History of the OHSU Library, 1893-1991
Long version

More than eighty years ago, on May 29, 1919, not long after Bertha Brandon Hallam became librarian of the University of Oregon Medical School, a fire broke out on the top floor of the medical school. Classes had just ended for the school year, and there were few students left. Those remaining students grabbed up armfuls of all the books and deposited them on the front porch of the house next door on Lovejoy St. Later, they transported the books up Marquam Hill to the yet uncompleted Mackenzie Hall and stacked them in the second floor hallway just outside the room where the library was going to be. Miss Hallam had to relocate her library operations up to the Hill earlier than she or anyone else had anticipated. It was a stressful first year.

That’s not the beginning of the story, however, for the oldest medical school library west of Denver and north of San Francisco.

1887-1918

In the fall of 1887, the University of Oregon Dept. of Medicine began classes in a small two-story structure on the grounds of Good Samaritan Hospital near where N.W. 23rd and Marshall is today. Classes were on the first floor and the dissecting room was on the second floor. Good Samaritan Hospital itself looked nothing like it does today. Instead, the hospital was a very large, wide multi-story house with the outward appearance of a late Victorian sanitarium. Horse-drawn carriages passed back and forth along N.W. 23rd. In 1893, the Medical School moved into a newly-completed building on the corner of N.W. 23rd and Lovejoy, just across from the hospital. It was in this second building that the Medical School Library was born in 1893.

The personal medical book collections of Dr. Rodney Glisan (who had died in 1890) and his brother-in-law, Dr. R. B. Wilson (who had died in 1887), both prominent Portland physicians, were donated to the Medical School. The donation was named the R. B. Wilson Library and was the start of today’s Library. Many of the original books are in our History of Medicine collection, signed by them and stamped R. B. Wilson Library. It is not known why the library was named after Dr. Wilson instead of Dr. Glisan. The R. B. Wilson Library was renamed the University of Oregon Medical School Library most likely when the Library moved up to Marquam Hill in 1919.

By sheerest coincidence also in 1893, or shortly thereafter, another library was beginning at the Tacoma College of Dental Surgery in Tacoma, Washington, that would eventually become our Dental branch library. Its history will be reviewed later.

In the beginning, the R.B. Wilson Library was scattered among the offices of various faculty. The collection grew slowly over the years with various gifts. In 1912 the faculty voted to begin purchasing titles out of the appropriation for laboratory equipment. By then the collection had been relocated in the rear of the Physiology Department. There is a photograph of the collection as it appeared then in the Library’s Photograph collection. In 1913, a library committee was formed, and part-time Professor of Physiology, Dr. John Dice McLaren, was chosen to be in charge of the collection, a responsibility he kept until he resigned from the faculty in 1917. Most of the time, the
collection was kept in a small locked room. In 1914 the faculty had decided to set the loan period to seven days for circulating books and by personal arrangement for reference books and periodicals. In 1915 the name of the School was changed from University of Oregon, Dept. of Medicine to University of Oregon Medical School. By the time Dr. McLaren resigned, the collection had grown to about 4000 volumes and there were about 46 periodicals being received. Throughout 1917 and 1918 (the years of American military involvement overseas in World War I), no one was in charge of the collection, and the faculty thought that a replacement should be found.

1919-1940

In summer 1918, the great influenza epidemic broke out and raced from the East Coast to the West Coast, ultimately killing over 600,000 Americans, making many more gravely ill, and no doubt shaking the confidence of the medical world. In November the epidemic began to subside and World War I came to an end, but nearly every family had felt the effects of this ferocious epidemic.

It was in this milieu as the epidemic began to subside that Mrs. William F. Allen, wife of a professor at the Medical School, urged a friend, Bertha Hallam, to apply for the librarian position at the School. Bertha Hallam was a library staff member at the Library Association of Portland, now Multnomah County Library. She was hired as the School’s first librarian, a position she kept for 46 years, retiring in 1965. By the time she started in January 1919, part of the collection had been relocated to a storeroom 12 feet square with no outside light or air and so crowded that the collection was stacked high on the floor. This was the collection she started to organize and, at the same time, help out with stenographic work and other duties for the business and registrar’s office.

When the fire destroyed the building at N.W. 23rd and Lovejoy, she and the Library relocated that summer to a room 20 x 30 ft. on the second floor of the uncompleted Mackenzie Hall, which is now the east wing of that Hall. It was certainly less cramped, but not for long, as the collection continued to grow. In addition, the University switchboard was in this room. She was expected to answer the incoming calls besides run the Library. By fall, all the books were on the shelves, sorted, and she began to catalog the collection. She used the Library of Congress classification system which was in use at the time at Reed College library. We still have some of her original book cards and accession books from 1919 on in the History of Medicine Room.

In 1919 very little appears to have existed on Marquam Hill other than the newly completed Mackenzie Hall, then called the Medical Science Building. There was an old quarry dating from before 1880, and there was the old Marquam homestead on top the Hill. An 1855 survey had characterized it as being covered with "broken and rough timber--fir, hemlock and cedar". Terwilliger Boulevard, originally called the Hillside Parkway, had been constructed in 1910, but there were no roads leading from it up onto the Hill.

A single, long wagon road wound its way up the Hill from S.W. 6th all the way to the top in 1919 called Marquam Road. Portland attorney Philip Marquam had built this road at his own expense after he bought the John Donner donation land claim in 1857 and moved with his family to his new house on top the Hill in 1858. (John Donner was the brother of the famous George Donner who had led a disastrous migration party over the Donner Pass in California in winter 1846-47.) There is a photograph of the wagon road in the Library's Photograph collection. Marquam became a Multnomah County judge, then a member of the Oregon Legislature. In the depression of the 1890s, he had to sell his property on the Hill to Joseph Healy who then renamed the area from Marquam Heights to Healy Heights. (Marquam did not own the part of the Hill where OHSU is today.)
The 20 acre tract of land where Mackenzie Hall was built was given to the Medical School in 1914 by the Union Pacific Railroad, through its subsidiary the Oregon-Washington Railway & Navigation Co., due to Dr. Kenneth Mackenzie's influence. Mackenzie was the railroad's chief surgeon and had succeeded Dr. Simeon Josephi in 1912 as dean of the School. Some of the medical students were paid to help remove the trees before construction started. The Oregon Legislature began to appropriate funds during each legislative session for building the Medical Science Building, totalling $110,000 by 1917. Portland citizens gave an additional $25,000. The Medical Science Building, which is the east wing of today's Mackenzie Hall, was completed in 1919. Construction of the Multnomah County Hospital was begun the next year, 1920, and completed in 1923.

