

CARROT AND BEET LAB



Fig. 1. The carrot and beet lab 1994. The building was constructed in the fall of 1910 as an animal isolation facility. Not visible in this picture is the 12 by 15 foot protrusion on the back of the building, originally a crematorium. [Author Photo AP-3]

In 1912, Dean of the Agricultural College Harry Russell notes that a "one story brick building equipped with a crematory furnace has been constructed at an expense of \$1500, west of the farm buildings." He further says that the building was designed as a quarantine establishment and is in constant use for the production of hog cholera anti-serum.¹

Hog cholera was a highly contagious viral disease widespread at the turn of the century. Dr. Burr Beach of the University of Minnesota, who came to Wisconsin in 1911, applied modern sanitation and refinement to a Minnesota breeder's inoculation technique to produce hog cholera serum. He was in charge of the University's manufacture of serum.²

According to the monthly reports of campus architect Arthur Peabody, the building was planned and specified in September 1910. Construction began October 1, 1910, and in the December 1910 report Peabody says the building could be used when required. Unusual among permanent University buildings, there was no contractor hired. Mr. Peabody oversaw the construction, which was performed by University laborers, and paid for with funds requisitioned by Peabody.³

The inclusion of a crematory furnace as part of the building was due to an outbreak of anthrax in the University dairy herd in the summer of 1909. A single animal was infected from waste discarded by the state lab of hygiene, and before a correct diagnosis was made, infected the barns and stalls, and the land where it was buried. During the fall and winter of 1909 losses in the cow and swine herds were considerable. The need for quarantine and disposal facilities was the impetus behind the construction of this building.⁴

A second serum plant was erected in 1914. After the control of hog cholera in the state in the 1930s, the building was turned over to other uses. In 1960 the building was repaired and modified by the installation of a cold room, and the change of the crematorium to a utility room. The building has every since been in use as the carrot and beet lab.⁵

1) *Regent's Report*, 1911-1912, p. 100; *Report of the Agricultural Experiment Station*, 1913.

2) *The Capital Times*, January 4, 1953.

3) Architect's Reports, Executive Committee Papers, September-December, 1910.

4) Report of the Director, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1909-1910, pp. 7-10.

5) Planning and Construction hanging file 7/3.