty. The English and History Library (undergraduate) with some recreational reading collections occupies the north wing. The east wing at the ground floor houses the music lounge, with the processing area on the second floor, and next above on the third the library lounge and three seminar rooms. The south wing with magnificent windows and an unequalled view of the Boston skyline across the Charles houses, on the ground floor, the Economics and Industrial Relations Library,<sup>1</sup> a map room, studies and work spaces. The second floor south wing is the real heart of the library with the Central circulation, catalog, reference, processing and other facilities for research and advanced study. The library administration is housed here and on the floor and mezzanine open and closed stack areas house important reference tools, collections, and facilities. A row of 15 individual short term study rooms for visiting professors, and faculty, are located on the second floor mezzanine. This

<sup>1</sup>The Dewey Library of Industrial Management has been moved to the newly acquired Sloan building and the space it formerly occupied now houses the Science Library.

rapid fire survey cannot do even a tithe of justice to a building that truly must be seen to be appreciated. After about two years of experience, certain definite advantages, not all of which were fully foreseen, have emerged.

1. The building wears well. Despite some small matters of leaks here and there, now fully corrected, the building has developed no major structural faults or deficiencies.
2. The concept of large open spaces with freedom of view and of movement comprise an advantage that can only be appreciated with use. There is no hampering or constriction of movement, no hemming in of person, no jostle and without a single glaring sign, SILENCE, no noise. I like to believe that this helps users of the library to think, to concentrate and to achieve . . . perhaps it does.
3. The harmonious combination of building, furniture, color schemes extending even to materials and textiles have resulted in an indefinable but real and distinctive atmosphere which we highly prize.
4. In this vein is the large use of glass throughout the building. Great panes of glass . . . the largest available in stock sizes, generated qualms about the effects of sunlight in and through large areas and even about the difficulties of cleaning an acre or two of glass. All of these qualms have been banished.
5. Air conditioning even in a New England winter is a real blessing; in summer it is a magnet for the whole campus. Freedom from dust (insured by precipitrons and the air conditioning jointly) means cleaner books. Smoking can be permitted throughout the building except in the stacks (and it could be permitted even there if it were not for the bother of ash trays) and is one of the un-library-like customs which seems to please the users . . . we did plan to provide spaces for allergic non-smokers, and have such areas but to date not one person has asked to use them.
6. The flexibility of large areas which permit alternative arrangements of furniture and other facilities has worked out well. Flexibility of the new building, however, will shortly encounter its sternest test.

7. The use of open stacks and the large amount of material that can be made available in this way to users is a decided advantage. It is true that we do lose some books . . . probably we would lose some anyway but thus far the loss figures are low enough not to be bothersome in Hayden.

8. The arrangement and juxtaposition of the processing, reference, and circulation departments and the main catalog have proved to be extremely useful not only to the library staff but of even greater importance to the users of the library.

9. The special areas have already more than repaid the time and energy, not to say the expense, devoted to their preparation. They illustrate the fact that we actually did more than build a new library building and move our collections inside—we recast and expanded the entire library system.

To be objective about a new library as about a newly born infant is to place a heavy burden on honesty and perception. There are some things about the building that could be better or have not yet realized their full purpose. In my opinion there were only two mistakes made of any magnitude in the building. One of these was a course of action adopted in the full knowledge that it had never worked in the past, and with faint hope that something would cause it to operate more satisfactorily in the new library. It was to complete a long relatively narrow library along an axis of major traffic with a door at each end. Two-ended libraries do not work, and if the fact is not sufficiently evident we can reaffirm it. No finite workable solution has yet been evolved for this vexing nuisance; yet the curious fact remains that most of the worrying is done by the library staff, not the users, for few protests have been received. Either our students are so well conditioned to study in noisy environments or are far meeker than I had ever imagined.

The second major deficiency was to fail to provide an outside egress at ground level at the foot of one of the two large stairways in the south wing. The egress was in the plans but was eliminated on the ground of "economy" over the protests of the architect and the library. In all probability the deficiency will have to be remedied sooner or later at a

cost greatly exceeding the "saving" effected in the first instance.