In late 1924, C. S. Jackson, editor of the Oregon Journal, purchased almost 88 acres on the Hill along Terwilliger Boulevard from the railroad and donated it to the State for use strictly for hospitals and medical school purposes. (Additional acreage was donated by the Oregon Journal Co. in 1958.) This donation provided the land for Doernbecher Hospital, opened in 1926, and, later, the Veteran's Bureau hospital. (Twenty-six acres of the donation had to be deeded to the U.S. Government for the Veteran's Bureau hospital.) A stipulation in the donation required that the donation be called Sam Jackson Park. In 1949, that part of the old Marquam Road from S.W. 6th up to the west end of the campus was renamed Sam Jackson Park Road.

When one stands in front of Mackenzie Hall today, the east wing on the right is the original Medical Science Bldg., oriented north-south, built in 1918-1919. The central part oriented west-east, which has the name University of Oregon Medical School on top, was built in 1921-1922. The west wing on the left was built to be a three-story laboratory wing around the time that the Old Library was built in 1939.

In late 1919, after Bertha Hallam was settled in on Marquam Hill in the original building (today's east wing), the Portland City and County Medical Society (now Multnomah County Medical Society) decided to give its library to the Medical School Library and to provide annual financial support. The next year the Portland Academy of Medicine likewise voted to begin making a yearly contribution in support of the Library and to designate the Medical School Library as its official library. In response to all this support from the medical community, Bertha Hallam began a medical library service for the physicians which rippled out across Oregon in succeeding decades and beyond. Her medical library service included preparing bibliographies, checking literature indexes and sources to answer reference queries, and sending books to physicians in the city, most of whom had offices in the downtown medical building in the early years.

Throughout these early years, there were a number of influential physicians who were strong supporters of the new Library and they are credited with much of the success of the Library over ensuing decades. Just a few of them were Dr. G.E. Burget, Dr. A.G. Bettman, Dr. Noble Wiley Jones, Dr. E.A. Sommer, and later Dr. Olof Larsell and Dr. John E. Weeks. Donations continued. One of the first large gifts was the 700 volume library of the late Dr. Mackenzie donated by his children in 1921.

The Library had already become overcrowded, a condition that would recur again and again the rest of the century. Fortunately, the second addition to Mackenzie was completed in 1922. The Library was moved that year up to the third floor on the north side of the new addition where there was an exhilarating view of Portland and the Willamette River. The new quarters, 100 x 30 ft. in size, included a combination study hall and periodical room, a small stack room, a work room, and another reading room. By 1928 the Library was overcrowded again and storerooms in the
basement as well as an adjacent lecture room had to be used for the overflow collection. There are several photographs of the Library, probably taken in the late 1920s or the 1930s, in the Library’s Photograph collection.

Through the efforts of Dr. E.A. Sommer and others, the Oregon Legislature in 1929 passed Senate Bill 108 which diverted a portion of the annual registration fee that all physicians had to pay to the Oregon State Board of Medical Examiners to the support of the Medical School Library. The original amount was $2 per licensed physician. (It was increased around 1979 to $10.) This provided a substantial contribution to funding the Library’s services and collection growth. At the same time, gifts continued to flow in from, among other sources, the book reviewers for the Medical Sentinel.

By 1928 the Library had grown to 10,000 vols. By 1938 it had reached 25,000 vols. By 1965, when Bertha Hallam retired, it had reached 100,000 vols. Today in 1999, it is about 225,000 vols., making our Library larger than most medical school libraries in the country in collection size. Dr. E.A. Sommer retired in 1933 and gave his entire collection (approx. 3000 vols.) to the Library. It went into a room on the top floor of Mackenzie. Thus, by the end of 1933, the Library had a presence on nearly every floor. It would get even more crowded.

During the 1920s Bertha Hallam began an Interlibrary Loan service. In its earlier years, there was much borrowing from Lane Medical Library at Stanford. During the 1930s, the Army Medical Library in Washington and Oregon State College Library in Corvallis replaced Lane as top lenders to our Library. Many of the books that Bertha Hallam had to borrow came not from other libraries but from local individuals.

In 1932, nursing education became a department of the Medical School--the Dept. of Nursing Education--and the Library began to serve nursing students and nursing faculty.

The Library staff was small all during the years Bertha Hallam was librarian. In 1931 she had two assistants. By World War II she had three assistants. In 1965, when she retired, she had four assistants. They were long time staff, staying with her for decades. There were student assistants also, in addition to the permanent staff. During the 1930s, there were even more student assistants than usual, funded by National Youth Administration funds.

In May 1937, Dr. John E. Weeks, a new member of the library committee, announced the arrangement of a $100,000 gift for the purpose of building a new library building, if a matching amount could be found. Dr. Weeks had moved to Portland recently after retiring from his ophthalmology practice in New York. Dean R.B. Dillehunt flew immediately to New York to request a second $100,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation, which was granted the following year. A federal PWA (Public Works Administration) grant of $163,350 was also secured later to make a total of $363,350. Dean R. B. Dillehunt referred to the proposed building in a January 23, 1938 newspaper article as "a new library wing" which will include "space for 100,000 books, assembly hall, reading rooms, storage stacks, and an historical division." The south end of the new building would be an auditorium. The north end would be connected to a newly-built west-end laboratory wing of Mackenzie Hall by a brick passageway that would enter Mackenzie on the second floor (that is to say, the floor where offices are numbered 2xx). This brick passageway would be removed in late 1994 to provide easier access to new buildings behind Mackenzie: CROET and Basic Sciences. Construction began December 1938. The Library moved into the new building October 1939. The Library was dedicated on Friday, June 7, 1940.
Not only did this surprise development solve the collection space problem, but it was also deeply symbolic. It made the Library a landmark on campus. Many members of the campus community wanted to name the Library after Dr. Weeks, but he discouraged the idea. Nevertheless, a plaque in the lobby entrance commemorates Dr. John Weeks and his role in the Library’s history. There are several photographs in the Library’s Photograph collection of the Old Library, some taken shortly after the Library was built and others during the 1940s or 1950s that show scenes outside and inside the Library. Some of the photographs show Bertha Hallam engaged in a reference search or sitting at her desk. There are also photos of Dr. Weeks. A portrait of Dr. Weeks hangs in Room 221, Old Library.

Bertha Hallam had been particularly interested in the history of medicine, and in 1937-1938 her interest intensified. In her 1937-38 annual report she mentions getting started on building a Marcus Whitman collection and also starting a collection of the books used by students of the first session of 1887-88 as a special exhibit. These two collections exist today in the History of Medicine Room.

She built the "First Class" collection by using the list of textbooks and recommended additional books that appeared in the announcement and catalog for the School’s first year, methodically acquiring each title or, if a title were already in the Library, culling it from the general circulating collection to be part of this special collection.

