XIX

The Army Medical Library Becomes the National Library of Medicine

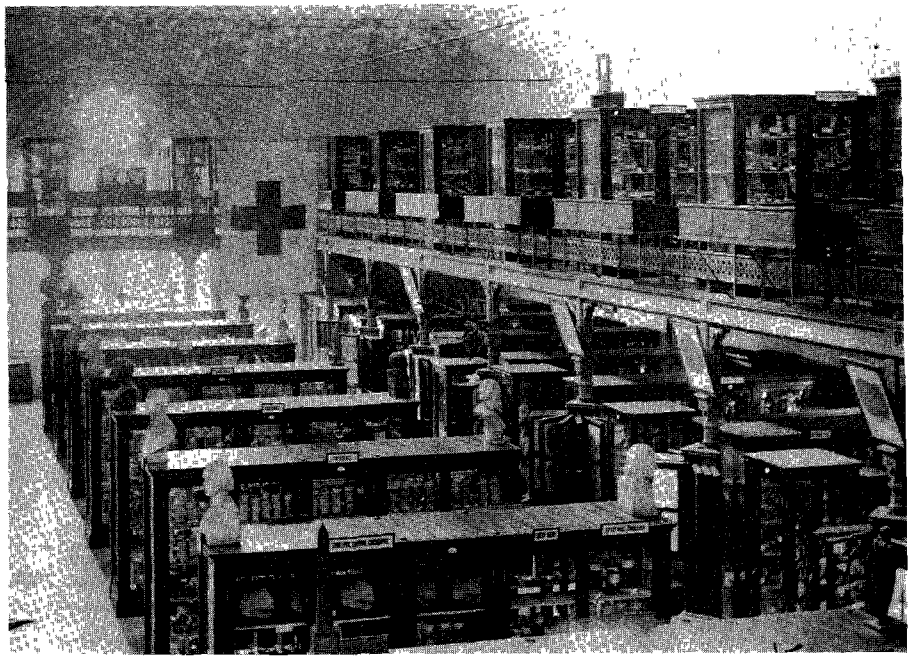
The Museum Moves and the Library Occupies the Entire Building

By 1945 the Library had been divided among four buildings; the main building, Fisheries Building, Fisheries Annex, and Allen Library in Cleveland. In the autumn of that year it seemed, for a time, that the Cleveland volumes could be brought back to Washington. The Librarian of Congress consented to house the material in the LC Annex for 5 years (when, it was assumed, a new AML building would be ready) if the Army Library would erect steel shelves in an empty annex deck. But the Architect of the Capitol ruled that the War Department did not have authority to pay for the stacks, the Library of Congress had no money to purchase them, so the annex space remained empty and the volumes remained in Cleveland.[1]

By 1947 the main building was again bulging with publications. This time space was obtained from the Library's old partner the museum, which the Medical Department moved temporarily into Chase Hall, a wartime barracks nearby on Independence Avenue. The Museum's offspring, the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, continued to occupy a portion of the building for several years, but the Library now had room to expand. Director McNinch had the walls of Museum Hall painted, shelves erected, and then moved the Acquisition, Catalog, and Index-Catalogue Divisions into the area. Documents were moved from Fisheries Annex onto the Museum Hall balcony, and other collections were shifted around.

In the autumn of 1948 the Library was permitted to use part of Tampa Hall, a temporary wartime structure across the street at 7th Street and Independence Avenue. Tampa's basement floor was concrete and could bear the weight of stacks, but the first and second floors were wooden and not designed to carry heavy loads. Book cases were placed around the perimeter of the rooms where the supports were strongest, but the floors shook when librarians walked. The flammability of the building also caused uneasiness.

Another crisis over space was averted in 1950 when Cleveland Medical Library Association consented to extend for 5 years the lease on the rooms



Old photograph of Museum Hall, crammed with exhibits of the Army Medical Museum.

occupied by the History of Medicine Division. But soon HMD became oversaturated as Director Rogers shipped 20,000 monographs of the 1801–1850 period to Cleveland in order to reduce overcrowding in the main building. To make a place for the arrivals HMD withdrew more than 10,000 out-of-scope U.S. government documents from its collection and returned them to the issuing agencies or the United States Book Exchange. It also moved about 15,000 little-used items into a warehouse. When the second lease expired it was renewed for 5 more years by the library association.

In 1952 government housing officials decided to move the National Park Service into Fisheries Annex and recompense the Library by permitting it to use Escanaba Hall, a temporary building at 9th and Independence. Collections had to be rearranged, some volumes being sent from Fisheries to Cleveland, some to Tampa Hall, and the 1850–1920 volumes to Escanaba Hall. Escanaba, like Tampa, was liable to the risks of fire, floor overloading, and poor security, but the Library utilized every bit of space and managed to shelve more than 110,000 volumes in the structure.

Lack of space for publications, librarians, and readers was not the only thing wrong with the main building. Parts of the structure were wearing out, some from age and some from lack of proper maintenance, the latter resulting from insufficient appropriations. During heavy rain, water came in around windows,

Museum Hall about 1948, after the Museum had moved out and the catalog, acquisition, and index-catalogue divisions of the Library had moved in.

accumulated in puddles on the floor, and caused paint to peel off the walls. It leaked through the skylights in Library Hall and dripped into wastebaskets and buckets placed around the floor and on tables. Tarpaulins had to be thrown over catalog cases, desks, and card files had to be moved, work was disrupted, and books and journals were damaged. Each range of stacks was protected by a roof of copper so that water leaking through the skylights would land on the roofs and run off onto the aisles instead of dripping on books.

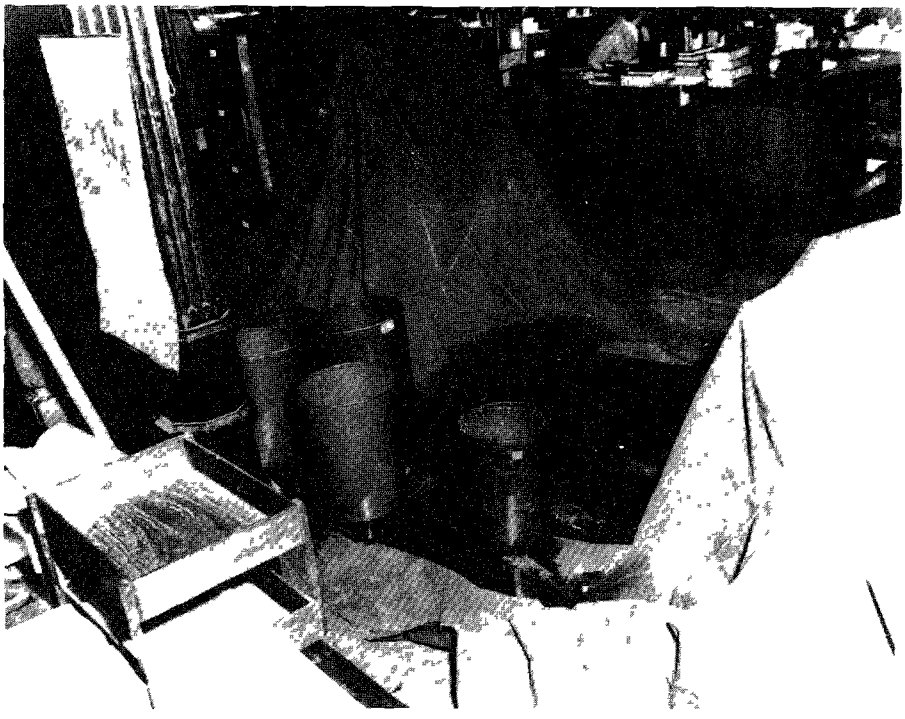
A drain in the concrete basement floor, over which a wooden floor had been laid, became clogged. Water 2 feet deep collected under the floor providing a breeding place for insects. Joists rotted until some 2 by 10's were reduced to 2 by 4's. The floor settled almost 2 inches before the damage was discovered and rectified.[2]

