Library Looks Toward New Home

With major funding from the state legislature and Central Michigan University, over the next four years the CMU Library Building will be expanded and almost totally renovated.

As part of the project the Clarke Library will be relocated from the fourth floor of the current building to the first floor of the library addition. In this new location, the Clarke will enjoy many new features. Among the most important changes will be the almost doubling of the library's collection storage capacity. The new facility also enhances the library's service program. The Microfilm Project, currently wedged into a corner of the stacks, will receive sufficient work space to operate in a more efficient manner.

A scanning/digitization work area will be included to allow the library to move forward with electronic projects.

A separate listening room for audio-visual material will help separate users seeking the quiet of the reading room from those interested in seeing, and hearing, the library's collection of Michigan videos. A meeting room will enable the public to both attend a presentation and look at the library's exhibits. This will replace the practice, born of necessity, of placing chairs for presentations "artfully" around exhibit cases since the library currently lacks any designated meeting space.

We look forward to groundbreaking for the project in fall of 1999 and completion of the entire project in late 2001.
Railroad Records Preserved

Working with the Ann Arbor Railroad Technical & Historical Association (AART&HA), the Clarke is making available for research over twenty-five feet of Ann Arbor Railroad records that are owned by the Association. These records were largely salvaged from the line's former Marine Operations headquarters in Frankfort.

Work on what would become the Ann Arbor was begun in 1870. By 1892 the line had essentially been completed, running from Toledo to Frankfort.

The Ann Arbor was built primarily as an alternative line that allowed freight bound for the upper midwest to avoid the frequently congested railroad tracks near Chicago. Instead, ferries moved railroad cars from Frankfort across the lake to ports north of the windy city. Indeed the line's water routes, which covered about 320 miles, were longer than the railroad's 292 miles of track. Thus the Ann Arbor was a curiosity, a railroad whose most important asset was ships.

Frankfort was chosen as the line's northern terminus for good reasons. The city was blessed with a snug harbor that stuck out quite far into the lake, making the port relatively free of winter pack ice. Selecting a good harbor that was not frequently icebound was critical to operating a year-round lake ferry service.

The Ann Arbor's ships were pioneer designs for car ferries making lengthy water trips. The ferries were among the first rear-loading car ferries to appear on the lakes. The line's system for making the railroad cars secure within the vessels, using jacks to lift slightly the cars weight off their wheels, and thus making it far less likely that the cars would break free in heavy seas, was widely copied.

Perhaps the most notable innovation made by the line was the use of sea gates to secure the ship's stern from swamping. Storm water rushing through the low stern deck of Lake Michigan car ferries represented a major threat and was directly responsible for the sinking of at least one vessel.

In response to this danger, Ann Arbor No. 5, launched in 1910, was equipped with a sea gate, a five foot, six inch high stern that could be lowered onto the ferry's deck while at sea but raised in port to allow easy loading and unloading of the cars. The first seen on the lakes, the gate was so successful that eventually all Great Lakes car ferries were outfitted with one.

Over the years the Ann Arbor built and operated eight ferries. The first seven were given the uninspired names Ann Arbor No. 1 through Ann Arbor No. 7. Wooden hulled Numbers 1 and 2 were both launched in 1892. No. 3 entered service in 1898. No. 4 joined the fleet in 1906, while No. 5 was launched in 1910, although she did not enter service until 1911. No. 6 was completed in 1917, while No. 7 entered service in 1925. The last ferry constructed by the railroad, the Wabash, was launched in 1927.

The line's eight ferries met various fates. On March 8, 1910 the line lost a ship to a disaster. No. 1 caught fire at her dock in Manitowoc, Wisconsin and burned to the water line. In 1911 the hull was repaired sufficiently to serve as a sand scow. Although other Ann Arbor ferries found themselves under water during their careers, they were all put back into service by the railroad.

The No 2 was the first Ann Arbor boat retired. Its service ended in 1911 when the No. 5 was delivered. It was kept for a few years as a "spare," but in December 1913 it was cut down to the hull and in 1916 sold as a barge.

The No 4 spent most of the 1930's as the company's "spare" boat. It was sold in 1937 to the Michigan State Ferry Service which rebuilt the ferry to carry automobiles. Renamed the City of Cheboygan, it was
placed in service between Mackinaw City and St. Ignace. When the Mackinac Bridge made the ferry obsolete, the *City of Cheboygan* was sold and converted into a barge.

The remaining ferries saw many years of service on the lakes. During the first years after World War II steady business challenged the ferries' capacity and made it difficult to maintain published time schedules. In 1954 the Ann Arbor Railroad explored building a new ferry but the projected cost, approximately $6 million, roughly equaled the lines net earnings for the preceding ten years. Unable to afford a new boat the railroad upgraded its three “newer” ferries, *No. 6, No. 7*, and the *Wabash*.

In 1958 *No. 6* was lengthened by thirty-four feet, given two new diesel engines, and was radically altered in appearance. When returned to service in 1959 the *No. 6* was renamed the *Arthur K. Atkinson*.

In 1962 the *Wabash* was minimally modified and given the new name *City of Green Bay*. In 1965 *No. 7* was rebuilt. It was outfitted with a new diesel power plant, a bow thruster, and displayed a considerably altered appearance. *No. 7* was renamed the *Viking*.