The Whitman Collection has a different origin. It does not contain any of the original books owned by Whitman, but instead other copies of those titles as well as books about Whitman.

In November 1837, Dr. Marcus Whitman and his wife Narcissa established a religious mission among the Cayuse Indians 25 miles east of Fort Walla Walla (a Hudson’s Bay Company trading post). They operated this mission until November 1847 when they were killed during an Indian massacre generally believed to have been caused by mounting misunderstanding and hostility between the local Indians and the Whitmans. Measles and smallpox epidemics were ravaging the Indian tribes. The Indians thought there was a plausible correlation between Dr. Whitman’s medicines and their soaring death rate, that maybe they were being poisoned. The tribal shamans encouraged this thinking. During the time the mission was in operation, Dr. Whitman had medical books sent out from the East for his use in providing medical care to the Indians. What happened to his medical book collection after he was killed? It disappeared. Ninety years later, in 1937, his collection was discovered by a professor at the Western Reserve University medical school in Cleveland, Frederick C. Waite. He donated the collection of 56 titles to the Whitman College historical museum in Walla Walla. Dr. Olof Larsell and Bertha Hallam learned of this, and she acquired a list of the titles donated from the librarian at Whitman College. From this list, Bertha Hallam was able to recreate the collection in our Library. There is a book written by Waite, therediscoverer of Whitman’s books, in our Whitman Collection.

In her January 1937 monthly report, Bertha Hallam mentions a Pacific Northwest Collection, but there are no details, and that special collection does not appear to be mentioned again. It did in fact exist. Part of it was weeded in 1982-1983, part was integrated back into the general collection ("PNW Collection" is still stamped in these books), and the remainder stayed in Room 440 and became known as the PNW Archives Collection. It is currently located in the History of Medicine Room. The PNW Archives Collection contains catalogs and other publications of the University from earliest years to the present, annual reports of the Medical Research Foundation of Oregon (now OHS Foundation), talks to the Medical History Club of the Medical School from the 1920s and 1930s,
and hundreds of other local historical documents that are in book form (as opposed to photographs, correspondence, etc.).

Another special collection is the Sydenham Collection, which consists of reprints of classic medical books. These reprints were published during the last half of the 19th century by the Sydenham Society, founded in London in the 1840s, and by the New Sydenham Society, founded also in London in the 1850s. When this collection was first begun in our Library is unknown, but it is housed today in the History of Medicine Room. It is fairly certain that Bertha Hallam was buying Sydenham reprints in the 1930s, but perhaps for the general collection instead of a special collection.

In the early 1940s, however, the small historical collection that existed was housed in cabinets in Room 221, called the "Historical Room" then. This is the first room on the right as you enter the Old Library. The room was used also by students and for group meetings during the 1940s, as it is again today.

A February 1961 monthly report by Bertha Hallam mentions a special exhibit of historical equipment from the Library's museum collection. The museum collection dates back at least to 1943, and possibly before then, because announcements of new museum acquisitions as well as requests for donations appeared in the Service Bulletin of the Oregon State Medical Society during World War II. At the time, the museum artifacts were housed in display cases in the reading rooms and the lobby. There were what were called "diversified displays" or exhibits of historical items in the Library's collection for special events during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1977 and later, though, the museum collection would begin to receive more attention regarding organization, as is detailed later.

1940-1965

In 1940 the Medical School Library staff hosted the annual meeting of the Medical Library Association. Nearly 100 people attended. They met in the auditorium of the new building. Forty-seven years later, in 1987, the Library staff again hosted the annual meeting of MLA. MLA membership had grown so large, however, that it was inconceivable to hold the meeting on campus. It was held in the Convention Center and in hotels downtown.

In 1964 the Medical School funded the renovation of Room 300 at the top of the stairs at the north end of the Old Library in order to house the historical book collection (which was not large then: between 400 and 500 volumes). Special built-in cabinets with aluminum grill fronts were installed. Furniture was moved in. This room had previously been used for storage and for School of Nursing meetings. The Portland Academy of Medicine provided funds for the purchase of special equipment for the room. The Academy also had been providing, and continued to provide, substantial funds for the purchase of historical books. On April 23, 1964, it was dedicated as the Historical Book Room.

During the 1970s the Portland Surgical Society was donating to the Library an expensive subscription to the Medicina Rara series of limited-edition, high-quality oversize reprints of medical classics which were being published at the time. These are located in the oversize section of the History of Medicine Collection.

In 1977, the Medical School Alumni Association gave the Library a large gift of $8,000 for renovation of the Historical Book Room, which included the deep red carpeting that is there today.
The wooden cabinets, which had been painted black in 1963-1964 were completely sanded and restained. The aluminum grill fronts were made a bronze color. The renovation gave the Room the distinctive "special collection" atmosphere that it has today. After the renovation and the original historical collection was reshelved, many books were identified in the general collection as historical, culled, and transferred into the Historical Book Room, thus swelling the size of the historical collection to about 3000 volumes. Other books in the general collection were identified as "History of Medicine Support", marked as such, and returned to the general collection.

In March 1979 the Historical Book Room (Room 300) was renamed the History of Medicine Book Room, or History of Medicine Room or HOM Room, for short.

In 1980-81, a very valuable edition of Andreas Vesalius' De humani corporis fabrica was donated to the Library. A massive three-volume work of Leonardo da Vinci’s anatomical drawings was purchased jointly with Reed College and University of Portland and is currently located in the History of Medicine Room in the oversize section. In 1981 Jeremy Norman, a San Francisco rare book dealer, appraised the HOM Collection and identified a small number of especially valuable titles (from a rare book appraisal view), recommending that they be stored in an even more secure location. They were stored first in a vault in the School of Dentistry, then in 1998 transferred to a heavy safe in the Main Library.

Bertha Hallam retired in August 1965 after more than 46 years as librarian of the School. Many honors were showered upon her, but three are of particular significance to the Library. In 1966 the Medical Research Foundation of Oregon (now OHS Foundation) established the Bertha Hallam Library Fund for the continued support of the Library. In 1967 the Oregon Medical Association established the Bertha Hallam Rare Book Fund. Only the first fund survives today. Also in 1967, a portrait of Bertha Hallam was completed by artist A. Elmer House, paid for by contributions from the Oregon Medical Association. This portrait now hangs in the History of Medicine Room. House had also painted the portrait of Elnora Thomson, first director of the Department of Nursing Education, in 1945, which currently hangs in Room 217, Old Library, in the same corner with G. E. Burget and Olof Larsell. Burget was chair of the library committee from 1918 to 1938, when he died. Larsell then became chair.