A downspout enclosed in the front wall corroded, allowing water to seep through the wall and raise and rot the floor in the Librarian's office. Finally all the downspouts in the walls had to be capped and replaced by exterior downspouts.

Certain renovations were desirable to improve the original characteristics of the building. The ceiling of Library Hall was 47 feet high; therefore the

room was drafty and practically impossible to heat comfortably in the winter, although additional radiators were installed Conversely, some rooms and stack areas became unbearably warm and humid in the summer A few exhaust fans and window type air conditioners were installed in the 1950's

Originally there was no way to move books from the third or second tier of stacks to the main floor of Library Hall except by carrying them or using a small hand-pulled dumbwaiter There was no way of moving book trucks from one floor to another. Volumes had to be carried up or downstairs from rooms or tiers to the interlibrary loan office, photoduplication office, loan desk, or other locations. The large increase in service rendered by the Library during the war made the slow movement of publications by manpower intolerable As soon as conditions permitted, in the autumn of 1945 Director Gardner requested that an electric elevator be installed in the stack area A short time later he asked that it be run to the basement where publications were received and dispatched. Not only would an elevator speed all services, but it would pay for itself in decreased personnel costs in a few years After much discussion at various levels within the Public Buildings Administration, the Military District of Washington, and the Corps of Engineers over the expense of the elevator



Waste paper baskets and tarpaulins catching water leaking through the roof after a heavy rain on the night of March 25, 1953

and the limited life of the old building, in the spring of 1946 the Library was promised an electrically controlled dumbwaiter and a new stairway. This did not satisfy the next Director, McNinch, and he renewed the pleas for an elevator. Permission was finally granted in 1947 and the elevator erected against the outer wall of Library Hall in 1948.[3]

The original gas lights had given way long ago to electric lights, but the combination of electric and natural lighting was not adequate in many areas. Flashlights were still used in the stacks in Library Hall until fluorescent lamps were installed. Desk lamps finally arrived in the 1950's.

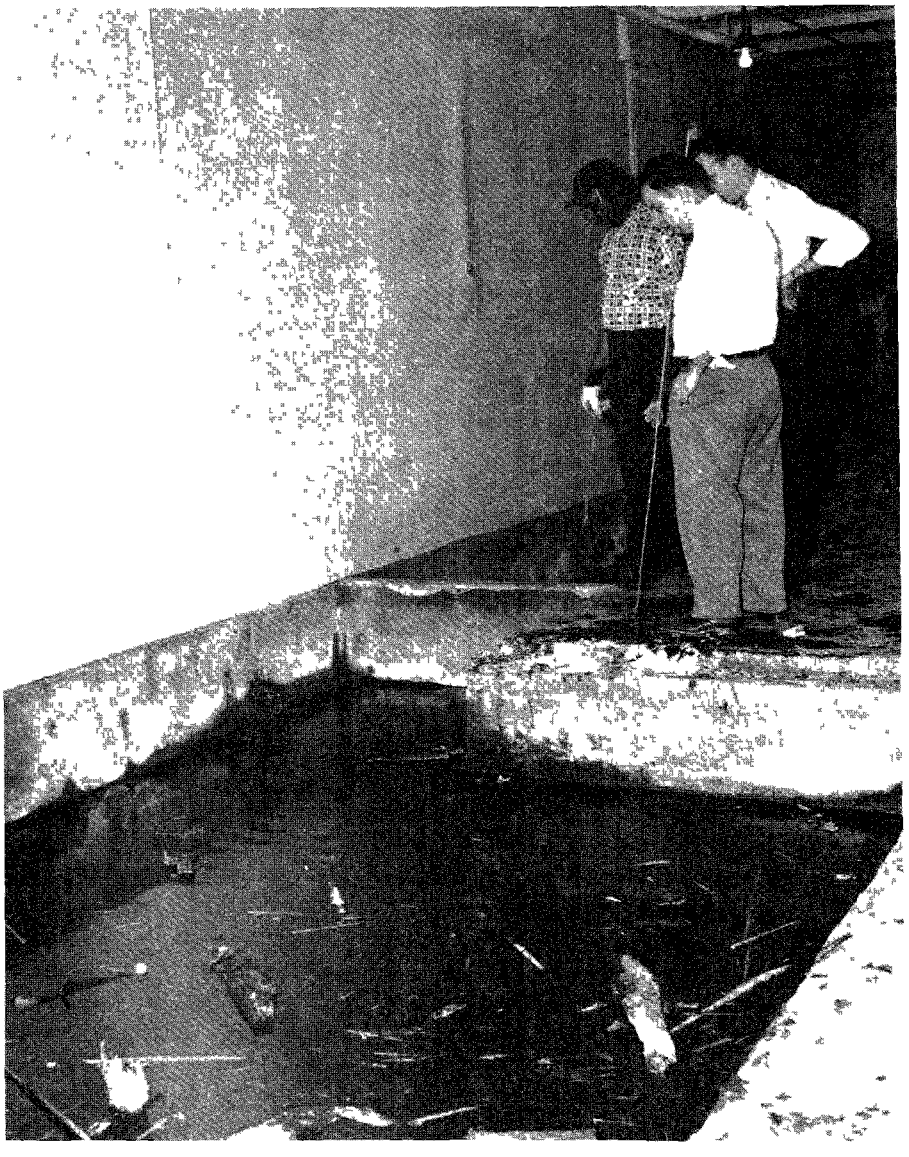
The building did not have a canteen or cafeteria. This was not owing to a gap in the original plans, for in the 1880's such facilities had not been placed in public buildings. Later, the interior became so crowded that no space could be spared for dining. The first canteen, operated by the Washington Society for the Blind, was installed in a small open space at the foot of the cellar stairs in 1948.

The Library had the dubious distinction of being the only Federal building in Washington with an outhouse. In Billings' day it may have been thought desirable to place toilet facilities in a separate building but it was inconvenient, particularly in the winter. Toilet facilities were installed on the third floor of the main building in 1950, but the outhouse remained in use as long as the Library remained.

