

OLD LAKE LABORATORY



Fig. 1. Lake lab looking north from Park Street c. 1960. [Series 9/2, Lake Lab, x25-699]



Fig. 2. The "remodelled" Lake Lab, from the lake side, 1994. Note the large oak to the east of the building in both photos. [Author Photo, AP-17]

In 1931, in the depth of the depression, to replace a lab destroyed in the building of the tank house, the regents approved the construction of a marine biology laboratory on Lake Mendota.¹ The architect was Arthur Peabody, and the construction was done by the Vogle Brothers (for \$4435). The total cost of the lab was \$7,500, paid out of the state's emergency fund. Zoologist Arthur Hasler (later director of limnology), who occupied the building beginning in 1937, said that until he moved in, the lake lab was never used as a laboratory. Hasler said that zoology chairman Michael Guyer had built the lab and that Guyer assigned it as living quarters for graduate students.²

The building was two stories with basement, a twenty two by thirty four foot red-brick structure with a concrete foundation and a hipped roof with asphalt shingles (see Fig. 1.) The basement level was a boat house, the first floor had several small rooms and a staircase to the upper level. The second floor was occupied by a single large laboratory, with a door on the south side at the level of Park Street. With the arrival of Hasler in 1937, the building became a laboratory. It remained in that capacity until 1961 when the Limnology Building was finished. At that time the old lake lab became storage and occasional lab space.

In summer 1980, partly because the upper stories were in bad repair, and because the building had always blocked the beautiful view from Park Street over Lake Mendota, the top two stories were removed from the building, and replaced with a concrete deck (see Fig. 2). The basement remains intact and is used for boat storage by the Union Hooper's Club.

1) Executive Committee Minutes, September 25, 1931; Regent's Minutes, January 20, 1932.

2) Arthur Hasler, oral history, University oral history project.