1965-1976

Margaret E. Hughes succeeded Bertha Hallam as Librarian in September 1965 and led the Library through a decade of unprecedented change until her retirement in June 1975. She had joined the library staff in September 1937 as the circulation librarian, fresh from graduate school (University of Minnesota), and later became a reference librarian as well. There were at least three major changes during her decade as Librarian: a massive expansion and remodeling of the Old Library, a large increase in library staff size, and active experimentation with and adoption of new technology. There are several photos of Margaret Hughes in the Library's Photograph collection.

During her last years as Librarian, Bertha Hallam saw that the Library was again running out of space. She had begun architectural plans for an expansion. In 1966 money for expansion became available, and Margaret Hughes directed the 1966-67 construction of about 8000 additional square feet. Two floors of stacks were added on top of the stack area, resulting in the four floors of today. A second floor was added on the south end of the Library (between the Library and the auditorium) with a staircase connecting the two levels. This addition contained offices, restrooms, and Room 440 which later became known as a storage room and still is used for this purpose today.
The three 24-feet high rooms along the front of the library, which were used for reading and study, were remodeled to be 12-feet high rooms in order to provide a long room above them which connected on the north end with the stair case leading down to the HOM Room and on the south end with the offices on the new fourth floor and the stair case leading down to the south end of the Library. This long room would become the first home of a new Instructional Media Dept. in 1982-83.

After the remodeling, there was an extensive redistribution of library staff, some of technical services functions going up to the new fourth floor offices and reference staff moving to the north end of the Library. Of course, the library staff was still quite small in the late 1960s, not much larger than it was during Bertha Hallam's years. That would change drastically in a few years. By the early 1970s new reference staff were added, although as part-time, and the circulation and ILL and technical services staff began to expand. Departments formed as a result of the staff expansion: Reference, Circulation, ILL, Cataloging, Serials, Acquisitions.

A third change was technology. The first Xerox 914 photocopier had already been installed early in 1964. A TWX terminal was installed in July 1968 for ILL communication with other libraries through the telephone lines. The TWX (teletypewriter exchange system) was a typewriter-like terminal that was slow (10 characters per second when printing out) and noisy, but in retrospect the first harbinger of what was soon to come.

Also in summer 1968 was the first computer printout of the periodical stack inventory, produced by the campus Computer Center. By 1974 there were other computer printouts done by the Computer Center, such as the "List of current serials-periodicals" and "List of continuations." The campus Computer Center would change names several times in the next three decades. Later in the 1970s it became Systems and Technology, then University Systems in the 1980s, then Networks and Computing, and in 1993 it became the Information Technology Group (ITG) after merging with the Hospital Information Systems Division.

In late 1972-early 1973, Medline literature searches were introduced by the Reference Dept. At first, searches could only be done using Mesh headings. Much later, textword searching of titles and abstracts was available. Initially the 10 cps TWX terminal was used. In 1973-74, the reference staff acquired a faster terminal dedicated to Medline searches. Serline became available in summer 1973. This is an online database of health sciences journal titles with holdings information from many libraries, including ours.

Funded by an NLM grant, a project to reclassify the Library collection from Library of Congress numbers to NLM classification numbers was begun in January 1972. The grant-funded project ended officially in May 1973, but in fact the reclassification project continued on and off for many years, even on into the 1980s.

Future space needs became a topic of study again in the early 1970s, the library committee investigating various solutions, rejecting a microfilm solution, finally recommending alternative storage facilities as a solution.

A union list of serials was published in March 1972 for the Medical School Library, the Dental School Library, the Primate Library, PSU Library, and the Oregon State Library. Another union list of serials in health sciences libraries in the Pacific Northwest was completed in summer 1972.
August 1974 saw the first inventory of the Library collection in the history of the Library. A massive weeding project followed the inventory, thus relieving temporarily the growing worries over the space problem.

The year 1974 is remembered principally as the year the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, and Dentistry merged to become the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, a year of tumultuous administrative, organizational change.

Margaret Hughes retired June 1975. All the old library staff who had started under Bertha Hallam decades before had already retired: Lolita McElveny, the circulation assistant, in summer 1965; Ora Goodman, the cataloger, in summer 1971; Marie Wagner, the circulation librarian, in February 1974. Margaret Hughes’ retirement was widely interpreted, and still is remembered, as the end of a long era, the last of the old guard. In fact, however, this was only partly true. Instead, Margaret Hughes was quite visionary and anticipated much of what was later to happen in the 1980s and 1990s in networking hospital libraries and physicians throughout Oregon.

In her 1974 annual report, Margaret Hughes wrote, “Our hope for the future is that a biomedical communications network can be established in Oregon. A director, based at this Library, could assist in the development of hospital libraries in the local areas.” She established a task force with the charge of (a) identifying subregional districts or basic units within the state, (b) consulting with health professionals and educators within each unit, (c) discovering specialized resources within districts, and (d) evaluating gathered information for the establishment of a node in the Biomedical Communication Networks.

Heather Rosenwinkel, reference librarian at the time, became acting Librarian for the year following Margaret Hughes’ retirement in summer 1975 until a new library director was selected.

It would take several years after the merger of the three Schools into University of Oregon Health Sciences Center before the Dental and Health Sciences libraries would be operating as a single UOHSC Library. By 1977 the Dental Library had fairly clearly become a branch of UOHSC Library operations.

**Dental Library**

The Dental Library traces its origins to the Tacoma College of Dental Surgery in Tacoma. From its beginning in 1893, the Tacoma College had been building a collection of dental and medical books and journals. The College moved to Portland in 1899 and changed its name in August (after the announcement for the 1899-1900 school year had been printed) to the North Pacific Dental College. It opened in a house on the corner of N.W. 15th & Couch in the fall. In 1900 it combined with the year-old Oregon College of Dentistry, keeping the name North Pacific Dental College. In 1908 it was renamed North Pacific College. The College moved to a newly-completed building at N.E. 6th & Oregon in 1911. It underwent another name change in 1924 to North Pacific College of Oregon. In 1945 it joined the Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) and changed its name to University of Oregon Dental School. The School moved up to Marquam Hill into its current building in 1956. It changed its name again in 1974 to University of Oregon Health Sciences Center School of Dentistry and then again in 1981 to OHSU School of Dentistry.

There were a number of part-time staff who oversaw the library in its early decades in Portland. During these decades, the library was kept mostly in locked bookcases. In 1946 Thomas H. Cahalan,
a full-time professional librarian, was hired and remained in the position into the 1960s. He reorganized the collection and shelved it on open shelves for free access, after which circulation soared. The Dental Library staff remained very small during the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s the staffing level fluctuated generally between 2.0 and 2.5 fte, one being the full-time librarian and the others part-time paraprofessionals, and this continued through the 1980s and 1990s. Cahalan was succeeded as dental librarian by Robert M. Donnell in the early 1960s. Donnell was succeeded by Carol G. Jenkins in 1972. Jenkins was the last dental librarian before the Dental Library became a branch of UOHS Library.

