

Carpenter Hall—Cornell's New Engineering Library

LAST FALL the engineering library at Cornell University moved into its new quarters in Carpenter Hall. The million-dollar library and administration building is a gift of Walter S. Carpenter of the class of 1910. Announcement of the gift was made in June 1955; plans were drawn up by the architectural firm of Perkins and Will, the contract was let in May 1956, and construction was begun that summer. In planning the building, the engineering library committee, the director of libraries, the engineering administration, and the architect worked together to develop a library which would keep pace with the rapid advance of science and technology, one which would be a center for engineering education, research, and study.

The engineering library at Cornell is a department of the university library and comes under the administration of the director of libraries. The library committee, made up of the librarian, a representative from each of the engineering schools, and the university library board member from the College of Engineering, acts in an advisory capacity. Preliminary planning was begun in 1952 when the library committee prepared a report on the space requirements and the predicted growth of the library as a separate unit. By this time the development of the projected engineering quadrangle was well under way; two buildings in this group had already been completed. It therefore seemed advisable to make a study of library needs and

location in relation to the new buildings of the college. The recommendations of this report were used as a basis for planning the present library. The recommendations stressed central location and easy accessibility for the building and suggested that the major portion of the library be on the ground floor. Space and other requirements allowing for twenty-five years growth were based on an estimated future enrollment of twenty-three hundred undergraduates and three to five hundred graduate students. As the engineering library is only one of many library facilities on the campus, a seating capacity of approximately 15 per cent of the engineering college's enrollment seemed sufficient. Planning was based on an estimated volume capacity of sixty-five thousand. This would allow for growth at the rate of twelve hundred volumes per year for twenty-five years. Because of the relatively large increase in the number of graduate students, special emphasis was given to facilities for this group. It was recommended that space be provided in the stacks for approximately sixty open graduate carrels.

Carpenter Hall stands at the entrance of Cornell's new engineering quadrangle. In architectural style it is designed to harmonize with neighboring arts campus buildings, and at the same time to serve as an introduction to the contemporary design of the new buildings on the engineering campus. The exterior construction presents an attractive combination of light grey Indiana limestone with Lenroc stone, a blue-grey native stone. This native stone also forms an integral part of the building's interior,

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for it is used as facing on lobby, reading room, and browsing library walls. Furnishings and paint complement the stonework in tones of soft blues, tans, and greens.

The building contains about fifty thousand square feet of floor area on two floors and a basement, the major portion of which is occupied by the library. Administrative offices of the College of Engineering are located along the north and east sides of the second floor. The offices of the dean and administrative staff and a conference room extend from a central reception area. A second suite of offices is assigned to various student services including admissions, scholarships, and placement. The placement area contains a large collection of company and career material, and includes individual placement interview rooms. The editorial offices of the *Cornell Engineer*, the engineering student publication, are in the basement. The building arrangement is such that traffic to the various areas is entirely separate.

The spacious main floor reading room has a seating capacity of 174 and includes large tables for problem work, individual

study desks, and numerous lounge chairs. Materials most in demand are kept in this room. The periodical indexes are immediately accessible in three sections of counter-high shelving at the front end of the reading room. These indexes are flanked by individual study desks for convenient seating. The reference collection and ten-year runs of current bound periodicals are shelved in a series of double-faced wooden stacks immediately behind the periodical indexes on the south side of the room. To the right of the entrance on the north side is the periodical alcove where current periodicals are displayed. The combination of recessed fluorescent lighting and daylight from windows on three sides, a full acoustic ceiling, rubber tile flooring, and a harmonious blending of colors with the birch furniture and interior stonework gives this room an inviting air, and yet one in which the students can enjoy concentrated study. Included in the main reading room is the card catalog of four sixty-drawer sections with a consultation table between. The circulation desk is convenient to the catalog and also allows supervision of

adjacent areas. The closed reserve section is directly behind the circulation desk and in back of this, separated by a wood panel, is the work area.

Of special note is the browsing library located near the main reading room. This room, which is handsomely furnished in the contemporary style as a lounge, is designed to provide students and faculty with an inviting collection of cultural reading in an atmosphere of leisure, quiet and dignity. It contains about fifteen hundred selected books in the fields of the humanities, social sciences, and related subjects. Books are those which might serve to stimulate interest in further reading. If this interest then leads the student on to more advanced works, these are available in libraries on other parts of the campus. The room is named for Albert W. Smith, director and dean of the Sibley College

of Mechanical Engineering from 1904-1921, who is especially remembered at Cornell for his fostering of broad cultural interests among his students.

