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1910 - 2010

A Centennial Celebration of the Opening and Dedication of the Alumni Library: Miami University's Carnegie Library

“The Greatest Blessing and the Most Valuable Asset of the University”: Miami’s Alumni Library

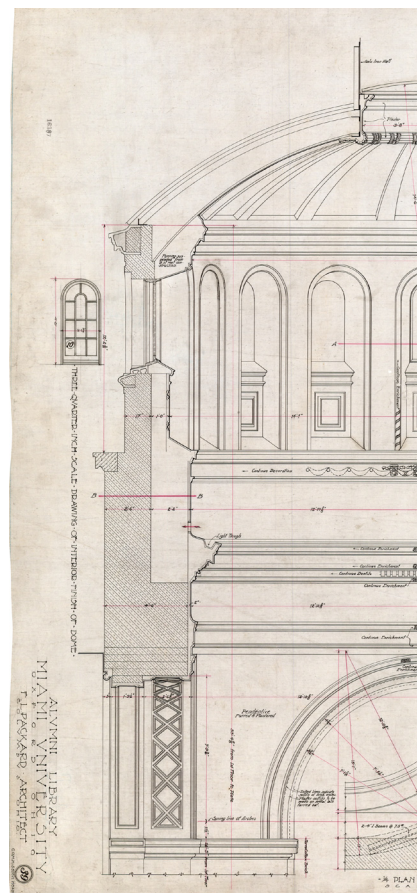
One of the most recognizable features of Miami University’s Oxford campus is its Carnegie Library. Like other 19th century university libraries, Miami University’s library collection was modest during its first 100 years. Since students recited passages memorized from textbooks in order to complement information gleaned from faculty lectures, books were mostly provided for supplementary reading. However, by the turn of the 20th century, changing teaching methods challenged students to demonstrate critical thinking and research skills. Needs for upgraded facilities, increased book budgets, and improved service to patrons prompted many college and university libraries to appeal to noted benefactor Andrew Carnegie for assistance. Miami University was one such institution that benefited from Carnegie’s generosity.