In 1945, when the School became part of OSSHE, the Dental Library had 4,500 volumes. By 1974, the collection had grown to 15,676 vols., with an annual circulation of 20,005 vols. Today in 1999, the collection is 16,845 vols., reflecting the results of several waves of aggressive weeding projects during the 25 years.

The first recorded weeding project started in 1976-1977 with many of the older books stored in Rm.13 in the basement of the Dental School. Many had become moldy or water-damaged. Room 13 was a main storage room that also contained old dental equipment and artifacts, class photos, diplomas, scrapbooks. There was a lesser storage area on the seventh floor of the Residence Hall.

An Independent Learning Center room was opened in May 1977 to contain audiovisual equipment and software (as videos and sound cassettes and slides were called back then). The 1970s were a decade of great growth in the audiovisual collection. The Dental Library's AV collection had grown to 195 titles by 1977. Dental acquisitions in general became coordinated with acquisitions in the Main Library. The Dental Library participated with the Main Library also in a project to produce an Oregon Regional Union List of Serials.

In 1978 a History of Dentistry Committee, chaired by Dr. J. Henry Clarke, began planning for a special History of Dentistry Room to be located in one corner of the Dental Library. Another weeding of Room 13 began to separate the valuable materials out and discard the rest. Free-standing shelving was removed from the room that would be the HOD Room. An antique dental cabinet was moved in.

The Dental Library had been organized using Library of Congress classification numbers in earlier decades. In 1979 a reclassification project had begun in order to convert the collection to National Library of Medicine classification numbers, a project which would continue for several years. An inventory and weeding of the general collection began, too. Cataloging began to be done using the new OCLC terminals that had been installed in the Main Library. Dental periodicals were coded into the Philsom automated serials control system.

The School of Dentistry's Alumni Association approved a $5,857 funding request to renovate the HOD Room. Renovation started in late March 1981 and was largely completed by mid-summer. Custom-made oak wall bookcases and display cases were installed. Air-conditioning was put in. Special window screens with Verasol were installed to screen out incoming ultraviolet light in order to protect the historical books. The finished History of Dentistry Room was dedicated with an open house October 22 and 23. At the time of the dedication, there were 400 books shelved in the HOD Room and about 150 rare or classic books needing preservation treatment or restoration were separately kept in the Librarian’s office. This totaled about 550 books, which is approximately the size of the HOD collection today. It is the only collection of its kind in the Pacific Northwest.
In May 1981, a second funding request for rare book restoration had been submitted to the Alumni Association, and this too, for $10,000, was approved. The restoration project began in July 1982.

There are many dental instruments and pieces of antique dental equipment in the museum collection. Before the 1970s, only a collection of unusual teeth existed that had been accumulated over the earlier decades. In the late 1970s, however, through the efforts of Dr. Clarke, a real dental museum collection began to take form with active acquisition of antique equipment and other artifacts. In the collection is a set of dental articulators, acquired in the early 1980s, that probably is the largest such set in existence. A dental x-ray machine dating from around 1920 was acquired in 1982-83. The museum has a tooth with a gold filling done by the famous Dr. G. V. Black in 1884 which had been extracted in perfect condition in Salem in 1930. The museum collection is distributed among several locations: in the HOD Room and in various display cases on the first, second, and sixth floors.

The School of Dentistry has an archives, too (although not in the Library), and an archivist was hired in the mid 1980s to organize the School of Dentistry's archival materials.

In summer and fall 1998 the Dental Library was closed for extensive remodeling. It reopened in January 1999. During the remodeling, books with dates from 1927 to 1964 were transferred permanently from the Dental Library to the offsite storage warehouse that the Library had been using since late 1996. The History of Dentistry collection was inventoryed again.

1976-present

James E. Morgan arrived from the University of Connecticut Health Center Library in July 1976 to become the third Librarian.

A breathtaking constellation of changes followed.

Proposals were developed to automate functions in nearly every department. A grant was written and submitted to establish an Oregon Health Information Network. Technical services functions were moved from the fourth floor down to the second floor to be consolidated with other similar functions. Library administration offices moved up to the fourth floor. The north lobby (Room 202) was walled off to improve security. Previously this had been a north entrance to the Library. Plans were made for the imminent renovation of the Historical Book Room. A CIBA slide collection was donated by Media Services to the Library in fall 1976. An Information Desk was established in January 1977. An extensive weeding project in the Dental Library was begun. The reference staff started offering Toxline searches in June 1977.

A large amount of CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) grant money was approved in 1977-78, adding 16 new staff and expanding the staff size suddenly to 43 fte. The CETA workers helped to inventory, organize, and box the museum collection, helped produce a union list of departmental library collections on campus, helped prepare the periodical collection for an automated serials control system called Philsom, helped weed the general collection, and helped inventory some of the archival materials housed in the North Tower room just above the Historical Book Room.

The Historical Book Room renovation was completed in 1977. Books in the general collection were identified for transfer into the Historical Book Room. The catalog department installed an OCLC
terminal and began using the OCLC online union catalog, based in Columbus, Ohio, for cataloging and card production in January 1978. A second OCLC terminal was installed in Cataloging in October 1979. The Reference Collection was reorganized from strict call number order into 21 special categories in early 1978. The ILL staff moved into the Reference Dept. area.

The CETA program came to an end officially in October 1978, but much of the work continued years afterward.

The Oregon Health Information Network grant was approved. The OHIN coordinator began in February 1979. Envisioned originally by Margaret Hughes, the Librarian in the mid 1970s, the aim of OHIN was to develop hospital libraries and library services throughout Oregon, with our Library serving more in a backup role instead of directly. It also provided training in underdeveloped areas, did collection needs assessments, collected statistics and produced an annual hospital survey. OHIN was cosponsored by the Oregon Health Sciences Libraries Association and our Library and funded by the National Library of Medicine.

The ILL Dept. began using the OCLC ILL subsystem for part of ILL lending and borrowing in spring 1979. It had to use the OCLC terminal in Cataloging for years, though, until its own OCLC terminal was installed in December 1984. The Serials Dept. began using the Philsom automated serials control system, based at Washington University Medical Library in St. Louis. Initially it was a batched serials control system. Philsom didn’t go online until February 1983. Philsom would gradually replace the Kardex journal checkin system.

An Oregon Health Sciences Libraries union list of serials was produced in 1977-78.

