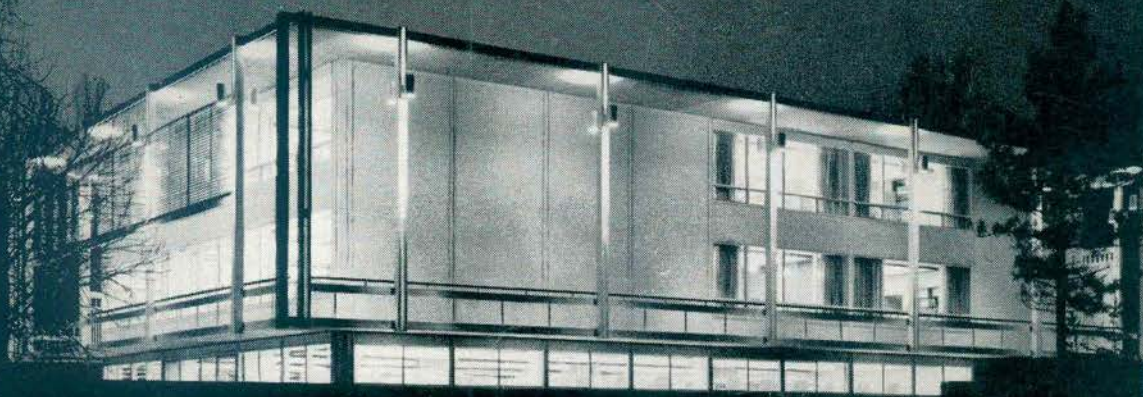


ARCHITECTURAL ISSUE

# *LIBRARY JOURNAL*

FOUNDED 1876 • VOLUME 85, NO. 21 • DECEMBER 1, 1960



*The New Look in Library Buildings  
Campus — County — City*

# LIBRARY JOURNAL

December 1, 1960, Vol. 85, No. 21

Founded 1876 by Melvil Dewey, R. R. Bowker,  
and Frederick Leyoldt

COVER: *A night view of the new Edward Clark Crossett Library at Bennington College, Vermont (Ezra Stoller photo)*

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PUBLISHER: DANIEL MELCHER

THE LIBRARY JOURNAL is published by the  
R. R. Bowker Co., 62 West 45th St., New York  
36, N.Y. Issued twice a month, from September  
through June; monthly in July and August.  
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

THE LIBRARY JOURNAL is indexed in *Li-  
brary Literature*, and *Library Science Abstracts*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: U.S.A.: 1 year \$9; 2 years  
\$17; 3 years \$25; Canada and Postal Union of  
Americas and Spain, \$10, \$19, \$28; elsewhere,  
\$11, \$21, \$31. Libraries with income under  
\$4000, retired librarians, extra or employee sub-  
scriptions where one already exists: \$6; \$11;  
\$16. Single copy, 50c.



# Beautiful Bennington

**MARY S. HOPKINS**, *Librarian*  
*Edward Clark Crossett Library*  
*Bennington College, Vermont*

BENNINGTON COLLEGE is a four year undergraduate college for women. When it opened in September 1932 the library was housed in "temporary" quarters, a wing of the administration and classroom building. As the years accumulated and the collection increased, space within the main building was added to the library area. However, for many years the library had been overcrowded and inconvenient — there was no more room for expansion.

A bequest from the estate of Edward Clark Crossett, father of a Bennington alumna, made it possible to plan for a new library building. This would be the first new academic building to be added since the original campus was planned. Ground was broken in September 1958.

The Trustees appointed Mrs. Gladys Y. Leslie as Library Planning Consultant. Mrs. Leslie, the first librarian of Bennington College, had recently retired. She worked with the Faculty Planning Committee and the librarian on the *Preliminary Program for a New Library Building*. Since there were no plans for expanding the college enrollment, the program took into account the usual number of resident students, 336, plus a few special students — not more than 360 in all. It was planned, of course, that the site should allow for enlarging the building if necessary. Book capacity was set at 75,000 volumes; seating capacity at 175, including 45 individual study tables. Resources to be added were microprint and microfilm equipment, art slides, and a room where students could listen to recordings of poetry, drama, foreign languages. (Music records are kept with scores in the Music Library.) A seminar room to be used for library instruction was included in the plans as well as a study-typing room and a night study room to be used after library hours.

Above all, the program asked for an inviting building where books would be

easily available in quiet, attractive surroundings. An outdoor reading area had been on the list of desiderata since 1932.

The architects have done a fine translation of the program. The site chosen is on sloping ground, near the dormitories, the Commons building, and the Barn where most classes are held. The entrance to the library is on the route from the student houses and Commons to the Barn. Although the program called for no steps, the graded approach to the brick terrace at the main entrance is inviting, informal, and easy. The sloping site was an advantage when, in the course of preliminary plans, it was decided to spend less for the building than had first been allotted and it became necessary to build a three-story building. We were fortunate at this time that Keyes Metcalf consented to act as Building Consultant.

*The brick terrace at the main entrance to the Bennington Library (Ezra Stoller photo)*







*The glass and wood screen of the Reference-Periodical Office provides easy supervision of the desk and entrance area*

*(Ezra Stoller photo)*

Entrance to the library is at the second floor level. The entrance lobby provides space for the book depository, coat racks, a bulletin board or exhibit space, a telephone booth for out-going campus calls. The service desk opposite the entrance serves also as a control desk. To the left of the desk is the catalog-reference area with easy access to the Catalog Office. Microfilm and Microcard readers are in this area; they can be supervised by a desk assistant if necessary. All offices and special rooms are at the north end of the building. On the entrance floor the delivery entrance connects with the work room and Cataloging Office.