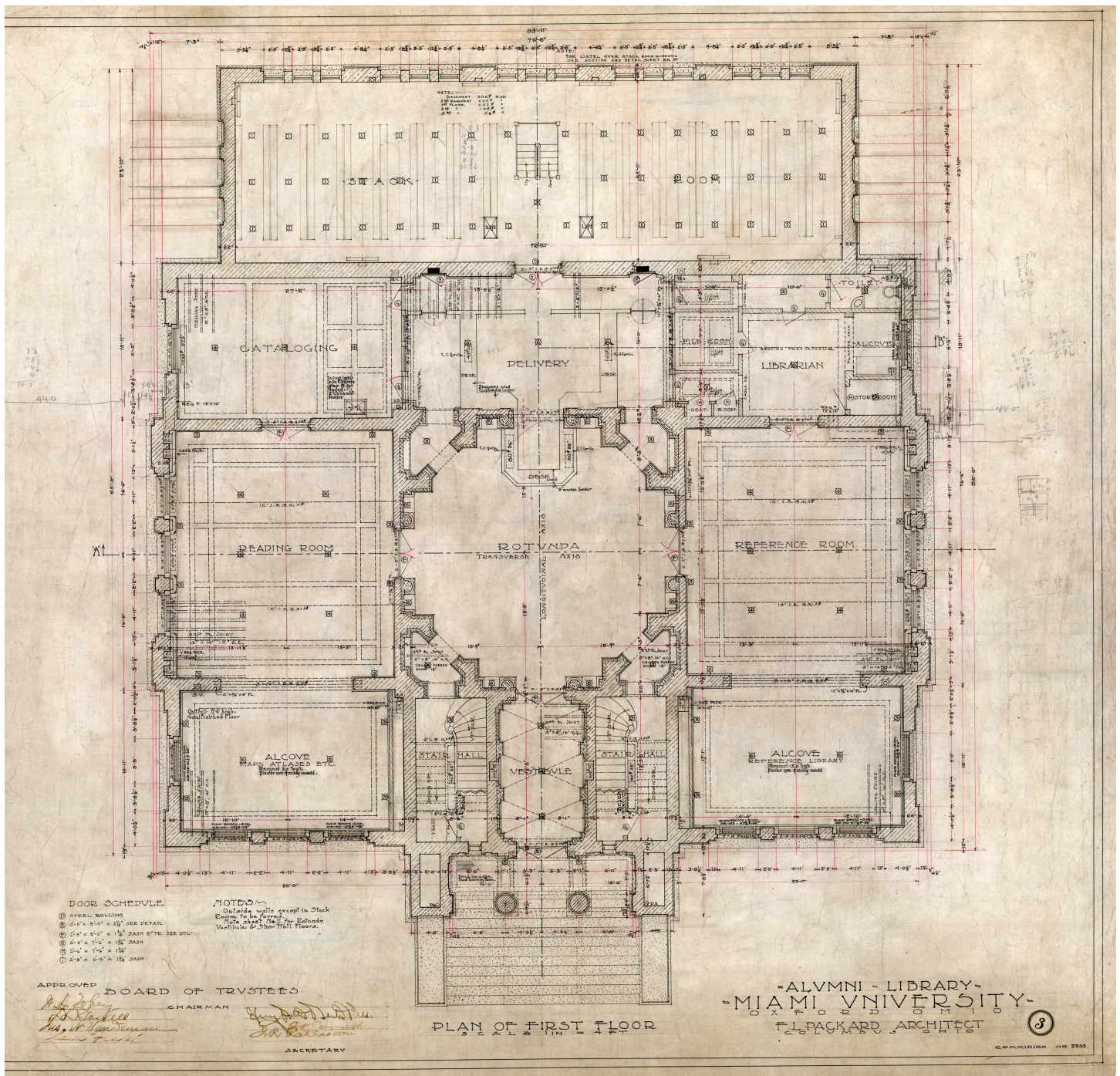
Inspired by Miami’s impending centennial in 1909, university leaders and a building committee sought a Carnegie grant to construct a main library on its campus. The university matched the \$40,000 gift with Alumni Centennial Fund contributions from 158 Miami alumni, students, faculty, and friends. To recognize these contributions, the building was named the Alumni Memorial Library.

Conceived as the most lavish building on campus, the project was awarded to architect Frank Packard of Columbus, Ohio. Inspired by Classical Roman styles, Packard created a library with a main reading room seating 192 people, a periodical room, multiple-tier stacks accommodating 150,000 volumes, and a handful of seminar and faculty study rooms. Notable features of Packard’s attractive building included a Rookwood tile interpretation of the university seal on the north exterior gable, a copper-roofed dome, and a 70-foot-high octagonal rotunda. Salt-glazed brick walls, marble and cast glass floors, bronze railings and skylights completed the building’s interior features.

One year after the library’s completion, all available shelf space was occupied. In 1914, planning for a building expansion was begun. New wings were added to the east in 1922 and to the west in 1951. Funded from both a university fund-raising campaign and the Carnegie Corporation, the 1922 addition was designed by I. Ralph Ridley. This addition included a main reference and reading room and a library stack extension. State funds provided the funding for the 1951 addition that was designed by Potter Tyler & Martin, which enlarged the building and restored its compositional symmetry.

The Alumni Library remained Miami’s main library until King Library was completed in 1966. Alumni Hall was renovated in the early 1990s; today, it is the home of Miami’s Department of Architecture and Interior Design and the Wertz Art & Architecture Library.





Frank L. Packard, Architect

Frank L. Packard was born in Delaware, Ohio on June 11, 1866. After studying architecture and engineering at The Ohio State University, he completed his education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1887.

Packard began his career as an architectural apprentice for the Delaware County, Ohio surveyor in 1881 and an intern with the New York architectural firm of Babb, Cook, & Willard. In 1892, he co-founded the Columbus, Ohio architectural firm of Yost and Packard. When his partner, Joseph Warren Yost, moved to New York City, Packard became sole owner of the firm in 1899.