The Library became a regional resource library in the Regional Medical Library Network in January 1981. This designation made our Library an official resource for other libraries in Alaska, Montana, Idaho and Oregon. University of Washington Health Sciences Library was the principal regional resource library in the Pacific Northwest.

Also in 1981 the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center was renamed Oregon Health Sciences University. The UOHSC Library became the OHSU Library.

Faster Medline terminals were installed in Reference in 1980-81. Now they printed at 120 characters per second instead of 30. Around this time, the Reference staff obtained passwords to Dialog and BRS, allowing them to search other databases such as BIOSIS and PsycINFO. Also in 1980-81, the Catalog Dept. was changing to the new AACR2 cataloging code. ILL started using an email system called CLAS OnTyme for certain ILL functions. The email system used a CRT instead of a teletype terminal, operated at 1200 baud, and soon eclipsed the old TWX terminal. CLAS OnTyme in turn would be largely replaced by NLM’s DOCLINE by the end of the 1980s for ILL between health sciences libraries and would finally be discontinued in 1993. DOCLINE used NLM’s Serhold holdings data for ILL functions.

During the late 1970s, many old journals (mostly foreign-language ones) and old books had been boxed up and stored outside the Library, particularly in the Campus Services Building. It amounted to about 20 percent of the collection. To eliminate the storage charges, all the boxes were brought back to the Library in 1981. Those materials deemed more useful were stored in Room 440, in closets, in alcoves, and other areas. Other materials of lesser usefulness were sent down to an OSSHE-coordinated storage facility administered by OSU near Camp Adair, a small village north of
Corvallis. There would be more transfers of materials to Camp Adair in succeeding years. Eventually these materials would be weeded from our collection when all the OSSHE schools had to vacate this storage facility in early 1990.

Space problems had become a looming worry again, so compact shelving was installed in a special area of the stacks called the pit. Long-range planning task forces in 1980 voiced the hope for a new library building envisioned for the early 1990s.

In September 1982, the Instructional Media Dept. was established on the fourth floor in the long room above the three front reading rooms. It was a joint project of the Biomedical Communications Dept. and the Library. The School of Nursing disbanded its Learning Resource Center and transferred all its audiovisual materials to the IMD. Later Apple II’s and Franklin computers were installed in the IMD. The Library's AV collection would expand significantly during the 1980s, but much of what was added would be weeded around 1993-94.

During the early 1980s, special library-design T-shirts were created and worn by staff for the annual National Library Week. One of the T-shirt designs was of a Vesalius-style skeleton sitting at a Medline terminal. Medline and other online literature searching had come to dominate Reference Dept. activities by then. If one can characterize the 1970s as a decade when online reference searching emerged to become a major Library function, the 1980s can be characterized as a decade when desktop computers reset the work of the entire Library staff in a new context. (The 1990s would be the emergence of "the network".)

The first library book approval plan was established in 1982-83. The approval plan provided books automatically to the Library for approval for purchase rather than requiring that the Library initiate each order. In 1983, the serials acquisitions department began using VISICALC, the very first spreadsheet program. Other spreadsheet programs were used later before finally settling in the mid 1990s on Microsoft Excel which is what is used today for work on journal renewals, collection budget, and other serials, acquisitions, budget and statistical needs.

In 1983-84 U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield arranged for a $20.4 million federal appropriation for the building of a new library building. It was to be called the Biomedical Information Communication Center. It was based on a new concept called IAIMS (integrated academic information management system) which envisioned computer networked campuses providing access to many different sources of information, from hospital records to genetics and other databases to the library catalog to email for everyone on their desktops. It was difficult to imagine at the time, but it actually happened later in the 1990s.

Since 1978, cataloging had been done using the OCLC system. While catalog cards were printed to be filed in our card catalog, MARC-format computer records of our cataloging were also being deposited on a magnetic tape. The expectation was that one day the Library would automate and have an online catalog. All cataloging done previous to 1978 would eventually have to be converted to MARC records. This process was called retrospective conversion.

In fall 1983, it was decided to have OCLC do the retrospective conversion for us. That fall a massive collection weeding project was begun in preparation for the conversion. This was the second large weeding project in the Library's history. It lasted until late summer 1984. A concurrent inventory of the collection was conducted, too. The result was a shelflist as clean and accurate as possible and a minimization of the amount of cataloging that needed to be converted. The shelflist was sent to
OCLC in Ohio in late 1984. By February 1985 the entire shelflist had been returned and refiled and almost all of our catalog records had been converted to MARC records. One benefit of the weeding project was that the books that had been stored in boxes, for example in Room 440, were organized again on shelves for easy retrieval.

An inventory of the History of Medicine collection was done from November 1984 through March 1985. Another inventory of the HOM collection was done in the late 1990s.

In 1988 the Library selected VTLS as the vendor for our integrated library system (a complete library automation system, including online catalog). The Library converted to the VTLS integrated library system in 1989. VTLS replaced the card catalog, replaced the Philsom serials control system, and replaced the manual circulation system. All the information was now integrated in one database.

Beginning in 1985 a collection assessment of the Main Library, Dental Library and HOM collections was undertaken. Known as the LIRN project (Library and Information Resources for the Northwest), it was part of a large effort by libraries in the Pacific Northwest, funded by the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust, to evaluate their collections with an eye to bettering collection development efforts in the future and improving access to information resources in the region. About 220 academic, public, and special libraries in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington participated. The project ended in 1989 with comprehensive printouts by subject area of the collection strengths of the participating libraries.

The National Library of Medicine brought DOCLINE to Region 6, our area in the regional medical library network in 1986. DOCLINE is an electronic interlibrary loan system based on NLM's Serhold journal holdings data. By 1988 our Library would be using DOCLINE quite a bit, and the Primate Center library and hospital libraries in Oregon started using it, too. The Reference Dept. started working with NLM's new Grateful Med system, too, a desktop computer-based program that made searching Medline in Bethesda, Md. easier for many people than the command line searching of Medline on Medlars.

Beginning in 1986, there was a rising interest in establishing consumer health collections, and during the rest of the 1980s and into the early 1990s one hospital library after another was setting up such collections. Our Library identified consumer health books in the general collection and began producing a bibliography of them in the late 1980s.

The Library staff hosted another annual meeting of the Medical Library Association in Portland in spring 1987. It was held mostly at the Convention Center because of the large attendance. Everyone on staff was involved in the local organization of this meeting in some way.

The Library started a new computer-based information service in 1987 called INFONET with a grant from the Fred Meyer Trust. It provided the first campuswide email service, based on a program called Mailman, in January 1988, and it introduced OHSU Medline which anyone could search without charge from their desktop computers and which indicated summary local holdings for the various journal titles in the database. These services would be replaced in the 1990s with other campuswide services.
Formerly limited to OHSU-affiliated people, INFONET’s electronic services were extended throughout Oregon in 1990. It changed name to ORHION (Oregon Health Information Online) and began charging an annual subscription fee for statewide users.

