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A YEARBOOK DEVOTED TO THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION,
EQUIPMENT, UTILIZATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF
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WORK ROOMS IN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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THE primary function of a college library is to make available for students and for faculty books and materials supplementing the instructional program of the college. It is obvious that the physical plant can either contribute greatly toward the realization of this purpose, or be one of its greatest hindrances. The recognized necessities have always included sufficient space for the storage of the book collection, quarters for the administrative work of the library staff, and seating space for a calculated number of readers in an adequately administered building. The arrangement of these and of their supplementary factors depends on the ingenuity of the architect, the specific variations and adaptations for particular local requirements, and the amount of money at the disposal of the builder.

In making his initial calculations, the architect consults with the librarian to find the number of books in the present collection and to estimate the space which will be required at the end of, say, fifty years. He consults with the college officials to find the number of persons who will be using the building, and to estimate the growth which may be expected. He follows this by a general discussion of the planning and locating of various features of the building. However, even with all the discussion, one finds on studying college library building plans that there has seemingly been no concentration on providing ample and convenient space for the efficient operation of the library staff.

It is needless to point out to one familiar with libraries that the successful operation of the entire building and the ultimate service rendered to those using it are dependent on the proper functioning of the staff in charge. Their work cannot be done in the most capable manner unless care and thought for their convenience and comfort are taken in preparing the original plans. Theirs is a highly complex task, the full intricacies of which can be realized only by one who has dealt with it. To those using the library, the staff is there merely for the purpose of serving them in any capacity they may see fit to require, from giving information about the library itself, to obtaining some first edition or the latest novel. But back of this is the actual administrative work—the

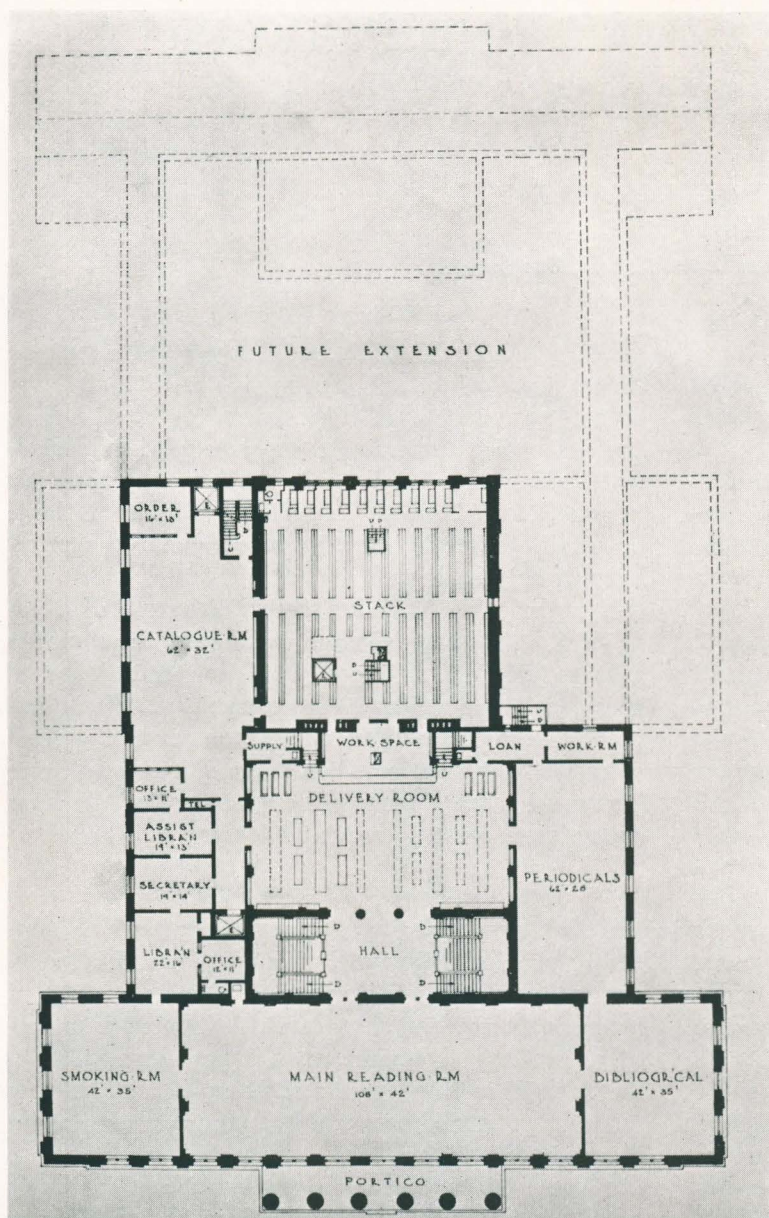
ordering of books, the receiving and checking of orders, cataloging and classifying, and, finally, the actual preparation of the books for the shelves. Besides books, there is the separate field of periodicals, which must be checked and at regular intervals prepared for binding. Whether the library is large or small, the technical processes remain the same, varying only in degree.