In 1951 Congress appropriated funds to construct a building for the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, which had remained when the museum departed. The Institute forecasted that it would move during the summer of 1954 and promised to bequeath all of its space in the old building to the Library. The Institute underestimated by only one-half year and started to transfer its equipment and furniture to its new building in February 1955.

As the Institute departed Rogers began to have the entire structure renovated. Following a plan that had taken a year and a half to prepare, all collections and work units were relocated. Every volume in the Library, more than three-quarters of a million pieces, was shifted. Four and nine-tenths shelf miles of serials were moved. One hundred and thirty thousand volumes were transferred from Escanaba Hall; fifty thousand from Tampa Hall. During the reshelving librarians discovered that the cast iron stacks in Library Hall were buckling from the immense weight of books that they had supported for two-thirds of a century. The stacks had to be shored up with channel steel beams. Finally after years of separation all book collections and work groups, except those in Cleveland, were reunited. Since 1942 the Library had been divided, inconveniencing readers and librarians. Much money and time had been spent moving collections and divisions, money which could have been saved or used more profitably had a new building been erected for the Library as planned during the 1930's.

Even after all the renovations of the mid-1950's had been completed, parts of the structure continued to break down. The worst water damage to publi-



A clogged drain dammed water to form this pool under the wooden floor in the basement. Astonished at the mess is Joseph McGroarty of the Library, center, and two employees of the Public Building Service

cations in the life of the structure occurred one rainy night in September 1957 when a drain pipe above the cellar stacks backed up and began to leak The next morning Robert Austin entered the area and saw a torrent of water pouring over books of the 1801–1850 period.[4] Employees rushed to move the books

and stacks, and carry more than 400 soaked volumes to the bindery, where other employees spent the day interleaving pages with paper towels while electric fans blew air over open books to evaporate the water. Books were even hung on clotheslines to dry. About 25 volumes were damaged so badly they could not be salvaged while others had to be repaired or rebound.

Birds entered through holes in screens and unscreened windows and then flew wildly about Library Hall trying to escape. A starling was found down in the basement stack. Readers were amused by pigeons roosting and clucking on the card catalog. Bats were found hanging from pipes. An employee felt something on her shoulder, turned her head, and saw a bat perching there.

Rats and mice found entrance to the building. In the winter of 1957 employees discovered that rats were coming up through holes in the floor of the east basement stack area and nibbling starch-filled bindings of folios and foreign theses. Exterminators discovered that the rat holes went down beneath the foundation to the remnants of the old Tiber Creek. The Tiber, which had flowed from its source near the White House toward Capital Hill and along Canal Street to the Anacostia River, had been filled in early in the 19th century and the east end of the building had been erected near the bed of the ancient waterway.

Windows fitted so loosely that cold air penetrated easily. During an unusually cold, blustery spell in the spring of 1958 Library Hall became so chilly that public service had to be suspended for a day, the first time on record. Dirty windows could not be washed conveniently because the wood frames were so deteriorated that they would not hold hooks from window washers' belts. Chunks of plaster fell from the ceiling of a room.

As though to top off the deterioration, a cornice came loose and had to be removed before it fell and perhaps killed someone.

New Name, New Parent, New Building

While librarians were shifting collections around in the old building and its satellites, trying to make space for acquisitions and to allow persons to work comfortably and efficiently, the campaign for a new building was progressing slowly. Plans for the interior had been redrawn to accommodate the Library alone, as a result of Surgeon General Kirk's decision to provide a separate building for the museum and AFIP. In 1946 the Medical Department requested money for construction, but the military establishment, retrenching and reorganizing after the war, had problems more important than the AML, and the Surgeon General could not push his request through the upper levels of the Army.[5]

By 1947 the estimate of space needed in the proposed building had risen considerably over the 1941 estimate. Because of the skyrocketing cost of materials, labor, and land, and the increase in size of the structure, the estimate of the cost of the land and the building reached $15 million, as compared with $4,750,000 in 1941. The director of service, supply and procurement in the

Defense Department vetoed the Army's request for legislation to appropriate $15 million. Instead he pointed out that the Library was used much more by civilians than by military personnel and therefore ought not to be financed by military funds. He suggested that the Library be transferred to some other agency such as the Public Health Service or Library of Congress.

The presence of a large research library in the armed forces began to perplex civilian officials who were trying to make the financial and business part of the military establishment as efficient as possible. The Library was a minor problem but only because its cost was small compared with the sums being spent on ships, planes, and other military items. The Library thus became the subject of study by several committees. The Commission on Medical and Hospital Services of the Armed Forces (frequently called the Hawley Commission after its chairman Major General Paul Hawley) considered the Library in 1948 and recommended, among other things, that it remain in the armed forces, be renamed the Armed Forces Medical Library, be budgeted for by the Army Department, and receive a new building. Off on the side the first Hoover Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government was recommending that the Library be transferred to the proposed Department of Health, Education, and Security (eventually established as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) and be given a new building.

Director McNinch saw that one way out of the dilemma was to have the Army categorize the Library as a "civil function." The budget for the AML would then fall under the Department of the Army Civil Functions Appropriation Act rather than the Military Appropriations Act. Through 1947 and '48 the idea wended its way upward to the Secretary of the Army. In the summer of 1949 the Secretary of Defense adopted the idea by requesting the General Services Administration to include the building in that agency's legislative program.[6]

Within the Defense Department, Comptroller William J. McNeil had disagreed with the Hawley report and suggested that the library be transferred from the Army to the Federal Security Agency or, if that were not possible, that it be budgeted for by the Army as a civil function. McNeil's recommendation and the Hawley report were considered by the Medical Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Defense. This committee, influenced by McNinch and Michael De Bakey, recommended that the Library remain in the Army as a civil function and be given a new building.

The Library was also looked at by another group, the Defense Department's Management Committee, chaired by General Joseph McNarney, set up to find ways of reducing the department's budget. It was estimated that the Library was costing the Army approximately $1,180,000 a year, thus the committee's concern. In the summer of 1950 this committee suggested that the Library be transferred to the proposed Department of Health, Education, and Security or be placed in the Library of Congress or be set up as an independent agency under supervision of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Library.

The Medical Advisory Committee disagreed with the Management Committee and set up a subcommittee on the Library. This subcommittee, composed of Edward Cushing, John Fulton, Henry Viets, Chauncey Leake, McNinch, and De Bakey recommended that the institution be made a civil function of the Defense Department and that the National Research Council's Division of Medical Sciences study the question. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson agreed to the latter in the summer of 1950.

By the spring of 1951 the NRC Committee on the Army Medical Library, chaired by George W. Corner, concluded, among other things, that the Library had become in the fullest sense the National Medical Library, it should continue under the military, have a governing board to direct its policy, and be given a new building.[7] By this time, however, because of the Korean War and unsettled world conditions the Defense Department had to defer action on the Library.