In 1987 the Vollum library had started in the newly-completed Vollum Institute for Advanced Biomedical Research as a branch of the Library. It was discontinued as a branch in 1990 when the Vollum Institute discontinued its funding. The Vollum library continues on, however, as a separate department collection within the Vollum Institute.

In 1990 an agreement was concluded between the Library and CDRC (Child Development and Rehabilitation Center) for the CDRC library, formerly a separate departmental library there, to become a branch of the Library. The CDRC library began to take form probably around 1956 or 1957, judging from existing property stamps in the early books, but it does not seem to have had a designated location until 1971 with the opening that year of the CDRC clinical building. The building was designed with the intent to have a designated library room for use by the staff, with the focus being on developmental, congenital and genetic problems that were being seen by the various CDRC programs. Gradually the library, called the CCD library at the time, absorbed small separate collections from throughout CCD (Crippled Children's Division) such as the "Speech-Audiology Library" and the "Social Work Library" and "Child Guidance Extension" (a collection dating from at least the late 1940s). By the late 1980s, much of the collection had been organized by Thelma Danilson, the CDRC librarian during the 1980s, using National Library of Medicine call numbers.

When the CDRC Library became a branch in 1990, its collection was retrospectively cataloged and the computer records added to the OHSU Library catalog. Complete library services were provided. Computer workstations were installed and networked. The journal subscriptions were reviewed annually. The collection was inventoried and weeded. Appropriate books were transferred from the Main Library into the CDRC collection. A Parents Collection section was established and the corresponding bibliography produced. There were open houses and orientations for CDRC faculty, staff, students, and interns.

CDRC has a history of more than 80 years. The Medical School had been providing medical services to crippled children since 1917, authorized by the Crippled Children's Law of that year. In January 1938, the Crippled Children's Division formally came into existence and was located in a former restaurant in downtown Portland. In 1954, a building was built on south campus for CCD (a building now referred to as CDRC-West). Originally, CCD's programs were oriented primarily toward orthopedically-handicapped children. After moving to the campus, however, CCD's emphasis gradually shifted into genetics, mental retardation, and developmental disabilities. In 1971, an adjacent building was completed for CCD diagnosis and treatment purposes, which is the building that provided space for what later became the CDRC branch library. The 1971 building was called the Child Development and Rehabilitation Center. In 1989, the Crippled Children's Division changed its name to Child Development and Rehabilitation Center.

Groundbreaking for the new Biomedical Information Communication Center (BICC) building took place on August 10, 1989 with Senator Mark Hatfield at the event. The five-floor building was mostly completed in summer 1991 and would win an architectural award the next year. From August 26 to September 10, 60,000 volumes were transported from the Old Library into the movable stacks in the BICC building. Most of the Library staff moved in then, too. Opening day was September 9. The building was dedicated on Friday, November 8, 1991.
Not only was the building a commemoration to Senator Mark Hatfield's role in the Library's history, similar to Dr. John Week's role more than a half-century earlier, but the building was again deeply symbolic as the 1939 building had been, although in a different way. The BICC building brought many different University functions together in the synergistic way envisioned by the IAIMS concept: library services, educational communications, training and support, computers and network services, medical informatics research.

That fall the Old Library really became "the Old Library" and a renovation of it was begun. By spring 1993 all the Library staff remaining there had moved into the BICC building.

The Library established the Oregon Memorial Library for Bereaved Parents in September 1990. This is a consumer health-oriented collection focused on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other books on grief and bereavement intended to be used by parents who have lost a young child. It is not separately shelved, but integrated with the general circulating collection in Main and Old Libraries.

In 1991 another NLM product became available in our region 6: Loansome Doc. This was an enhancement to the Grateful Med program and DOCLINE which allowed Grateful Med users to tag citations on a retrieved screen that they would like to have photocopies of. Grateful Med then logged into NLM's ELHILL computers and sent a request to the user's primary health sciences library.

NLM renamed our Regional Medical Library (Pacific Northwest Regional Health Sciences Library Service) to: National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM), Pacific Northwest Region in late 1991. It is based at the University of Washington Health Sciences Library in Seattle.

In early 1992 the BICC announced a partnership between ORHION and an outside company called U.S. HealthLink which resulted in many changes over the next two years. The Rural Health Information Project, for example, began in summer 1992 and provided outreach services to 43 rural hospitals, most of which did not have hospital librarians. In the Library, Medline and other databases provided by U.S. HealthLink replaced the older databases from the INFONET days. In summer 1993, however, the Library staff decided to switch to databases provided by CD-Plus which had begun offering Medline, Cinahl, Health Planning & Administration, and PsycINFO with server-based software. By spring 1994, the CD-Plus databases had replaced U.S. HealthLink services and offered local holdings information. A CD-Plus document delivery option soon followed. In early 1995, the company CD-Plus changed its name to OVID Technologies. These databases were now referred to as the OVID databases. U.S. HealthLink services were discontinued in spring 1995.

A newly-formed consortium of local libraries, named PORTALS (Portland Area Library System), began offering electronic services in November 1992. Comprised mostly of academic libraries, PORTALS provided access to the library catalogs of all the consortium libraries and selected ones outside Portland (University of Oregon, Oregon State University, University of Washington, California's Melvyl). It would later license many databases for access by PORTALS libraries.

One PORTALS initiative was the introduction in 1992 of Ariel specialized workstations as a way to transmit documents between libraries. Since then, Ariel workstations have become our preferred way to send certain documents quickly with high-quality imaging results.
In 1993 the Library was beginning to provide electronic services remotely to nursing students in Ashland and elsewhere throughout the State.

In September 1993, help desks of Networks & Computing and the Library were brought together inside the Library into a single unit known informally in the beginning as The Bridge. The Bridge split into two segments in summer 1994. First there was a phone-only Help Desk, staffed by customer support staff from Networks & Computing, for answering phone questions about network, computer, and software problems. Second there was a walk-up Information Desk, known today as the Info Desk, separate from the circulation desk. There was much remodeling in the BICC building at this time and several departments such the Edu-Tech computer store and Educational Communications were relocated within the building.

The Internet had become a major topic of interest for our Library in 1992. Librarians had begun subscribing to library-oriented discussion lists on the Internet such MEDLIB-L and PACS-L. The lists would proliferate throughout the 1990s and be a vital source of information for the staff. The Internet came to dominate Library thinking and library services. In 1993 and 1994, gophers (Internet programs) were being used to find Internet resources, and the Online Northwest conferences those years had many presentations on ftp'ing and gophers. By 1995, gophers were being replaced by the World Wide Web.