For the most effective accomplishment of these tasks, the fundamental requirements are the same for a large building as for a small one—sufficiency of space, and convenience of arrangement. It is imperative that both these factors be given the most attentive consideration at the time of construction to insure the library's successful operation and its later expansion to meet demands made upon it.

Sufficient Working Space

A lack of working space with the attendant hampering of administrative activities in the libraries of some of our large university centers has made it increasingly evident that careful planning is necessary, and has given librarians a new conception of the value of such space. An architect's blueprint may take adequate cognizance of the needs of the staff at the time of building, and provide for them then, as if disposed of forever. The problem is not so simple as this, however, as some of the larger libraries have found and are continuing to find, when they are forced to enlarge their quarters and to extend their scale of operations. In the earlier days of library building the designers seemed to overlook the fact that a new and improved building with greater facilities for service will inevitably mean, in addition to an increased use of the library in all its branches and an increase in resources, likewise an additional number of people to care for it. Because of a lack of sufficient provision for such expansion, a librarian may be hampered by crowded work rooms, although his building is practically new.

Recognition must be taken of the merely physical features which the work rooms of necessity include. In addition to the built-in features that can and should be provided (lavatories, toilets, and adequate closet space for storing supplies), there must be room



Second floor plan, University of Rochester Library

for the desks and chairs of regular office equipment, and the furniture peculiar to library offices. This includes space for booktrucks, bookcases, ample aisle space for movement of persons and trucks, space for card catalogs, typewriter stands, shelving for reference books. The work carried on here must proceed in an efficient and orderly fashion, and a generous amount of floor space is necessary to insure that it does so. Not less than 100 square feet should be allotted for each staff member, both present members and potential future members.

While it is not possible to forecast exactly the growth of a library or of its staff, it seems wiser to provide too much than too little area. The building having been erected, it is usually impossible to pro-

vide for additional adjacent working space. It may be that rooms in another portion of the building can be utilized. However, the various processes of preparing books for circulation are so inter-related that there would be a considerable loss of time if they were scattered, and administrative costs would thereby be increased.

Convenience of Arrangement

This presents the second problem—that of arrangement. An arrangement which makes for the greatest possible conservation of effort through location convenient to all branches of the work will result not only in lower cost of operation through time saved, but also in greater general efficiency throughout. When planning the location of administrative offices and work rooms, it is highly desirable that they be near the public catalog, and with direct entrance into the bookstacks. If possible, the staff quarters should be en suite and in close juxtaposition to one another.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

This is the arrangement at the University of Rochester library, where offices and work rooms are on the second floor, contiguous to the delivery room. There are two entrances from the catalog room into the stacks, and one into the delivery room, where the card catalog is located. The catalog room, with an area of about 2,000 square feet (32 x 62), has an office at one end for the order librarian, and one at the opposite end for the head cataloger. This adjoins the office of the assistant librarian, while the secretary's office is between that of the librarian and the assistant librarian. This arrangement places the greater part of the staff together on the same floor in proximity to the main reading room as well as to the delivery room and the bookstacks.

The receiving room is in the basement beneath the order librarian's office. Books are unpacked there and placed on a book truck to be taken by elevator to the order department office for checking with the invoice and order cards. After being collated, they pass through the cataloging and classification departments and finally are prepared for the shelves. This arrangement, planned around these several processes, permits efficient and orderly handling.