This was a period when officials were trying to unite military agencies. A proposal was made to place the Library under the aegis of the Navy, Air Force, and Army and have the directorship rotate among medical officers of the three services. While the proposal was being debated and moving forward, Rogers labored to persuade his superiors that it would be a step backward to rotate the directorship every few years instead of continuing the policy of having a permanent Director.[8] His view on this point finally prevailed, and when Robert A. Lovett, the Secretary of Defense, signed a directive transforming the Army Medical Library into the Armed Forces Medical Library on March 4, 1952, there was no mention of rotation.[9]

The Library now had a new name.[10] Henceforth the Director was to be an officer of the Army, Navy, or Air Force appointed by the Secretary of the Army with approval of the Secretary of Defense. It was to have an advisory group composed of the Director, a representaative from each service, and up to five civilians appointed by the Director. And it was to have a civilian Librarian, appointed by the Director. Rogers continued on as Director of the renamed institution, Kanardy Taylor continued on as Librarian, and the advisory group was set up a few months later.[11]

During these years when the Library's future was being discussed by high level officials, officers, and committees, the location of the proposed building was being debated anew. The possibility of an atom bomb attack on Washington in a future war caused civil defense planners to object to the erection of new government buildings in the center of town. In addition a building on the perimeter of the town would cost perhaps $2 million less than a building on Capitol Hill, displace fewer persons and businesses, cause no demolition of houses, not contribute to traffic congestion, and allow free parking of automobiles. Director McNinch opposed a site on Capitol Hill because he feared that the Library of Congress would eventually absorb the AML if it were placed there. He came to favor Bethesda where the large Naval Medical Center and expanding National Institutes of Health were close together on opposite sides

of Wisconsin Avenue.[12] On the other hand some other Army officers opposed Bethesda because they felt that if the building were erected there, the Library would be absorbed by the Navy or Public Health Service. Many officers and civilians preferred a site at Walter Reed, but as time passed more and more of them came to favor Bethesda.

By 1949 Surgeon General Raymond Bliss had decided on Bethesda. In March 1953 Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson told the Secretary of the Navy to plan, budget for, and construct the building at the Naval Medical Center.

The Navy gave Commander John A. Oley the task of preparing plans for the building and stationed him at the Library in April 1953 as a special assistant to Rogers. After attending a summer course in medical librarianship at Emory University and visiting several new library buildings throughout the country, Oley began to chart the flow of operations in the AML, survey all jobs, estimate the space that would be required in the future, and draft diagrammatic plans. Rogers thought his plans were excellent and showed them to Keyes Metcalf, the AFML's consultant and one of the most knowledgeable persons in the United States in regard to library structures. Metcalf said of them: "I think these are one of the best statements of requirements for a library building that I've ever seen." The Navy used Oley's data in making sketches and estimating the cost of the building.[13]

Commander Oley retired in September 1955. The following year Robert W. Severance, formerly librarian at Baylor and more recently deputy director of the Army Library, came to AFML as Rogers' assistant to do further work on the plans, act as liaison with architects and contractors, draw up a list of equipment for the new structure, and plan the move.

In the summer of 1955 Congress appropriated $350,000 for the preparation of plans and specifications of the building.[14] Later that year Wilson reviewed the apportionments of appropriated funds and decided that, because of the size of the defense budget and need for funds elsewhere, the Library would have to be deferred again. Therefore the $350,000 was not spent.

By this time many members of the staff had given up hope of ever seeing a new Library. They had been disappointed so many times that they had come to feel that they would work forever in the old, grimy, run-down structure. The Director's spirits may have been lowest on the day Major General Elbert DeCoursey, who had obtained *his* building for the AFIP, sat along side of Rogers on a Pentagon bus and remarked sadly, "Rogers, you're never going to get that building, you're never going to get it."[15]

Meanwhile earlier in February 1955 the Task Force on Federal Medical Services of the second Hoover Commission released a report recommending that the Armed Forces Medical Library be designated the National Library of Medicine and be transferred to the Smithsonian Institution as a semiautonomous agency with an adequate budget and building.[16] The Defense Department and Bureau of the Butget opposed transfer to the Smithsonian because

President John F. Kennedy greeting members of the Second International Congress on Medical Librarianship, Washington, D.C., 1963.

funds had been appropriated for plans and they doubted the wisdom of placing the Library within the Smithsonian group. Nevertheless the plan appealed to some congressmen. Senators Joseph McCarthy and H. Alexander Smith, along with three representatives, introduced identical bills between June 20 and July 21 to implement the task force proposal.

Thus in the summer of 1955 the Library's future was proceeding along two lines, one stemming from the Hoover Commission aimed at converting the Library into a semi-independent agency within the Smithsonian Institution, the other, from the Defense Department, intending to retain the Library in the armed forces with a new building at Naval Medical Center.

At this juncture Senators Lister Hill and John Kennedy, both influential in health legislation, became interested in the Library. In September members of their staffs began to develop legislation that would unite the Library with the medical exhibits of the Smithsonian into an independent agency to be named "The National Library and Museum of Health."

Director Rogers received a draft of the bill in early 1956. He opposed it for several reasons. He felt that the proposed Library-museum would have a difficult time as an independent agency (as, for example, the National Archives had before it was absorbed into the Federal Security Agency); the museum ought to be the subject of separate legislation, and the best course would be to attach the Library to the Public Health Service and give it a building on the NIH grounds in Bethesda.

The bill was rewritten and introduced by Senator Hill on March 13, 1956. Under the terms of the bill the Library would become an independent agency named the National Library of Medicine governed by a Board of Regents

composed of the 4 Surgeons General, the Librarian of Congress, and 12 other knowledgeable individuals appointed by the President. The Board would have the responsibility of acquiring a site, erecting a building, advising the Director, and carrying out other duties.[17]

Several years previously Surgeon General Leonard Scheele of the Public Health Service had been asked if his organization would harbor the Library. Scheele was enthusiastic about the idea but laid down the policy that the service would accept, not fight for, the institution. Between 1949 and 1955 the majority of Army officials wrestling with the problem of the Library came to favor the PHS as the Library's new home if the Army were to relinquish it. Even before the Hill-Kennedy bill was introduced sentiment was swinging from the Library as an independent agency toward the Library as a PHS agency. Senator Hill preferred that the Library be independent but was willing to see it enter the PHS. Scheele obtained permission from the Secretary of HEW to bid for the Library and directed his staff to draft a bill for the purpose.[18] The bill was well received. Rogers, after considering it, preferred the placement of the Library in the PHS to other alternatives.

In hearings on the Hill-Kennedy, McCarthy, and Smith bills before the Senate Subcommittee on Health, April 10 and 11, 1956, Scheele presented a strong case for the PHS, reinforced by arguments from the Bureau of the Budget and prominent medical librarians. On the other hand Leonard Carmichael of the Smithsonian gave reasons why his Institution did not want the Library. During the following month the committee redrafted the Hill-Kennedy bill to transfer the Library to the PHS, and on June 11 the Senate passed the measure.