Many changes in technology on campus occurred in the early 1990s. In 1991, the old INFONET email system was replaced by AT&T Mail. In 1993, a three-year campus phone conversion was completed. Networks & Computing merged with the Hospital Information Systems Division to become the Information Technology Group (ITG). The campus began a conversion of all the separate networks into one single campus network with the start of the OHSU workstation installation in the BICC building in early 1994. The new OHSU workstation provided a common set of core services to everyone on campus (databases, email, address book, etc.). AT&T Mail was replaced by WordPerfect Office, later called Groupwise. Three years later, in May 1997, the campus network conversion to a single system connecting over 6000 core-service OHSU workstations had been completed. The next phase was started: conversion of Novell NetWare 3.x to NetWare 4.x and the introduction of the Windows 95 OHSU workstation.

In 1994 the Library received a Murdock grant through PORTALS for $11,393 in order to retrospectively convert the PNW Archives collection catalog records into computer MARC records in the catalog. The project ran from August 1994 well into 1995. This project made the PNW Archives collection, then shelved in Room 440 and now shelved in the History of Medicine Room, accessible through the catalog. In the next few years, the History of Medicine collection itself would finally be barcoded and thus indicate in the catalog where those books were. The HOM collection had been retrospectively converted into the online catalog in 1991 but had not been barcoded then.

CD-ROMs began to be purchased in 1995, some for use on the public access computers in the Library and some for circulation out of the Reserve collection in the Main Library and Dental Library.

In summer 1996 the Library’s integrated library system was migrated from a proprietary operating system-based Hewlett Packard central computer to a UNIX-based server.
Also that summer, OHSU created its university-wide World Wide Web page system. Since then, the Library has used web pages to provide many kinds of information about Library services as well as provide Internet resources to users and internal procedures manuals for Library staff.

OHSU started a consumer-oriented Health Resource Center in the fall of 1996. Housed initially in the Main Library, it was renamed Health Information Library and in December 1999 was moved to the ninth floor of the University Hospital. A consumer health literature collection was opened in 1997 in the offsite clinic at Gabriel Park. A collection was also established in the new Doernbecher Hospital when it opened in summer 1998. A Health Information by Mail service was begun and run by the Main Library. An RML/NLM-grant-funded project in Hood River was undertaken to train health professionals who worked with underserved populations, such as Spanish-speaking patients, to access patient education materials on the World Wide Web.

A large part of the monograph and journal collection housed in the Old Library was moved permanently down to an offsite storage warehouse, operated by the Oregon Historical Society, at N.W. 14th and Everett in downtown Portland in late 1996 and early 1997. All journals from the earliest years up to 1930 and monographs from 1901 to 1964 were involved in this move.

In fall 1997 the Library started its Oral History Project, amid a resurgence of interest on campus in an archival and preservation effort. The project interviewed 77 people in the next year and a half, some of whom have died since being interviewed. Concurrent with this project was a massive project to organize and make accessible the accumulated photographs, archival papers, and museum artifacts that had been stored in the North Tower and other locations in the Old Library. These materials and artifacts have since been transferred into Room 440 in the Old Library.

Licensing of OVID databases expanded in late 1997 with the addition of full-text databases (electronic journals). The Library would also be expanding access to many other electronic journals through its web pages in 1998 and 1999.

OHSU initiated a Center for Women’s Health in January 1998. The Center includes a library which is part of the OHSU Library. The CWH Library initially was housed in the Main Library, but was moved to the ninth floor of University Hospital in December 1999.

OHSU initiated a new World Wide Web-based distance education project in September 1998 called the Virtual Learning Center, and the Library participated in developing this service. Using Nousoft software, the VLC provided the electronic environment for offering core master’s-level and Ph.D-level courses for students in the School of Nursing, including course reserve materials and student-teacher interaction.

In summer 1998 the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center, in Beaverton, was merged with OHSU. Administrative and operational changes are underway. Eventually the Primate Center library’s holdings will be accessible in our Library catalog. It will be part of the OHSU Library. The ORPRC was established in 1960 by the National Institutes of Health as the first of seven primate research centers.

The Oregon Regional Primate Research Center library originated in an apartment building up here on the Hill in 1961. It moved out to its current building, now called the Administration Building, on N.W. 185th in spring 1962. At first, it was on the main floor, but in 1981 it was relocated to more spacious quarters in the basement. It was almost certainly the first library in Oregon to use the new
National Library of Medicine classification numbers to organize its collection. In contrast to the OHSU Library which has a heavy clinical emphasis, the Primate library has a more biomedical research orientation and has more materials on chemistry and animals. Over the decades, the Primate library has participated with the OHSU Library in many projects, including union lists of journals and NLM grants.

In April 1999, OHSU entered into an agreement with the National College of Naturopathic Medicine, located in Portland, to host their library catalog on the same UNIX server that has our catalog and to provide certain catalog and system support services.

Without doubt, the single most important development in the 1990s was the emergence of the Internet and especially the World Wide Web. It caused a major reorientation in thinking not just among the Library staff but also among the networks and computers staff at OHSU. The campus network was made a TCP/IP network, essentially a mini-Internet which allowed easy access to the outside world.

The Internet also caused changes throughout the larger economy. There was a major shift in the distribution of government documents, for example, away from the printing of paper documents in Washington, DC and their mailing to hundreds of libraries and toward the publishing of these same documents on the Web with printing done locally on laser printers everywhere.

The Internet stimulated the growth of the role of licenses in protecting ownership of intellectual property as an alternative to the traditional role of copyright. It sparked an explosion of electronic journals in the closing years of the 1990s.

Our Library, along with other libraries, is quickly becoming a hybrid paper & electronic literature collector and provider. It is tempting to ask what our Library will be like eleven years from now in 2010, but that turns out to be an unproductive question to pose in expectation of a useful answer. Eleven years ago, in 1988, the Library staff was taking turns standing in front of a single terminal in the Old Library to read and send email. No doubt no one on the Library staff had any accurate idea of what the 1990s were to bring. Thus, judging from historical experience, we cannot know what the Library will be like even eleven years from now, not to speak of 80 years from now.

It is easy to notice the changes of the last 80 years and easy to overlook the things that have remained the same. Library users still check books out as in 1919. Users still ask the Library staff questions as in 1919. The Library staff continues to be overworked, yet dedicated as in 1919. A number of library staff have been here for decades, just as library staff were here for decades when Bertha Hallam was librarian. The Library continues to run out of space just as in 1919. It is impossible to imagine the changes ahead in the next 80 years, but it’s fairly certain that there are some things that will not change.

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