AT ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

The Atlanta University library, designed by James Gamble Rogers, combines excellent arrangement with thought and care for general pleasant surroundings for the benefit of the staff. The offices and working space are in the shape of an ell surrounding the circulation lobby, where the card catalog and delivery desk are located. The cataloging and classification office at Atlanta is in one large room on the second floor and has a southern exposure.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

In the University of Michigan library the technical processes are grouped in one large room on the entrance floor, while the librarian, associate librarian, and stenographers have offices on the second floor directly above the work room. There is, however, a stairway (numbered 2 in the diagram) leading from the office of the librarian directly into the work room below, and giving him perfect freedom of entry and communication at all times. The public card catalog

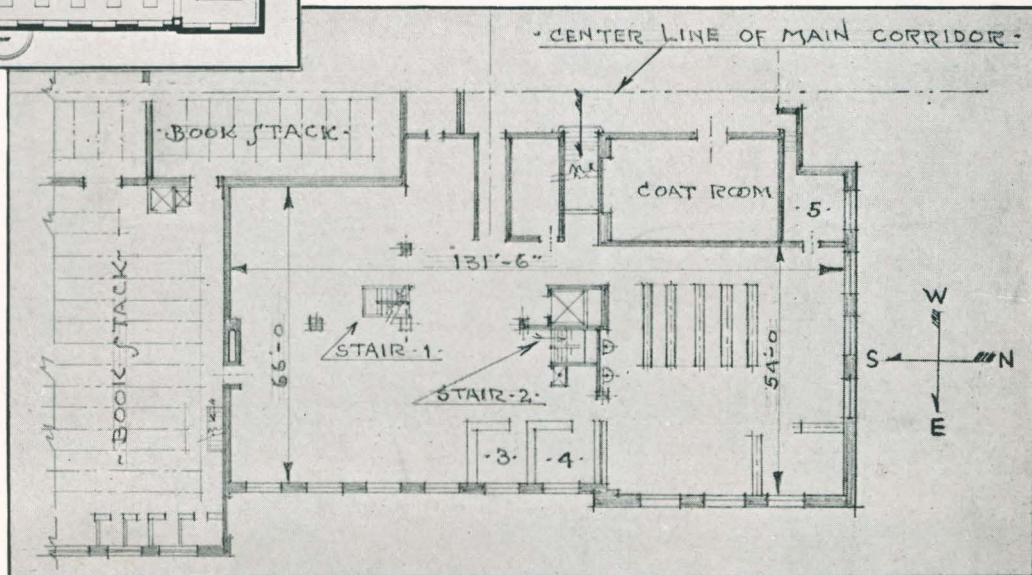
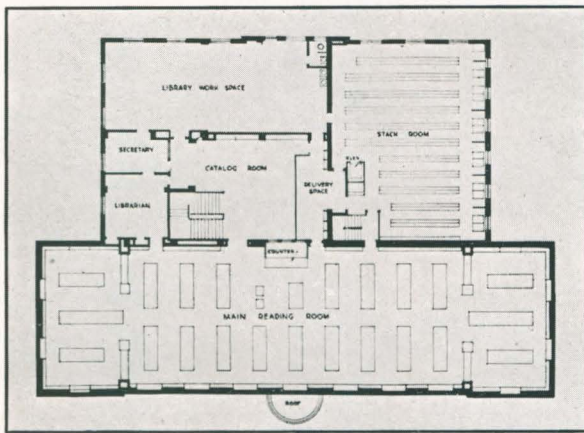
is located on the second floor and is connected by a stairway (No. 1) to the work room. Because of the separation of the card catalog from the cataloging and classification departments, however, it is necessary to maintain an official catalog on the first floor for the use of the staff.

At Michigan it is interesting to note the logical arrangement and relationship of the different departments to each other and to the stacks. Incoming books are received in the work rooms first in the office of the order librarian (No. 5) for the regular rechecking process. They then proceed straight across the work room to the classification (No. 4) and cataloging (No. 3) offices, then to the outer large work space to be prepared actually for the shelves, then to the stacks directly.

