

SMALL ANIMAL HOUSE



Fig. 1. The small animal building in 1994. Note the tiny doors on the side of the building. They were for monkey egress in Dr. Clark's day, and boarded up in Dr. Shackelford's. [Author Photo, AP-23]

Built as a virus research laboratory in 1941 for Drs. Paul Clark and Conrad Elvehjem, this building housed Dr. Shackelford's fur research program from 1951 until 1974. It is now storage space.

Dr. Paul F. Clark came to the University in 1914 from The Rockefeller Institute, where he had studied the polio virus under the renowned Simon Flexner. Dr. Clark took charge of medical bacteriology, in the fledgling medical school. Facilities for Clark's study of viruses were severely limited, and his work was undertaken in the "animal research laboratory", later the meats lab. This location was the best that could be found for the work covered by a \$62,000 grant from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, to be under the control of Drs. Paul Clark and Conrad Elvehjem, received in March 1941. These were highly unsuitable quarters. Dr. Clark later (1969) said that "our cramped animal quarters made it impossible to quarantine our animals adequately before using them in experiments". The regents voted to add \$3500 in unassigned funds to a \$12,000 WARF grant for the construction of a small animal house for the research studies in infantile paralysis. This building was first going to be located between the highway lab and the mining and metallurgy buildings, on the engineering campus. Without explanation, the location was changed to the far west campus

which later became Herrick Drive. Probably this was to eliminate the presence of diseased animals in a central campus area; the west end location already held the hog cholera labs and the state animal disease control lab. Contracts for the small animal building were let by the regents on July 26, 1941, with the general contract going to George Nelson and Son for \$7,149. Total contracts let were for \$15,500, with funding coming from a \$12,000 WARF grant and the \$3500 balance from the regents unassigned fund.¹

The building was a 34 by 50 foot, one story wood frame building sheathed in asbestos insulation board. The building had special features due to Dr. Clark's use of monkeys. These included special sealing of the walls to prevent the monkeys from stuffing them with trash, and small doors to the outside which allowed the monkeys (*Macaca mullata*) access to the outdoor pens from their individual indoor pens.

Dr. Clark spoke highly of the new facility, and gave much of the credit to his colleague Dr. Conrad Elvehjem. After a decade (1942-1952) of research on polio and other viral diseases, and the effects of nutrition on disease in the new building, Dr. Clark reached the mandatory retirement age of 70 and was retired in 1952; by this time Elvehjem was dean of the graduate school, and "we both realized that our story had been told and gave up the 'virus laboratory' for nutritional studies in fur bearing animals"²

The study of fur bearing animals had been going on at the University since October 1937 when two legislators appeared before the board of regents to describe the ravages of disease in silver fox and other fur bearing animals. The regents asked the emergency board for funding and in July 1938 the board appropriated \$10,000 for this use. The 1938 state legislature appropriated \$15,000 per year for fur research in fox and mink. This funding was gradually discontinued in the 1940s. Wisconsin has always been a major producer of mink.³

Into this situation came a young new faculty member named Richard M. Shackelford. He had recently graduated from the genetics program and was offered a position studying the genetics of fur-bearing animals. He accepted the position in 1940 and began his work in quarters in an old barn on the agriculture campus that had been partially destroyed by fire. In 1951 when asked by Dr. Elvehjem if he would like to take over the old "polio lab", he was overjoyed. The regents approved money for remodelling the "polio lab" in September 1951. The monkey cages were removed, but the outside animal doors still remain (see Fig. 1). Dr. Shackelford's mink and fox research program did not survive his retirement in 1974. In 1985, The Virus and Fur Research Building was renamed Herrick Drive 2105, and became the home of the Physical plant director, and part of the sea grant program.⁴

1) Annotated Bibliography, Paul F. Clark, 1969 p. 15. Archives, Paul F. Clark biographical file; Regent's Minutes, January 18, 1941, March 8, 1941, Oral History, Paul Clark, 1972, archives oral history project; Executive Committee meeting, July 26, 1941. Contracts, series 1/8 contract #85-1.

2) Annotated Bibliography, Paul F. Clark, 1969 p. 22. Archives, Paul F. Clark biographical file; p. 22;

3) Regent's Minutes, October 12-13, 1937, August 16, 1938, October 1, 1938, October 29-30, 1937, ; Executive Committee Minutes, June 13, 1938.

4) Regent's Minutes, September 8, 1951, Richard M. Shackelford, interview by the author, fall 1994.