The bill specified that the building be erected in or near the District of Columbia. Earlier an editorial writer in the Chicago *Sunday Tribune* had praised Hill and Kennedy's efforts to assist the Library and had suggested that the building be erected in Chicago where there were universities, fine libraries, five medical schools, plus the headquarters of the American Medical Association and several other medical societies.[19] This started a campaign by civic leaders and physicians to persuade Congress to place the Library in that city. Chicago newspapers ran editorials calling their town the Nation's number one medical center. Mayor Richard Daley appointed a 19-person National Medical Library Committee. Chicago's Medical Center Commission offered, free, 9 acres of ground valued at $500,000 for the site. Chicago's council passed a resolution endorsing the campaign. Eleven representatives and one senator from Illinois introduced bills identical to the Hill-Kennedy bill except that they specified Chicago as the Library's new home.[20]

On June 19 the bill introduced by Illinois Representative O'Brien was the subject of hearings by the House Administration Committee. Mayor Daley, Senator Paul Douglas, Morris Fishbein, and 16 other prominent Chicagoans traveled to Washington and argued persuasively for their town. Thirteen physicians, librarians, educators and administrators appeared a few days later in favor of the Washington area.

The House Committee voted to take no action on the O'Brien bill, and thus on its companion bills. This paved the way for the House to take up the Hill-Kennedy bill introduced by Representative Percy Priest.[21] The House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, to whom the Priest bill was referred, avoided a fight over the site by removing the words "in or near the District of Columbia" from the bill and leaving the selection to the proposed Board of Regents. The House passed the measure on July 23. The Senate agreed to the House amendments, and President Eisenhower approved the bill on August 3.

The armed forces had supported the Library to the best of its ability, but the military's primary job was the defense of the United States and it needed the funds it could obtain from Congress for guns, ammunition, food, pay, and everything else required by the infantry, artillery, air force, and other units. It was probable that the Army would never have been able to pass along sufficient funds to enable the Library to rise to its full potential as the Nation's medical library and center of biomedical communications. The act of 1956 raised the status of the institution from that of a departmental to that of a national library, it reinforced the Library's management by the addition of a knowledgeable, influential Board of Regents; but most importantly it moved the institution into the mainstream of American medicine by placing it in the Nation's primary health organization, the Public Health Service. There the Library rounded out research, prevention of disease, and all the other health-related activities of the service.

During the years when the future of the Library was being debated by civilian and military committees and officials, McNinch and Rogers were aided by a number of prestigious physicians, men who knew from experience how valuable the Library was to the medical profession and who believed that it should be enlarged, given greater support, and be housed in a modern building. They had served on committees and subcommittees, acted as consultants and advisors, and they championed the cause of the AML in meetings where the Library seemed of relative unimportance compared with other items. Among the most active were John Fulton, Chauncey Leake, Michael De Bakey, Worth Daniels, and Alan Gregg. De Bakey supported the Library in committees and the Hoover Commission. Daniels swayed congressmen, including Representative Percy Priest, to vote for the institution. Alan Gregg of the Rockefeller Foundation worked quietly behind the scenes. The assistance rendered by these persons is immeasurable but was significant.

After the act was passed the Bureau of the Budget and Department of Defense arranged to transfer the Library's property, funds and personnel from the Army to the Public Health Service. On October 1, 1956, the Armed Forces Medical Library became the National Library of Medicine, approximately 80 years after John Shaw Billings began calling it by that name.

In the months that followed President Eisenhower appointed regents. The Board held its first meeting on March 20, 1957. The chief topic was the selection

of a site for the building. The majority of regents favored the Washington area, and they spent half a day considering 10 locations that had been suggested including Capitol Hill, the Mall, Naval Medical Center, Soldiers Home, Naval Observatory, and National Institutes of Health.[22] During the second meeting, April 29, the members visited proposed sites, discussed and rejected the Chicago offer, and voted for a site on the old Glenbrook Golf Course located on the southeast corner of the campus of the National Institutes of Health.[23]

Construction of the Bethesda Building

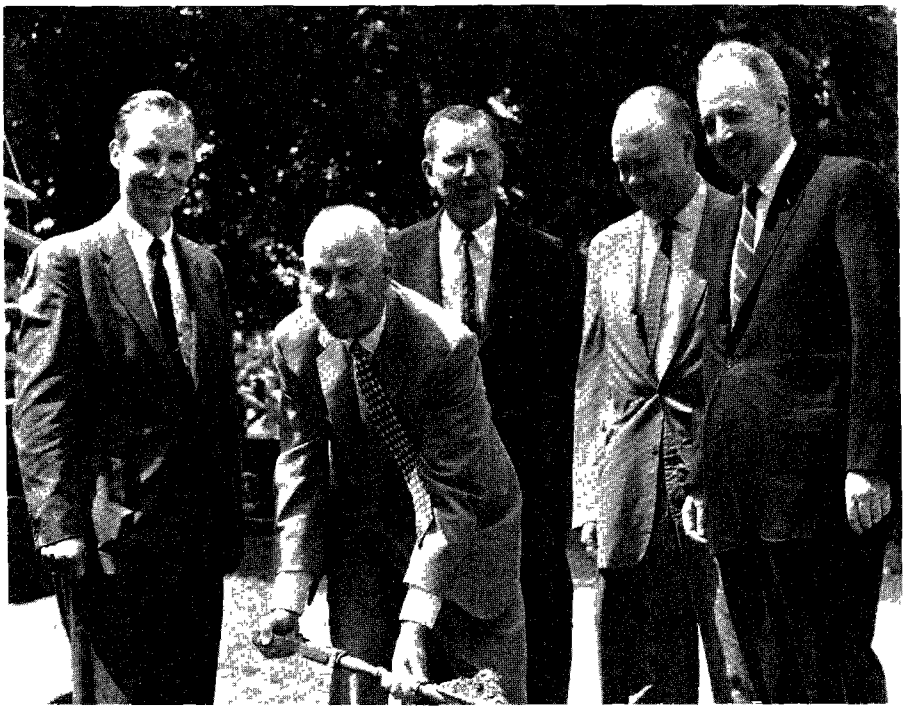
Neither the President nor the House had requested funds to erect a new building, and for a time it seemed that the planning that had been going on for 40 years would continue indefinitely.[24] But Senator Hill, chairman of the subcommittee responsible for the Library, convinced the full Senate Appropriations Committee to add $6,950,000 to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's appropriation.[25] Congress agreed to the amendment. President Eisenhower signed the act on August 1, 1958.[26] The Second Supplemental Appropriation Act of 1956 had appropriated $350,000.[27] Therefore $7,300,000 was now available to plan, construct, and equip a new building.

Under contract the New York firm of Robert B. O'Connor and Walter H. Kilham, which had designed library buildings for Princeton, Colgate, Louisville, and other schools, recommended that new plans based on Oley's statement of requirements be prepared. The firm estimated the cost of a building as $8,774,000 compared with the 1955 cost of $5,150,000. The Bureau of the Budget was unhappy with the increase in cost; it wanted the cafeteria and an auditorium to be deleted from the plans, and it urged that the structure be placed closer to existing NIH buildings. The Bureau limited the cost to $7,300,000 and reduced the planned area to 230,000 square feet of space, but it later withdrew its objections to the location of the building and to the inclusion of a small cafeteria.