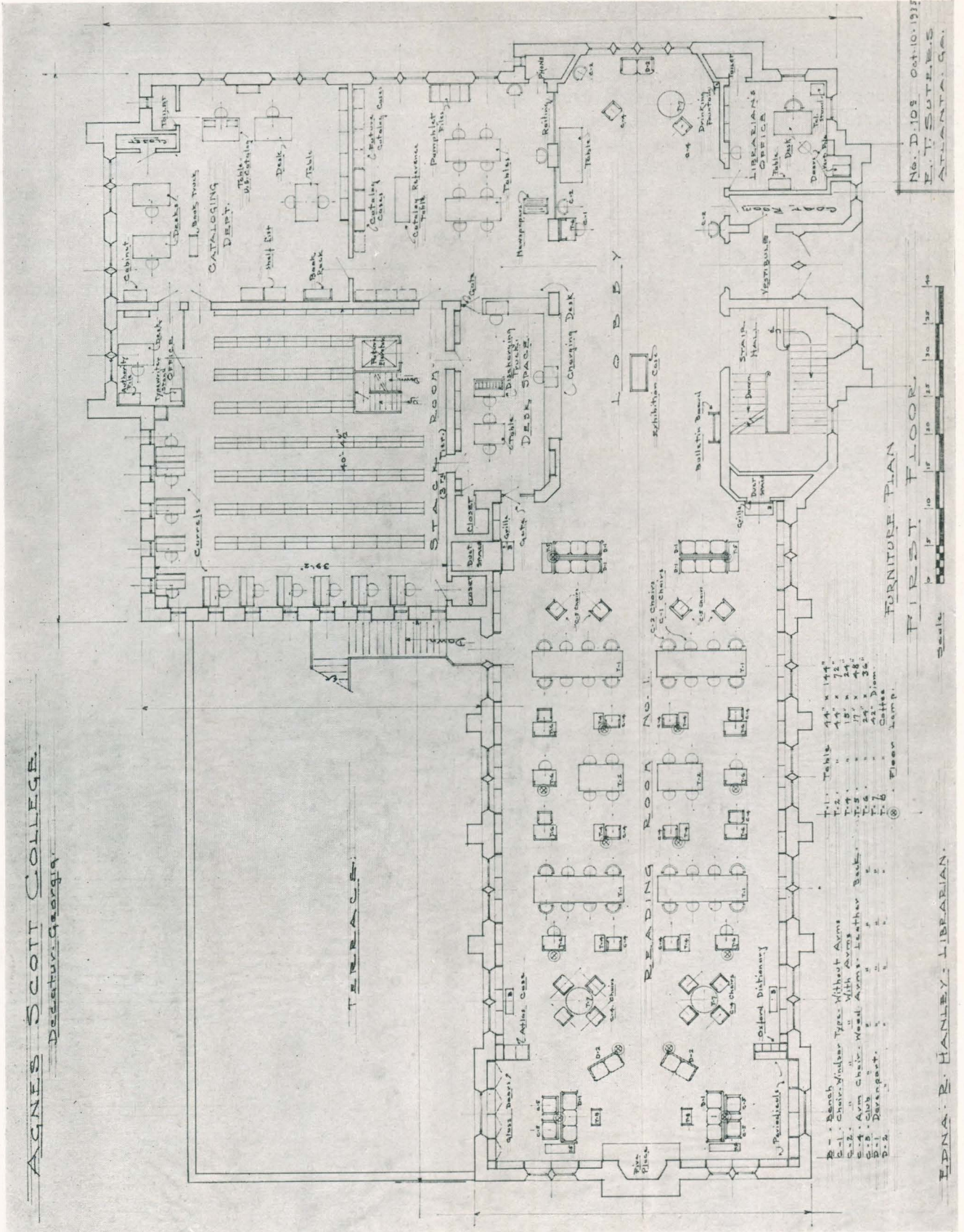
The work room here likewise illustrates the finest possible provision for growth and rearrangement, since it is entirely free from partitions. Offices for heads of the cataloging and classification departments are formed by enclosing and easily transferable floor bookcases. Thus the entire room is flexible and can be changed as circumstances may demand.

Left—Plan of the second floor of the library building, Atlanta University

Below—The staff work room on the first floor of the library at the University of Michigan



AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE
Deerhurst, Georgia.



No. D. 105 Oct. 10, 1915
F. T. STUBBS
ATLANTA, GA.

FURNITURE PLAN
FIRST FLOOR

EDNA R. HANLEY, LIBRARIAN.



