

BACTERIOLOGY



Fig. 1. 1956, bacteriology with T-16 still standing in front. series 9/3, Bacteriology, ns-564]

Built in 1953 to house a rapidly expanding and world renowned bacteriology department, the bacteriology building was named in 1977 for ex-President E. B. Fred, who had been a member of the bacteriology faculty. A major addition was built in 1979 on the south east corner.

Bacteriology at the University has had a long and distinguished history. The first class in the subject was taught by Dr. William Trelease in the period 1881-1883, and this may have been the first bacteriology course taught at any American University. When Trelease left in 1883, the courses were taken over by professor E. A. Birge, then later (1893) by his pupil, H. L. Russell. Because of the wide range of applications of bacteriology both in the fields of medicine and agriculture, the department grew rapidly. In 1914 it was decided that the department of bacteriology should be removed from the college of Letters and Science and attached partly to the college of Agriculture, and partly to the medical school. This division was partly due to the availability of laboratory space in those colleges that was lacking in L&S. The quarters of the bacteriology department began in South Hall (at that time called Agriculture Hall). In 1903, lab space was moved to the new agriculture hall while lecture space was still in south hall. These facilities were increasingly unsuitable, as enrollment, especially graduate enrollment grew. Early in the post WW II era the department had as many as 1600 students, and taught short courses as well.¹

Planning for a new facility was begun in 1951. The regents decided on the location at Linden and Babcock Drives in July 1951. This location required that Babcock Drive be relocated about 150 feet farther west. At the same meeting, the regents voted to release funds for architectural services on the building. During late 1951 and early 1952 the constructional committee met with faculty and staff to plan the new facility. The regents voted to retain Brimeyer, Grellinger and Rose of Milwaukee as architects for bacteriology. After consulting with faculty and the planning committee during the rest of 1951, the architects began submitting plans in April of 1952. It was clear that the first proposals

were too large to be built with the \$1.75 million appropriation, and several iterations of the design were done during the spring of 1952. The final version reduced the original size by 92 percent. Estimates made in July 1952 showed the cost to be just under the budget. In July 1952, the regents approved the preliminary plans for bacteriology and directed the architects to prepare final plans. The preparations of final plans and specifications took almost a full year. This was because the design of the building was modern, the equipment and furnishings complicated, and the utilities involved. Not until July of 1953 were contracts for construction awarded. The general contractor was J. P. Cullen & Son of Janesville for \$812,494. Total contracts awarded came to \$1,706,640.²

Groundbreaking took place on July 27, 1953, and included department chairman W. C. Frazier, professor Elizabeth McCoy and president E. B. Fred. Drawings and descriptions of the "strikingly modern building" had been published throughout the summer of 1953 and it was hoped that the building would be available by the fall of 1955. The site was difficult, due to the moving of Babcock Drive, which required relaying all basic utilities on that part of campus. The extreme complexity of the modern lab equipment caused many delays as specifications were altered and suppliers located. This was the first really modern laboratory building on campus for decades, except for the state lab of Hygiene, whose furnishings were used as a model for bacteriology.³

In August of 1955 building superintendent and professor E. M. Foster notified the faculty and students of bacteriology that the contractors had issued keys to staff for the parts of the building that were complete. This included floors two three and four. Gradually during the winter of 1955 the building was turned over to the department. 1956 saw a number of problems resolved that included defective equipment and leaking windows. The building was a four story 176 foot (E-W) by 61 foot (N-S) rectangle, with a basement and one story lab section to the north, and a five story tower section rose at the junction of the two rectangles.

The building was framed with steel reinforced concrete, and steel beams and columns in the northern lab section. Floors were of poured concrete. The International style was in large part a style of showing off the capabilities of the new construction materials. This is reflected in the entirely horizontal lines of the facades, and the unbroken runs of aluminum windows. There are no vertical components at all, thus demonstrating that the exterior walls were entirely non-load-bearing.

The north section of the building was comprised entirely of two very large (42 by 64 feet) undergraduate labs. The rest of the first floor contained classrooms, many smaller laboratories, and a lecture hall seating 175. On the second and third floors, were graduate and research labs, faculty and staff offices. And on the fourth floor were animal rooms and labs for investigation of animal infections. The entire building was faced with red brick to match nearby agriculture buildings, and the first floor entry lobbies were trimmed with cut stone and granite steps.

In July 1977 the regents voted to name the building after E. B. Fred, president emeritus, and ex-bacteriology faculty member.

Within twenty years of completion the bacteriology building was too small. The crowding was principally in the graduate office and lab areas. In 1979 a three level, 63 by 200 foot addition by Bowen Kanazawa partnership was built on the south east corner of the building. The lowest level is mechanical space, while the upper two levels are entirely labs and offices. The addition includes a new entrance on the northeast side, whose windows extend around an exterior corner in the best International style tradition.

1) Curti and Carstensen: *The University of Wisconsin, A History*, v.1 p. 360; University directories; *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, October 1914 p. 14. Oral History, E. B. Fred.

2) *Regents Minutes*, July 21, 1951 p. 26, January 12, 1952, July 12, 1952, July 11, 1953, *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, October 1953, p. 17.

3) *Daily Cardinal*, July 30, 1953, *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, June 1953, p. 14; *Wisconsin Country Magazine*, May 1953 p. 9, October 1955, p. 4,