A leading institutional architect, Packard designed over 3,400 buildings, including Miami University's Alumni Library. Packard also drafted one of the first master plans for The Ohio State University campus. He died in 1923.



Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919)

Andrew Carnegie emigrated from Scotland to Allegheny, Pennsylvania with his family when he was 13. Rising from a position as a telegraph operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad to become Superintendent of United States Railways and Telegraphs, Carnegie demonstrated remarkable business acumen. Making wise investments and responding to the growing American demand for steel, Carnegie founded the Carnegie Steel Company, which produced steel rails for railroads. By 1900, the company made more than \$40 million annually. Carnegie sold his empire to his competitor, New York banker J.P. Morgan, for \$480 million. When the two companies merged to form U.S. Steel, Carnegie had amassed a fortune approximating \$300 million. Now considered the richest man in the world, Carnegie devoted the rest of his life to philanthropy, giving away almost 90 percent of his fortune.

Carnegie attributed his success to self-education, gained largely in the private library of Colonel James Anderson, a wealthy Allegheny, Pennsylvania businessman who opened his personal library to neighborhood working boys every Saturday. As a young telegraph messenger, Carnegie read his way through the almost 500-volume library, one shelf at a time. Later reflecting on Anderson and his generosity, Carnegie remarked that Anderson “opened to me the intellectual wealth of the world.”

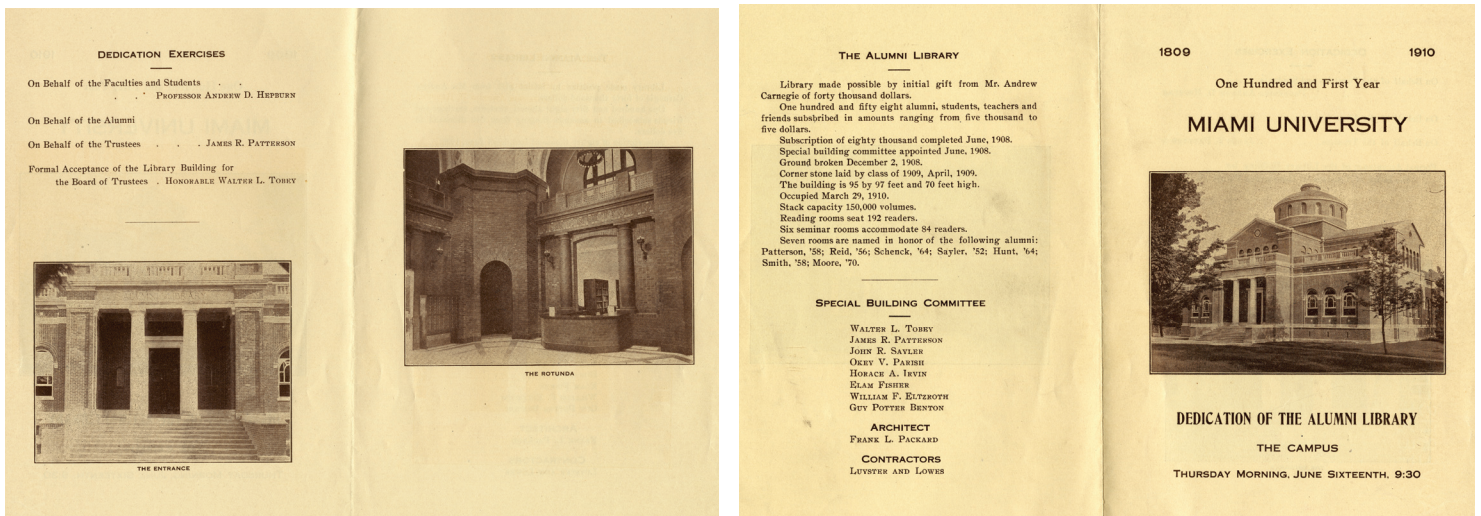
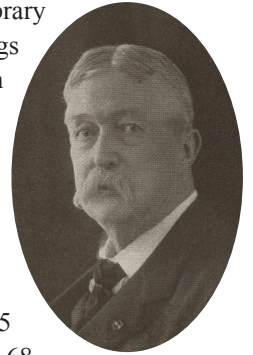
Carnegie saw it as his duty to guide fellow millionaires in responsibly sharing their fortunes with others. Convinced that libraries made a positive impact on people, he began awarding library grants in 1881 to communities that demonstrated their need for a library, their commitment to providing a suitable site, and their ability to offer long-term support. In approximately 30 years, Carnegie made possible the construction of almost 1,700 libraries nationwide; 111 were built in Ohio. Another 820 were built in other countries. Overall, Carnegie spent \$56 million on this initiative.