On June 24, 1957, the General Services Administration contracted with O'Connor and Kilham to develop preliminary plans for the building. The Public Building Service approved the plans on January 30, 1958, but the Bureau of Budget objected because the floor area was 5,000 square feet larger then the approved figure. The Bureau finally compromised at 232,200 square feet. The architects reached this footage by transferring mechanical equipment from the mezzanine to C level, shortening the bay module in one dimension from 21′ 4″ to 21′ 1″, and by eliminating areas of the mezzanine to the north and south cantilevered over the hall below.

Through 1958 plans were developed, many staff members presenting suggestions that were used. Keyes Metcalf gave advice. Bids were accepted for contracts in 1959, the Arthur Venneri Company being the lowest of 17 construction bidders at $4,370,000.[28]

During the afternoon of sunny, warm June 12, 1959, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on the site to mark the start of construction. Senator Hill

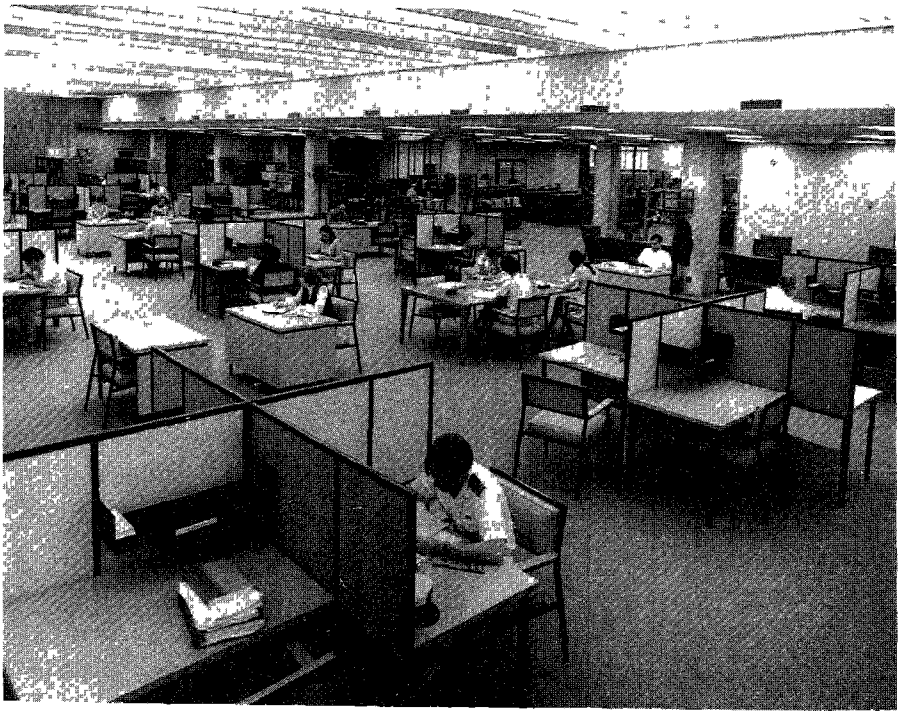


Senator Lister Hill shovels the first spadeful of earth at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Library building, June 12, 1959. Looking on, from left, are Surgeon General Leroy Burney, chairman of the Board of Regents Champ Lyons, Congressman Melvin R. Laird, and Arthur Flemming, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

dug the first earth while former Surgeon General Leroy Burney, Representative Melvin R. Laird, Senator Gordon Allott, Secretary Arthur S. Flemming, and other distinguished persons looked on. A few days later on June 17 machines and men began to excavate in earnest.

The digging went well until September when the excavators unexpectedly encountered hard rock. The rock formation had to be blasted, which increased the cost by almost $200,000, infuriated neighbors who claimed their homes were being damaged by shock waves, and slowed the work. Unusually cold, snowy, winter weather delayed the work further. By mid-1960 construction was 4 to 5 months behind schedule, and the contractor began employing two shifts of men to speed the job.

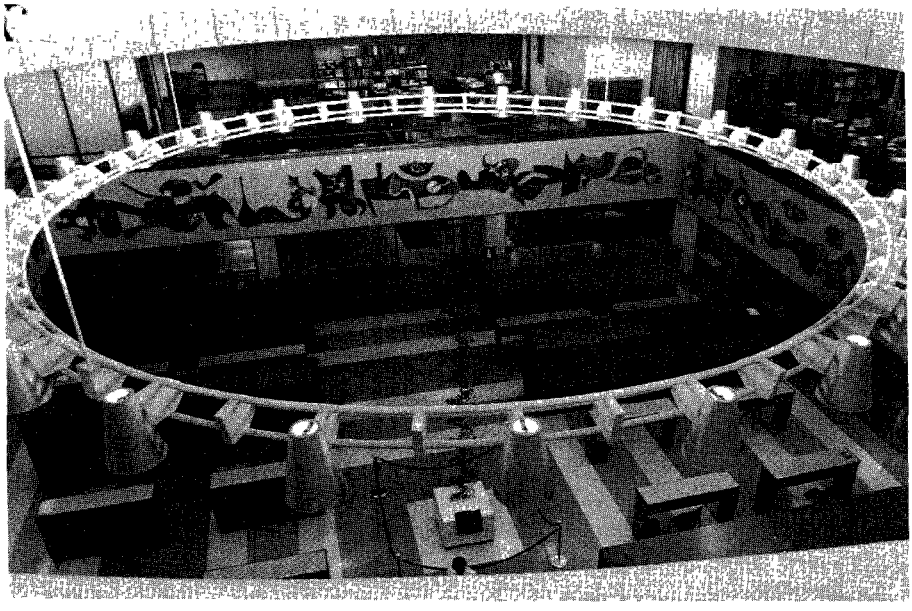
By December 1961 the building was about 90 percent completed. Stacks were being installed in one level and the other two levels were almost finished. On the afternoon of the 14th of the month, dedication ceremonies were held in the main reading room. Secretary Abraham Ribicoff and Senator Hill spoke,



Main reading room, shortly after the Bethesda building opened

and Greek Ambassador Alexis S. Liatis presented a cutting from the plane tree on the Island of Cos, the tree under which, according to tradition, Hippocrates taught students.[29] More than 1,200 guests attended the dedication. Letters and telegrams of congratulations came from all over the world. The following morning a special symposium, "Books and Medicine," was held

When completed, the building sat on a knoll facing the main traffic thoroughfare, Wisconsin Avenue. Measuring 276 by 192 feet, constructed of reinforced concrete faced with limestone, the structure was topped by a roof having an eye-catching hyperbolic paraboloid form. Within was 231,560 square feet of floor space, and a quarter million linear feet of space for shelves with an ultimate capacity of 1.5 million volumes. Half of the structure was below ground, a precaution against the kind of atom bomb attack envisioned by civil defense planners of the 1950's. The defensive planning led to the insertion of narrow, recessed windows on the main floor and a secondary use of the building as an air raid shelter. Containers of food, medical kits, and other civil defense emergency supplies were stored against the walls on the lower levels for many years. The top floor, the mezzanine, contained offices The main floor held reading rooms, the card catalog, the history of medicine reading room and offices, and