On the top, or third, floor is the listening room with tables for earphone listening and three booths for language practice. The seminar room and study-typing room on this floor are locked off from the library when it closes for the night, an outside door is unlocked and the rooms are used as study rooms after library hours. Entrance is by an outside stairway. Also on this floor is the staff room.

Clerestory windows on the east wall of the ground floor and the glass wall with sliding glass doors leading to the outdoor reading court on the south make the study

areas light and pleasant, quite different from the usual library basement. At the north end of this floor are the public toilets and the furnace, equipment and storage room.

As one enters the library there is an immediate sense of books and reading, of ease and informality. One of the advantages of clustering the special rooms at the north end of the building is that large areas remain where there is no interruption to books and readers. The stairway at the right of the entrance is so situated that it gives easy and obvious access to the other floors and does not create unnecessary traffic in reading areas. The variety of reading areas: individual study tables or booths, groups of tables for two or four students, and several lounge areas create an informal, non-institutional atmosphere. Starkness that might have resulted from the use of white metal shelving, white formica table and counter tops, becomes a pleasant clarity and crispness through the use of walnut stained stack ends, walnut shelving and the use of quiet colors on the upholstered furniture.

The lighting throughout, except for offices and special rooms, is luminous lighting panels with contrex sheeting. The light is diffused and the contrex sheeting is sound absorbent. Cork floors on the second and third floors help in soundproofing.

The design of the building is modern. To quote Dean Belluschi: "... The architects endeavored... to give it a form which would harmonize with the simple original buildings, particularly the dormitory group, yet possessing a fresh modern flavor of its own."

To do this, the architects have used materials and colors of the other campus buildings: the white wood exterior goes with the white clapboard student houses; red brick for the entrance terrace and the wall of the reading court repeats the red brick of the Commons. At night the outside lighting together with the lights from inside through the south windows and the stair well on the campus side makes the library attractive and inviting.

One measure of a college library is the students who use it. The pleasure, pride and satisfaction of the Bennington students in their new building is a mark of its success.



### *Building Data*

NAME OF LIBRARY: Edward Clark Crossett Library, Bennington College.  
ARCHITECT: Pietro Belluschi, and Carl Koch & Assoc., associated architects. FEE: \$34,814.65, nine per cent of construction cost.  
CONSULTANTS: Keyes Metcalf (*library consultant*); Sasaki, Walker & Assoc. (*landscaping*); Bolt, Beranek and Newman (*acoustical engineers*); the architects, assisted by Contract Interiors, Inc., Boston (*interior decoration*).  
TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION: Reinforced concrete; wood frame; curtain walls; double glazing. Interiors plastered, paneled, or covered with Vitratex.  
BUILDING COSTS:  
Cost of site: \$7,700.  
Construction costs: \$28.50 per sq. ft.  
Total cost: \$486,182.  
LIGHTING: Luminous ceiling using contrex sheet, Luminous Ceiling, Inc.; cost: part of total electrical sub-bid of \$39,226.20; all lighting fixtures, \$3,576.03.

FLOOR: Cork tile, Tessera Corlon and some vinyl cork; *supplier*: Armstrong; *cost*: \$7,600.  
HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING: Packaged gear; forced warm air conditioning and ventilating system; cooling towers by Binks; condensing unit by Trane; *cost*: \$32,165.  
BOOKS: *total volume capacity*: 75,000; *linear footage*: 14,401; special walnut low shelving designed by architects; *supplier*: Swift; *cost*: \$3,831, plus \$595 for atlas and pamphlet shelving.  
STACKS: *linear footage*: 2,118; metal with special wood ends, Remington Rand; *cost*: \$24,522.48.  
LIBRARY FURNITURE: *charging desk*: special design by architects; *supplier*: Gordon & Sutton, general contractor; *cost*: in general contract: *catalog cases*: stock walnut with special metal legs, Mid Century; *cost*: \$3,230; *exhibit case*: designed by architects, Contract Interiors; *cost*: \$180; *other furniture*: Contract Interiors and C. B. Swift; *cost*: \$28,620.57.

## Third Time Lucky for Barnard

**ESTHER GREENE**, *Librarian*  
*The Wollman Library, Barnard College*  
*Columbia University, New York*

BARNARD COLLEGE, in the more than seventy years since it was founded, has moved its library three times. With the last move, that to the new Adele Lehman Hall — Wollman Library, it is hoped that the library will be well provided for for years to come.

Many decisions prefaced the one to build a new library building on the four acre campus where every square foot of open space is cherished. An earlier plan briefly considered, which proved too ambitious, would have combined a science building with the library. The renovation of Milbank Hall, the main classroom, science and administration building, had offered another possible solution with library quarters to be added to an existing structure. Since 1918 the library had occupied the third floor of Barnard Hall, the first and second floors of which were given over in the most part to the gymnasium. The possibility of gaining more space in its present location was seriously studied.

That a decision had to be made to provide additional library facilities became evident following a self-evaluation of Barnard's over-all needs and the subsequent library survey completed by Professor Maurice F. Tauber during the fall of 1954. After many deliberations by faculty, staff, and special committees, the Board of Trustees placed a new library building as the next item in Barnard's development program.

The firm of O'Connor and Kilham was chosen as architects to work with an ad hoc Library Committee of which the librarian was a member. Her report, prepared for the consideration of this committee, outlined the requirements of a building best suited to carry on Barnard's library procedures. Upon acceptance of this report, drawings got under way. The decision to add an additional floor with faculty offices and seminar rooms came somewhat later in the planning.