John Shaw Billings (1838-1913)

John Shaw Billings graduated from Miami University in 1857. He was medical inspector of the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. As head of the Surgeon General’s Library in Washington, D.C., Billings developed the collection that became the National Library of Medicine. He also formed the New York Public Library.

Inspired by Billings’ achievement, Andrew Carnegie provided over \$5 million for the creation of 68 branch libraries in New York City. Later, he promised 20 more libraries for Brooklyn. Billings influenced Carnegie to provide funds for the construction of libraries in cities and towns across the country, including Alumni Library. Billings himself contributed a significant amount of money to the project.

After Billings died on March 11, 1913, Carnegie offered the following tribute: “Knowledge is said to consist of two elements – what you yourself already know, and what you know how and where to obtain – of both departments our dear lost friend was master.”



The program documents remarks made by Professor Andrew D. Hepburn, facts about the building, members of the building committee, and photographs of some of its features.

Murder in the Stacks

[Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company, 1934]

With its rotunda and glass-floored stacks, the Alumni Library is said to be the inspiration for the setting of *Murder in the Stacks*, the first novel of Marion Boyd Havighurst (1894-1974).

Dedicatory Exercises

Duly Observed for Miami's New Alumni Library.

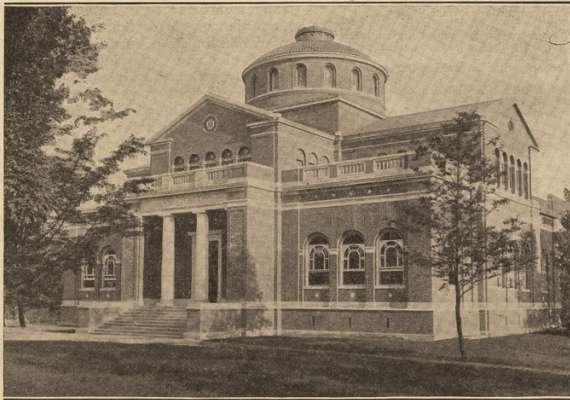
BUILDING FORMALLY ACCEPTED BY PRESIDENT TOBEY
FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

Thursday's exercises began with the dedication of the Alumni Library on the Campus at 9:30 o'clock. The academic procession started from the auditorium and slowly wended its way across the campus and halted in front of the Library steps. Hon. W. L. Tobey, the acting president of

Special Building Committee. The Special Building Committee was composed of Walter L. Tobey, James R. Patterson, John R. Saylor, O. V. Parrish, Horace A. Irvin, Elam Fisher, Wm. F. Eltzroth, D. L. Gas-kill, John N. Van Deman, and President Benton.



Dedication of Alumni Library.



The Alumni Library.

the board of trustees presided and briefly outlined the history of the Library.

Facts Concerning Library.

Library made possible by initial gift from Andrew Carnegie of forty thousand dollars.

One hundred and fifty-eight Alumni, students, teachers and friends subscribed in amounts ranging from five thousand to five dollars.

Subscriptions of eighty thousand completed June, 1908.

Special building committee appointed June, 1908.

Ground broken Dec. 2, 1908. Corner stone laid by class of 1909, April, 1909.

The building is 95 by 97 feet and 70 feet high.

