

# The Illinois Chemist

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S. D. KIRKPATRICK

THE ILLINOIS CHEMIST is glad to have been afforded this opportunity of welcoming as our guests the members of the American Chemical Society. We feel that we have been indeed fortunate in that our University has been selected as your meeting place. To us your presence here marks the beginning of a new era for Chemistry at Illinois. The opening up of the new building with its mammoth floor space and modern and practical equipment are but the outward signs of a progressive development and expansion which is evidenced in every unit of our organization. To feel that we undergraduates are actually a part of this organization, brings us to a realization of our responsibility, to the many things that are expected of us. One of these, and by no means the least important, is that we contribute our share toward making this spring meeting a success. Let us show every one of our visitors that he is welcomed here by every one of the undergraduate body.



THE CHEMISTRY LIBRARY

MARION E. SPARKS.

When Dr. Arthur W. Palmer returned from Germany to take charge of the Department in September, 1899, the period of growth had begun. The number of students increased rapidly in the next three years, and with the small staff, three, in 1891-92, there were disadvantages in having to go to the main library (then on the second floor of the southwest wing of University Hall) for all chemical books. Students of the early '90's recall as a familiar sight Dr. Palmer fairly sprinting from one building to the other.

But under the rule then, the University library was only open during the day, and books could not be taken to other buildings.

However, after considerable discussion, a plan was devised; permission was given the Department to put up some wooden shelves along the west (inner) wall of the balance room (now No. 304 and 305 of the Law Building). Dr. Palmer and Professor Parr drew out on their personal checks the books most needed, and the Chemistry library came into being. The exact date of opening has not been learned, but W. E. Tower, '94, took a picture of it which appears with this article and the negative is dated as taken November, 1892. A cross country run was no longer necessary to find a melting point or verify a page reference.

The number of books increased with the demands of the department, and the adoption of a more liberal policy for the main library.

When the plans for the new building were made, a library room, 201, was provided. In this was placed, in the fall of 1903, (as in much of the rest of the building) some old furniture, including some tall bookcases discarded from the main library in 1897 in which year the main library was moved into the present library building. More books were then brought over including the sets of chemical serials.

At first the room was kept locked and to use the library one had to look up the librarian, but from about 1907 to 1908 it was left open at all times with an assistant present, from 8-9 in the morning and 4-5 in the afternoon, to receive and give out books. These assistants so far as is known have been as follows: Alice L. Blair, Grace S. Robinson, Bertha Sharpe, and Mary Renick, and since October, 1911, the writer, having served full time only since 1913.

In 1914 the "locked door" policy was adopted, and in 1915 the regular schedule as for the main library, except for Sundays. This has required the employment of student helpers, usually seniors in chemistry who in this way obtain considerable library training. The rate of increase in "missing" books is beginning to show a decrease.

The first catalog consisted of author and shelf lists prepared by the writer in 1904-05 for Dr. A. T. Lincoln. There were less than four hundred entries, possibly nearly 2,000 volumes. The present catalog includes author, subject, and shelf list cards for all books at Chemistry, together with author and subject cards for all chemical literature on the campus.



THE CHEMICAL LIBRARY AS IT APPEARED IN NOVEMBER, 1892.

A notable addition to the library was made by Mrs. Palmer, who gave Dr. Palmer's chemical library to the Department. A special bookplate and case help make this a suitable memorial to Dr. Palmer, for to him largely we owe the existence of the Chemistry Library.

On January 1st, 1916, the Chemistry Library contained 6900 volumes, about 4000 of these being serials. More than one hundred current serials are taken. About 2500 volumes will be added by transfer from the main library when the new room is ready. New books and journals are being purchased as funds permit.

Purchases, other gifts and the growth of serial sets made it necessary to annex the former home of the Chemical Club, Room 203; all shelf space is now full and at rush hours the appropriate sign for both rooms is "Not even standing room". Relief is in sight, however, in the new spacious Room 257, whose dimensions are 38 by 65 feet. With stacks in the west half and tables by the nine wide east windows that are low enough to give a view of more than tree tops, with a new catalog case, telephone, electric fan and improved lighting, we shall have almost absolute protection from fire and water. Hereafter visitors will be *shown* the Chemistry Library,—not hurried past it to view crowded laboratories and elaborate apparatus!

The crowds and noise of 201 will be replaced by scholastic quiet, plenty of room, and, we believe, by increased usefulness.



THE FIRST BUILDING AT THE UNIVERSITY, REAR VIEW

The Department of Chemistry began its existence in the basement of the rear wing of this building. From a photo taken about 1875.