Declining railroad business, however, doomed the ferries. The *No. 3*, considered too old for refitting, was laid up in 1960, sold in 1962, and was subsequently converted into a barge. The *No. 5* was sold and towed out of Frankfort harbor in 1967.
In 1972 the City of Green Bay's service ended and in 1974 the ship was sold for scrap. The Atkinson in 1973 was laid up. Only the Viking continued to sail, an irony in that it was the inability to pay back the loan taken out to refit the Viking that forced the railroad into bankruptcy.

In 1977 the state of Michigan bought the Ann Arbor Railroad. For a few years state subsidies made possible ferry service. The Viking made its regular run and in 1980 the Atkinson reentered service.

State funding, however, proved short lived. In 1982 all subsidies for services north of the city of Ann Arbor were suspended. This decision ended a ninety year maritime tradition. In 1983 the Viking was sold, with the Atkinson experiencing the same fate a year later. Although rumors have swirled for years about the two ships, both remain idle, tied up in Wisconsin ports.

The Clarke Library is pleased to work in cooperation with the AART&HA to help preserve the records and memory of one of the state's most interesting railroads.

On The Web

The library has mounted three new resources on its web site. These resources include a bibliography of Michigan local history, an annotated bibliography of children's books, and an exhibit discussing the history of Michigan maps.

The children's book bibliography represents the library's holdings of children's fiction and non-fiction set in Michigan. The almost two hundred titles listed span a wide range of interests and time periods.

Not surprisingly biographies are among the most common works of non-fiction. They range from biographies of eighteenth century Native American leaders such as Pontiac to former president Gerald Ford. Interesting as biographies and the other works of non-fiction can be, the intriguing titles of many of the fictional works seize the imagination. Motor Boat Boys on the Great Lakes: or Exploring the Mystic Isle of Mackinac, Pirate of the Pine Lands, or Mystery of the Fog Man suggest tales of adventure.

Topics also range widely from historical tales to contemporary trauma. Next Spring an Oriole explores the emotions of a ten year old girl who in 1837 travels in a covered wagon to the Michigan frontier. Laddie of the Light also explores a young girl's feelings, but about the contemporary concerns created by her parent's divorce.

The Michigan local history bibliography culminates almost a year's work to gather together much of the library's Michigan material. Arranged by county the work is a major effort to bring together local history publications in a single source. Although local history publications are among the most common items in the Clarke, bibliographies of Michigan local histories are extraordinarily rare. For the most part Michigan local history remains tucked away, with a few copies of various publications found here or there but with few if any indexes.

By documenting the Clarke's generous collection of this material the library has performed a singular service. The staff has created the most comprehensive existing Michigan local history checklist. We are pleased and proud to make this material available both on the web and in a companion printed volume that we plan to publish later this spring.

The library has also mounted on the web an informative exhibit regarding Michigan maps. Divided into three parts, the exhibit explores maps of exploration, maps of ownership, and transportation maps.

We encourage you to explore these resources by visiting our web site at www.lib.cmich.edu/clarke.
A Final Word

With plans well underway for a new building, it probably goes without saying that the library's staff as well as the Board of Governors is excited, energized, and perhaps just a little bit worried.

The reasons for excitement are obvious. The current Park Library Building was dedicated in 1969. The Clarke is today badly overcrowded, lacking sufficient space for material. The current library building is also outdated in its ability to support contemporary technology.

The addition to, and renovation of, the building gives us a "once in a generation" opportunity to address a large number of "bricks and mortar" problems. From the Clarke's perspective we will gain badly needed space to house both the current collection and expand our holdings into the future. Major new accessions will no longer be greeted by long faces and the plaintive plea "but where will we put it?"

The project also has proved a catalyst to energize new dreams and plans related to better serving the library's users. Among those dreams are improved, more spacious accommodations for the microfilm program and dedicated space for future digitization projects.

Creating an environment that facilitates the success of these two ongoing, critical activities is essential to the long-run health of the library. Increasingly the era in which special libraries could optimistically assume that "if we have it they (the users) will come," is being replaced by the more modern notion that we must "distribute it (via microfilm, the world wide web or some other means) or die."

There will always be a place and a need for institutions that retain the "artifact," as well as users who want to touch and feel the book. Our new building will reflect this need. But it is critical to the library's future that our resources also be made available to the increasingly technologically enabled researchers who want, and expect, the information found in the artifact to come to them.

A new library structure that both honors the past and reflects the future is the goal that underlies the planning for our new facility. If the getting from here to there, surviving the two years of cranes, bulldozers, blowtorches, noise, and dust is something about which we worry, the end result is a goal that all of us firmly believe in.

We look forward to serving you in the new facility in 2001, and to helping you get by the workers during construction.

Summer Exhibit Focuses on One Room Schools

One room schools will be the focus of the Clarke's summer exhibit. Mounted jointly with the Leelanau County Historical Society, the exhibit will explore the genesis, years of growth, and eventual demise of these once vital centers of education.

The founders of the Republic recognized the importance of education. The success of their new nation rested on the faith that an informed, thoughtful electorate would act responsibly and chose wise leaders. Education was the key to both personal and national success.

A far flung and sparsely settled land long frustrated the ability to bring systematic education to children. America's one room schoolhouses eventually addressed this issue by bringing education that empowered children to achieve personal success as well as creating the informed electorate upon which the nation's public well being rested.

Visit the library this summer to learn more about one room schoolhouses, a critical element of the American experience.