Occupied March 29, 1910.

Stack Capacity 150,000 volumes. Reading rooms seat 192 readers. Six seminary rooms accommodate 84 readers.

Dr. Hepburn Speaks.

On behalf of the Faculty Dr. Hepburn spoke to some length. His long and efficient services for Miami University made him a fitting representative for the college faculty. Despite the fact that he had been up the greater part of the night before to serve his fraternity as toastmaster, Dr. Hepburn seemed younger than ever before to recent alumni.

Address by Hon. J. R. Patterson.

President Tobey next announced an address on behalf of the Alumni of Miami University by James R. Patterson of the class of 1858.

The devotion of Mr. Patterson to the very highest interests of Miami University and his invaluable services as a trustee was a source of inspiration to all of the officers of Miami University. Every college movement having for its object the inspiration of students to higher at-

tainments and all movements that had architects were consulted; and after for their object the up building of the most strenuous efforts we now re-university had at all times received joy in this most satisfactory result. A princely contribution at his hands. While grateful to all who have in He helped the building of the Alumni any measure contributed to this suc-Library and his gift came at a time, cess, sons of "Old Miami," and of when it seemed that the committee "New Miami"—it is with especial in-having in charge the solicitation of terest and gratitude that I acknowl-funds should have to fail in their ef-edge the generous responses from my forts to secure the necessary amount associates of "Old Miami."

to meet Mr. Carnegie's conditions, Led by our distinguished alumnus but Mr. Patterson came forward with Whitelaw Reid of the class of '56, and his subscription, which encouraged now ambassador to England, with a the committee to greater effort donation of five thousand dollars, fol-lowed by the donation by another alumnus of five thousand dollars, then which resulted in meeting fully the conditions Mr. Carnegie imposed.

Mr. Patterson's Speech.

"I cannot express the gratification, the delight which this event brings to us all. It is an achievement for which we have hoped, and toward which we have worked for many years. And I most heartily congratulate the friends of Miami University on its splendid

by donations each of one thousand dollars from our distinguished and beloved Alumni, the late Samuel F. Hunt, Nelson Saylor, John B. Smith, Robt. C. Schenck, the heirs of Wil-liam Beckett, and by Philip N. Moore, the memories of whom will ever be cherished and honored by the sons of



Rotunda of New Library.

During the dedication of the Alumni Library on June 16, 1910, Miami's acting president, Raymond Hughes, pronounced the Alumni Library as the center of intellectual activity on the campus as "the greatest blessing and the most valuable asset of the University."



Dr. Hepburn Speaking at Dedication.

accomplishment. First of all I want to acknowledge our great indebtedness of our worthy president for his invaluable efforts in the initiative of this movement, in securing the aid of the great library builder, Andrew Carnegie. It was after a most determined, and persistent siege in New York, that Dr. Benton was able to get a hearing and enlist his interest in our behalf. And Dr. Benton's report of Mr. Carnegie's offer to donate forty thousand dollars, on condition that the Alumni of Miami University raise forty thousand more, was received with great rejoicing, and infused fresh life into our efforts. The need of a new library building was pressing upon us sorely, and we now felt greatly cheered by the possibility of securing it. Urgent appeals were sent to all of our Alumni; li-brary buildings of the leading institu-tions of the country—East and West were visited; leading librarians, and

Miami and whose names are to be perpetuated in the reading rooms and alcoves of this library.

In closing I wish to express our appreciation of the skillful, splendid services rendered by our Architect, Mr. Frank L. Packard, of Columbus, in designing and erecting this beautiful building, the most ornamental, monumental, and attractive building on our campus, and to have accomplished the wonderful feat of having it completed—with perfect work—within the contract cost. "A thing of beauty, and a joy forever."

Trustees Accept Building.

The formal acceptance of the Li-brary Building for the board of trust-ees was made by Hon. Walter L. Tobey. At the close of his speech the procession was again formed and the march made through the Main Build-ing and around to the north entrance of the auditorium where the com-mencement exercises took place.