The major part of the book collection is shelved on the three stack levels which are open to all students by direct access from both the reading room and the work area. The present stacks have a capacity of some seventy-five thousand volumes and include space for seventy-two open graduate study carrels. The stack area plus the shelving in the reading rooms provides space for 100,000 volumes. There is an adjacent unused basement expansion area which will give an ultimate capacity of over 200,000 volumes. The central area of the second floor serves as an auxiliary reading room with a seating capacity of 117. Here are shelved engineering theses, various do-

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ARL Discussions

Donald Coney, librarian, University of California, Berkeley, is the author of "The Bases of Selection: or, Reflections in a Bloodshot Eye," a paper included in the *Minutes of the Fifty-first Meeting of the Association of Research Libraries, July 12, 1958, Stanford University*. Mr. Coney raises a number of questions relating to such topics as (1) the individual library and the nation, (2) comprehensiveness *vs.* selection, (3) selection, the orphan function, (4) the springs of decision (offers, subject interest, library image, ideal collection, building to strength, avarice, evocation), (5) competition, (6) the uses of cooperation, (7) photoduplication as a complicator, and (8) specialization. In connection with selection as a function, he writes: "For the guidance of librarians can book selection policy be stated explicitly enough to be a real guide? It is easy enough to draw up broad canons of selection which, like virtue, will attract universal praise, but a selection code for the amateur selector would have to be very detailed. There is probably no substitute for substantive knowledge and the conclusion would appear to be that if library staff are to select they must be as well prepared as the scholars they serve."

Also included in the *Minutes* is a report prepared for the Social Science Research Council, Committee on the Near and Middle East, "The Acquisition and Control of Publications from the Middle East," by David Wilder. The mechanism suggested is "a Bibliographic Center for Near and Middle East Materials which would carry on the functions of acquisition, listing, cataloging, and the encouragement of the acceptance of local responsibility in whatever areas this appeared feasible." Mr. Wilder suggests that the Center be established with the Library of Congress as host.

chief of the division for scientific classification in the Social Science Library of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., died suddenly on October 31, 1958, at the age of

seventy-four. Trofimov was distinguished both as a teacher and as a constructive thinker in both descriptive cataloging and classification theory.

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mestic and foreign government technical reports, and a special collection on sanitary engineering. A corridor from this room leads to a series of faculty studies. These are small offices which are assigned on a temporary basis to staff members of the College and to visitors who wish to make extended use of the library.

The library has been in operation for several months in its new quarters. A comparison of attendance figures for a similar period in the fall of 1956 shows that use of the library has tripled. Several innovations that were tried have met with wide approval. The individual study desks in the reading room are very popular and are usually filled first. The microfilm and typing room which has

full acoustical treatment is used not only for these purposes, but also by students who wish to talk together quietly about their work.

The present collection covers all fields of engineering offered in the curriculum. The allied fields of economics, architectural planning, mathematics, chemistry, and physics, as they are applied to engineering, are also represented. Much material which was scattered in out-of-the-way areas because of the inadequate space in the old library is now brought together in Carpenter Hall. Now with sufficient room for expansion, plans are under way to enlarge this collection and make it one of the outstanding research facilities in the country.

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On the second and third floors, special classroom areas may be formed through use of accordion walls. Except for these, there are no walls in any of the main areas. Such areas will be compartmentalized by arrangement of the stacks. This type of division permits a great deal of flexibility for it is easily changed to meet any needs that might arise.

Persons using the library are permitted complete freedom in the stack areas, but as a means of expediting withdrawals, one may merely request a book at the circulation desk. The order will then be forwarded to the proper division where the book will be located and then dispatched to the circulation desk by means

of a book lift which serves all three floors.

At present the library staff consists of fifteen professional librarians, fifteen non-professionals, and fifty students. The students provide approximately two thousand hours of assistance per year. To operate the enlarged library, five professional and five non-professional staff members will be needed.

Perhaps the most phenomenal aspect of the entire project, and one that best indicates the emphasis placed on the concept of service, is the fact that during the entire period of construction, despite the ever present noise and dirt, the old library was kept operative, and never at less than 75 per cent efficiency.