Two desks and a filing case for the shelf list are not shown in this photograph of the cataloging room

AT AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE

In the design of the new library at Agnes Scott College the comfort and convenience of the staff were given as great value as any other single feature, and it truly embodies all possible elements which could contribute to the achievement of this end. The building is L-shaped. One wing, two stories in height, consists of a large reading room on each floor. The other wing is four stories, and contains storage and unassigned space on the ground floor, lobby and administrative quarters on the first floor, seminars, staff lounge, and projection and typing rooms on the sec-

ond, with a museum on the top floor. The six decks of the bookstacks are located in the internal angle of the building, with the work room on the first floor opening from them. The card catalog is just outside the work room and near the delivery desk. Adjacent to the work room and opening into the stacks is an office of about 120 square feet for the head cataloger. It was architecturally impossible to have the librarian's office adjoin the cataloging room, although it is on the same floor and within a short distance from it. However, there is a local telephone connecting the office of the librarian with the cataloging room, which aids in eliminating many steps.



An attractive staff lounge for rest and recreational purposes was included in the plans for the new library at Agnes Scott College

Other Essential Rooms

In some of the larger libraries a bindery is considered a necessary part of the equipment. Where this is so, it need not be in the same part of the building as the main work room, but should be located with convenient access to the stacks. In a smaller library, it is cheaper to send books and periodicals out for binding. It is desirable, though, to set aside some space where small repair work can be done.

In any library a receiving room is practically indispensable. Particularly is this true where large shipments of books are received daily. The University of Rochester is adequately equipped in this particular detail, with a receiving room in the basement. It is directly beneath the office of the order librarian and is connected to the work rooms on the second floor by an elevator. This handles the actual receiving of heavy shipments on the lowest possible level, while at the same time making it convenient to send them through the various processes required later.

Not only should the staff be equipped to carry out the actual work as conveniently and as comfortably as possible, but they should have pleasant lounges for rest and recreational periods. These need no longer contain merely bare essentials, but may be made as attractive as the budget permits. There should be rest rooms, locker room, lavatories, and kitchenette. Tea served in the afternoon gives the members of the staff an enjoyable few moments of respite from the busy work and students, and provides relaxation for those sitting at desks and typewriters. Pleasant surroundings and consideration for a staff tend to create and to maintain an atmosphere of harmony and esprit de corps which is desirable in every library group.

Lighting—Ventilating—Heating

Although the problems of lighting, ventilating, and heating the work rooms, offices, and all rooms to be occupied by the staff are common to the remainder of the building and undoubtedly dependent on the entire system, it is well to bear in mind the fact that special attention should be paid to these essentials. After all, the staff spends some seven or eight hours daily in the same quarters, for the most part, and any uncomfortable feature can easily become greatly magnified by constant association. The work is of such nature that, for best results, good light, fresh air, and comfortable desks and chairs are a necessity.

Of illumination, it is necessary to say only that, while sunlight is obviously to be preferred, there is still precaution to be taken even when conditions are most favorable for having a full day of sunlight. An accepted standard is that window area should equal 25 per cent of the floor area. This will vary in different sections of the country. In some places the air is clear and strong light prevails. This is the case near Atlanta, and both Atlanta University and Agnes Scott College were forced to take special measures to prevent glare. The work rooms in both these libraries have a southern exposure to obtain all the breeze possible. Venetian blinds have been utilized effectively for a maximum of light without causing undue strain. Naturally, the architect in any case will take the local conditions into consideration in his plans.

Artificial illumination presents an engineering problem complete in itself. Enormous improvements are continually being made in this science, but it need not be discussed here except to point out that some eyes require much less light than others. Serious thought should be given, therefore, in work rooms as well as in the entire library building, to providing different quantities of light to take care of these individual differences.

Equally important with the lighting system is the ventilation, which is really a physiological problem. Good ventilation means maintaining a supply of fresh air heated to a comfortable temperature of 70 degrees, with a relative humidity during the winter months of about 50 per cent. There should be a slow movement of the air (without causing drafts), and preferably in a vertical line.

Considering, then, all the factors involved, and studying present college and university library building plans, their good points and their deficiencies, one should be able to determine what is adequate provision for the library staff. From librarians laboring at a disadvantage because of insufficient working space, one may learn caution in planning. From those who have been successful in meeting the problem, a college or university planning to erect a library building may well take advice in dealing with the local situation.

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