Public card catalog area. The mural around the mezzanine was the work of Frans Wildenhain. A model of a section of a deoxyribonucleic acid is on exhibition.

large rooms for indexers, catalogers, and reference librarians. The bottom three levels, underground, provided stack and work space.[30]

The Library Moves to Bethesda

While the building was being constructed two staff members, Ray W. Grim and William H. Kurth, were planning the movement of literature, furniture, and equipment from the main building, the temporary buildings, and the Allen Memorial Library in Cleveland. They identified furniture and equipment to be retained and pieces to be discarded; figured out special handling procedures for certain items; selected and ordered new equipment; drew sketches of floors of the new building showing phones, power sources, and placement of furniture for use of movers; notified the book trade and library profession of the coming change in address; instructed staff members who would participate in the move; determined the order of priority for moving sections of the Library in such a way that operations would be disrupted as little as possible; and tried to foresee every other thing that would have to be done.[31]

A survey indicated that the degree of insect infestation in the building was low, particularly considering the age of the structure, but to kill any bugs that might otherwise be moved with the books a team of exterminators visited the

Library on three successive Friday evenings and sprayed insecticide mainly in the basement. When the move began the books on book trucks on the loading dock were dusted with low pressure compressed air before being placed in moving vans.

Ten firms looked through the old building and then submitted bids to move the Library to Bethesda; Davidson Transfer and Storage Company's was the lowest. Davidson trucks begain to transport books on March 3, 1962. In Cleveland the History of Medicine Division, separated from the Library for 20 years, was loaded into four vans and driven to Bethesda, guarded by a Pinkerton detective in each cab and insured in transit by Lloyd's of London for $6 million.

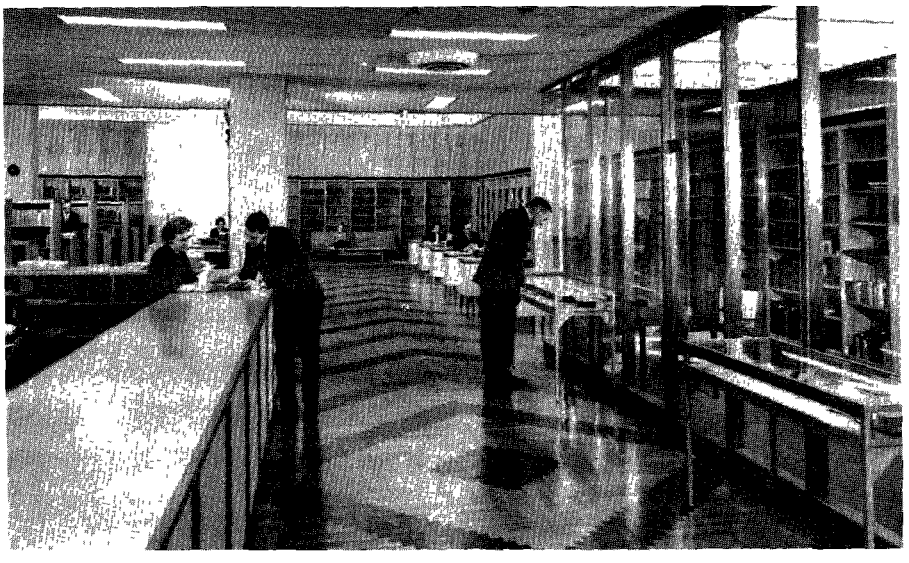
On April 6, halfway through the move, the building was turned over to the government, and the first staff members moved in. Hundreds of minor and a few major deficiencies were being corrected, and breakdowns expected in any new large building occurred. Two of the three elevators stopped running. Heat stopped flowing to one section of the building during cold weather, forcing librarians to wear overcoats. Filing cabinets for the Director's office were a sixteenth of an inch too large to fit into their allotted space. Despite precautions, pieces of ancient furniture from the old building turned up, some of it of unidentifiable use. On the whole the move proceeded very well, and the doors were opened to the public on the morning of April 16.

The last book was removed from the old building on the Mall at 12:17 p.m. on May 3 and shelved in Bethesda by Rogers at 5 p.m. It had taken 60 days to move the largest medical library in America, but so well had the transfer been planned that scarcely any interruption occurred in service.

Death of the Building on the Mall

After the Library moved, a decision was made to preserve the building. It was one of the oldest structures in the country designed specifically as a Library and museum; the country's first true postgraduate medical school was established there in 1893; many famous scientists had researched there (Walter Reed and James Carroll on yellow fever, Frederick Russell on typhoid vaccine, George Callender on wound ballistics, to name a few), many noted librarians and scholars had labored there, many great bibliographies had been born there. The General Services Administration rehabilitated the structure. The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, now in its own building at Walter Reed, planned to install some of its histopathology laboratories. In 1962 the museum moved back after being lodged in temporary structures for 15 years. The museum had always attracted tourists and after it returned to its old home it was visited by hundreds of thousands of persons annually.

In 1964 the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings studied the building and, upon its recommendation, the Secretary of the Interior approved it as a Registered National Historic Landmark.[32] It was described as "a massive structure, carefully designed and executed. Tasteful terra cotta ornamentation helped to make the building attractive as well as useful." Along with the Wood-



Reading room of the History of Medicine Division. On the right is the glass-enclosed incunabula room.

row Wilson House, Clara Barton House, and Naval Observatory, it was one of eight structures in the Washington area in the National Landmark Registry.

But hardly had the museum settled down when President and Mrs. Johnson persuaded Joseph H. Hirshhorn to give his collection of sculpture and paintings to the United States. The Smithsonian Institution, under whose umbrella the collection would be placed, wanted the site upon which the museum stood for the Hirshhorn Museum, and it wanted the medical museum collection. S. Dillon Ripley, secretary of the Smithsonian, told a House committee: "[the building] is not in my estimation a distinguished architectural edifice, though it may have sentimental value."[33]

Voices were raised in protest against the destruction of the building. Kenneth M. Brinkhous, professor of pathology at the University of North Carolina, testified in a Senate hearing: "I have great respect for history, and where important things are done . . . It was a good example of the late last century governmental buildings and for what was done in it I think it ought to be preserved. . . ." Frank M. Townsend, former director of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, said: ". . . I can't understand why the Smithsonian Institution insists on this exact side on the Mall for the Hirshhorn Museum. There is more space on the Mall than is necessary for both these buildings . . . we need not destroy a national historic landmark in order to provide for a new museum. . . ." Elbert DeCoursey, another former director of the Institute of Pathology, remarked in a House hearing: ". . . as a physician I am a humanist also, and I hate to see this building a historical site one year and the next year

see it torn down." Senator Daniel K Inouye noted " . we have been receiving a lot of letters from constituents for and against and most of the letters opposing the establishment of the Hirshhorn Museum at this location have come from people who are sympathetic with the medical profession and suggesting that one of the major reasons for not moving [the medical museum] is that this present AFIP is a historical landmark "[34] The forces that desired the land for the location of the Hirshhorn Museum were too strong, and the decision was made to raze the structure.