The same mistaken "economy" cost us one plumbing stack which is not nearly so critical but would have made a better building. We need another elevator; the shaft is in place but the machinery is not, but its utility might be debated. The advisability of placing an incinerator in a library as we have done is open to argument. Before the building was occupied, a minor fire caused smoke damage in a corridor; but there has been no trouble since, and I cannot see how it could harm the library proper. We wasted some space in stair wells, and wasted some money in putting some electric panels behind full size doors when others were neatly faired into room walls but these are minor matters. Our plain linoleum is handsome but it is expensive to maintain. Our door locks drove us nearly frantic in the installing but the fault lay with the manufacturer and has been rectified. Our outside doors are handsome but the system of securing them does not seem to be practical, and one other large pair of doors is in process of replacement.

When the building is finally occupied myriad details during the "settling down" period almost drive the new occupant to distraction. It is impossible to walk about the building without seeing and noting deficiencies, things that have not arrived, are held up, or have not been completed, minor changes that must be made and the like. One cannot see the whole only the raw newness of recently assembled parts. Slowly these begin to add up and one day suddenly comes full realization. The manifest satisfaction of the users of the library, the speed and gusto accompanying their transfer to a style of living to which they will gladly remain accustomed, is payment in full for a world of travail.

#### *Bibliography*

- The Charles Hayden Memorial Library—  
A Brief Preview, by John E. Burchard and  
Vernon D. Tate, *The Technology Review*,  
Volume 52, May 1950  
Program—Commemorating the Opening of  
the Charles Hayden Memorial Library,  
Friends of the MIT Library, Massachu-  
setts Institute of Technology  
M.I.T. Library Annual 1949, Part One—A

Chronology of Library Planning at M.I.T. 1916-1950, The Charles Hayden Memorial Library, Annual Report of the Director of Libraries for the Year 1948-49.  
 Dedicating the Charles Hayden Memorial Library—M.I.T. Library Annual 1950  
 Books in Libraries—The Librarian and the Building of a Library, by Vernon D. Tate (and) The Architect, and the University Library, by Ralph Walker

*Statistical Data:*

Cost	3.5 Million
Dimensions	218' x 189'
Lighting	Silvray
Seating	500
Ceiling	15'
Capacity	400,000 Volumes
Exterior Material	Shot-sawn Indiana Limestone

## Michigan Scholarships and Fellowships

Library Service Scholarships and Fellowships offered by the University of Michigan provide an opportunity for well qualified students enrolled in the Department of Library Science to acquire experience in one or more departments of the General Library. Awards are made to applicants who present evidence of superior academic ability and who can qualify for library assignments. ¶ Scholarships, which carry a stipend of \$1750, will be awarded to successful candidates who have had little or no library training or experience. Fellowships, worth \$2250, are granted to students who have already had formal training or considerable library experience. Payment of the stipend is made in ten monthly installments from September 30 to mid-June. Each appointment is for one academic year and may be once renewed. ¶ Scholars and Fellows may elect not more than half the number of course hours expected of full-time students in the Department, and must pay the regular University fees for these elections (six hours or less). They will be scheduled for thirty-six hours of service weekly in the General Library. Scholars and Fellows are allowed the Christmas and spring vacations scheduled in the University calendar. ¶ Applications for both Scholarships and Fellowships should be made not later than May 1. Announcement of the awards will be made about June 1. ¶ Inquiries and requests for application blanks should be directed to Samuel W. McAllister, associate director, General Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

## Evaluation of the Modular Plan

*(Continued from page 128)*

*Can the interiors of modular libraries be attractive?* The danger is monotony. This can be avoided through imaginative use of color, design of furniture, and arrangement of equipment. One can find good and bad solutions to the problem in the various modular buildings.

*What effect does a modular library have on the behavior of its users?* The testimony of librarians administering these libraries is uniformly favorable. The atmosphere is friendly and pleasant and readers respond accordingly. This tendency is encouraged by the fact that these buildings are all at-

tractively furnished and all use a very informal arrangement of furniture.

*Is the modular idea applicable to all libraries?* The danger is that librarians will assume that it is. In libraries where there is no need for flexibility, where codes do not permit, or where the predominant style of architecture clashes, and where there is no need for economy, other methods are more suitable. Artificial circulation and treatment of air is essential in most climates in a modular building and this costs money.

Furthermore, there can be no universally best way to plan a library.