On the evening of October 4, 1968, the Medical Department began a ceremonial closing of the building. After listening to speeches and music the guests took a final stroll through the rooms At 10 o'clock the muffled drums of the United States Marine Band echoed throughout the building and the drum major led a procession down the stairs to the front door As the strains of *Auld Lang Syne* filled the halls the curator locked the door to the public for the last time.

Notes

[1] Information on buildings used by the Library may be found in Space Information, Old Building Restoration, and other files in MS/C/309, *Army Medical Library News*, Henry, *Armed Forces Institute of Pathology*, annual reports of the Library, reports of U S Army Inspector General filed in HMD

[2] Information on repairs and renovations may be found in *Army Medical Library News*, *Army Medical Library Bulletin*, and annual reports of the Library Employees, among them Howard P Drew, Jr , Stella Schehl, and Joseph McGroarty, also provided information

[3] File Elevator Project History MS/C/309

[4] Robert Burdette Austin was born in Sheridan, Wyo , Nov 10, 1905 He attended at various times George Washington University, Columbia University School of Law, and Western Reserve University School of Library Science He came to the Library in September 1928 and served in various capacities until September 1961 Thereafter he was associate librarian at Washington University School of Medicine until October 1967 and administrative assistant at the Francis A Countway Library of Medicine, November 1967 to September 1968 In the 1940's Austin became interested in early American medical publications He slowly and laboriously compiled bibliographical information on those that appeared before 1820 His useful, authoritative book on the subject, *Early American Medical Imprints A Guide for Works Printed in the United States, 1668–1820*, was published in 1961

[5] Documents providing information on the proposed Library building, 1945 onward, are in MS/C/309, MS/C/47, MS/C/345 and MS/C/205 See also records Hon Consultants and records Advisory Group

[6] Chronology of correspondence regarding civil functions for AML, May 1947 to 1950 file Transfer of AML MS/C/309

[7] Report of NRC Comm to Secretary of Defense, May 25, 1951

[8] Correspondence in NLM, including memo, Rogers to Gen Hays, sub , Plans for the Armed Forces Medical Library, Oct 30, 1951

Former Director McNinch, now stationed in Japan, opposed the plan of rotating the directorship He believed so strongly that the best course for the Library was to continue under a permanent director, Rogers, that he offered to return to the United States to argue against the proposal See notes by McNinch NLM

[9] DOD Directive 20 33-3, May 4, 1952 copy in *AML News*, April 1952

[10] The date was May 9, 1952, when DA General Order 49 redesignated the Army Medical Library as the Armed Forces Medical Library

[11] Papers and Proceedings of the Armed Forces Medical Library Advisory Group, 1952–1956 copy in Archival Collection

[12] For Director McNinch's views favoring a location in Bethesda see letter, McNinch to M Cummings, Mar 5, 1974, and notes by McNinch in NLM

[13] Oley, "Basic Elements in the Planning of a New Building for the Armed Forces Medical Library," *Bull Med Lib Assoc* 42 454–7 (1954) See also annual reports of the Library regarding

Oley's activities Sketches of the proposed new building based on Oley's work are in NLM

[14] 84th Cong , P L 219, Aug 4, 1955

[15] Tape-recorded autobiography of Rogers NLM

[16] Report is reprinted in 84th Cong , 2d sess , Hearings before the Subcommittee on Health on S 3430, pp 52–54, also in minutes of meeting of AFML advisory group, Oct 28, 1955

[17] 84th Cong , 2d sess , bill S 3430, "To promote the progress of Medicine and to advance the national health and welfare by creating a National Library of Medicine "

The composition of the Board was changed slightly as the measure progressed

[18] Committee Print, Proposed Legislation on the National Library of Medicine, May 18, 1956 Committee Print No 2, May 22 Hearings before the Subcommittee on Health on S 3430, pp 28–31

[19] Editorial, "A medical treasury threatened," Apr 1, 1956

[20] Copies of many Chicago newspaper clippings are in NLM

[21] 84th Cong , 2d sess , Bill H R 11524, introduced May 29 See Theodore G Klumpp, "How Congress Almost Aborted the National Library of Medicine," *Med Times* 101 40–51 (December 1973)

[22] Information of the Regents' meetings is from the Minutes copies in Archival Collection

[23] The golf course was owned by NIH but operated by Montgomery County It remained open until Mar 31, 1959

[24] The progress of the planning, construction, and equipping of the building may be traced through minutes of staff conferences, MS/C/295, minutes of the Board of Regents, *NLM News, NLM Bulletin,* annual reports of the Library

[25] Senate Report No 1719, pp 37–8 H R Bill 11645, p 33

[26] P L 85–580

[27] P L 84–219, Aug 4, 1955

[28] It was said that Arthur Vennen spent much time personally overseeing construction of the building, was proud of the results, and regarded it as his monument in the Nation's capital

[29] The tree was planted in a brief ceremony near the Library on May 11, 1962

[30] Building Data and Floor plan, National Library of Medicine PHS pamphlet, (1961) Foster E Mohrhardt, "A Building for the National Library of Medicine," *Libri* 12 235–9 (1962), lists several articles about the structure

[31] Kurth and Grim wrote a book to assist others who would need advice in like situations *Moving a Library* (1966)

[32] Letter, A Clark Stratton, Acting Dir , Nat Park Service, to Stephen Ailes, Secretary of the Army, Jan 14, 1965 copy at AMM

[33] House of Representatives, Report of Proceedings, Hearings before Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, H R 15121, H R 15122, H R 15123, H R 15312 to provide for the establishment of the Joseph H Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and for other purposes June 5, 1966 Copy at AMM

The team of librarians who examined the Library in 1943 noted, "The fact that the building has been in use for over fifty-six years is ample indication that it was well-planned for its time As far as the surveyors can learn, no other great research library in the United States still occupies a building completed as early as 1887 and not materially added to since" Keyes D Metcalf, et al , *The National Medical Library Report of a Survey of the Army Medical Library,* p 5

"Dr Billings must have had a good deal to do with the planning and should be given credit for the basic strong points which characterize the building Today, 73 years after construction, it is the oldest library building housing a great research collection in the United States The University of Pennsylvania Library was completed four years later, early in 1891, it is now being replaced by a new library The Cornell University Library was completed in October, 1891, a new central library for Cornell is now under construction, and the old building after gutting and complete rebuilding, except for the sturdy stone walls, will be retained as an undergraduate library The Newberry Library, the fourth oldest, was completed late in 1893, and detailed studies are now being made in regard to its future In many ways the Army Medical Library was a better planned building than either of the university libraries listed " Keyes D Metcalf, "Housing the Library," *Bull Med Lib Ass* 49 379 (1961)

[34] Joseph H Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Hearings before the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, United States Senate, 89th Congress, Second Session, on S 3389, a Bill to provide for the establishment of the Joseph H Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden June 3, 1966