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Carver Science Hall

By DAVID G. MOBBERLEY

Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa, will dedicate Carver Science Hall on the occasion of its third annual Christian Liberal Arts Festival, October 6, 1956. This building venerates one of Simpson's most distinguished former students, George Washington Carver, Simpson adds its name to the list of those who recognize the richness and warmth of this great and dedicated human spirit. The connection between Carver and Simpson is well-known and there is no need to retell that chapter in his life story here. But succinctly to emphasize that relationship, no words



Figure 1. Carver Science Hall, Indianola, Iowa

could be more appropriate than Carver's own—"At Simpson, I discovered that I was a human being."⁽¹⁾

Carver Science Hall (Figure 1), for which ground was broken in June 1955, will be ready for occupancy by Simpson's Division of Natural Science in September, 1956. In recognition of Carver's sacrificial gifts to southern agriculture and his distinguished service to humanity, the Cowles Foundation of New York, New York has provided a most substantial portion of the financial where-

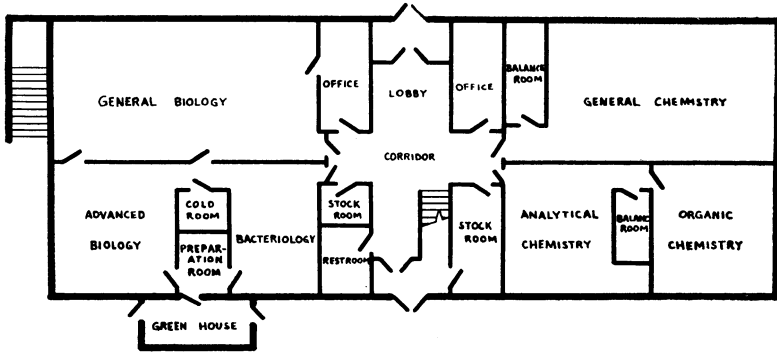
withal that allows erection of this building. Within Carver Hall's memorial lobby, finished in a rich, green marble, appears a bronze plaque of Dr. Carver and a carved inscription bearing the following words that express the titanic significance of Carver's life as well as the generosity of the Cowles Foundation. "In memory of George Washington Carver, 1860-1943, unique and creative servant of mankind in agriculture, industry, art and religion, whose rise from slavery to world stature marks him as one of the great spirits of human history. Rejected elsewhere, he enrolled as a student at Simpson College in 1890. Reflecting on his years here he once said, 'My greatest discovery was that I am a human being.' Here also he made his greatest decision: To forsake as he then thought, art and beauty for agricultural studies and fundamental service to humanity. Simpson College is forever grateful to the trustees of the Gardner Cowles Foundation whose sense of the far-reaching significance of Carver's life prompted their generous gifts which made this Carver memorial and science building possible." (2)

The building is a three-story structure of modified Gothic architecture, the general appearance of which blends harmoniously with that of other buildings on the campus. As will be evident from Figure 2, it has been designed as a building for teaching science by methods in which the laboratory experience is held to be the more important.¹ Because cost per cubic foot is always a prime factor in erecting buildings, hall space has been kept at a minimum and the lecture rooms have been grouped on the basement level. This allows the upper stories to have concentrated in them, adequate laboratory space for the work of each of the four departments comprising the Division of Natural Science. The departments of Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics and Mathematics are included in the division. Home Economics and Physical Education, also integral parts of the division, are housed elsewhere.

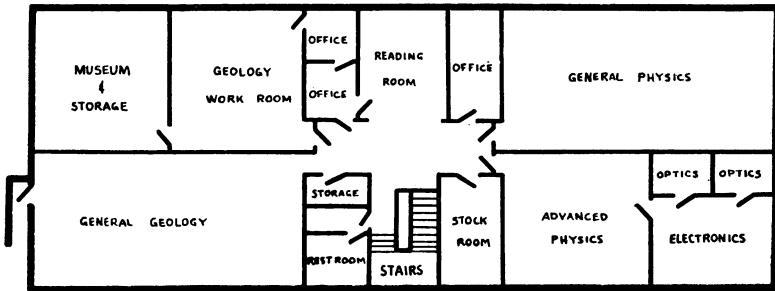
Of more than ordinary interest to students and teachers of Botany is the attention given to the plant sciences. A modest greenhouse is included, the facilities of which will allow us an opportunity to expand our teaching to include plant physiology. Also included is a low-temperature laboratory that will double as a walk-in "ice box" and a site for botanical microtechniques. A small, semi-private area within the Biology laboratories will provide space for a working herbarium, to become the center of increased activities in systematic botany.

Another distinctive feature of Carver Science Hall is the reading room carefully designed and tastefully furnished in honor of one of Simpson's most outstanding professors, Dr. J. Allen

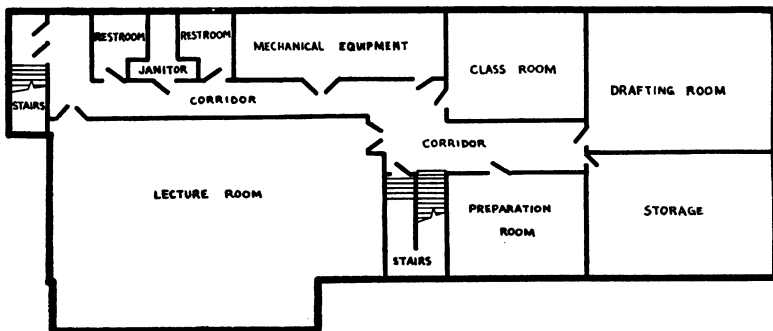
¹Drawings by Flora Kitzman.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

Figure 2. Floor plans of Carver Science Hall.

Baker. For forty-two years, his was the spirit that guided the cause of science at Simpson. Chief among Dr. Baker's honors was his tenure as President of the Iowa Academy of Science in 1948. (3)

While no concerted effort is being made to prepare a collection of Carver mementos, of some note is the group of herbarium specimens of flowering plants that have found their way into the Simpson College Herbarium. Through the kindness of Dr. Richard W. Pohl, Curator of the Herbarium, Iowa State College, Ames, some thirty specimens, collected and prepared by "G. W. Carver" (as he signed the labels) were given to the author. From a botanical standpoint, they are not unusual at all, being largely common species from the prairie flora of Story, Polk and Warren counties. But because these specimens represent some tangible expression of Carver's activities in Iowa, it seems appropriate that they be housed in Carver Hall.

The completion of this building represents another step forward in the development of science education in Iowa. We are proud to be able to take an increasingly active part in the dissemination of scientific knowledge by virtue of the facilities provided by this building which honors one of the most unique figures in American agriculture.

Literature Cited

- (1) Gross, John O., Unpublished Bulletin, Division of Higher Education, Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn. 1941.
- (2) Kerstetter, William E.; From a carved inscription in the foyer of Carver Science Hall, Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa, 1956.
- (3) Past Presidents, *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, Volume 62, 1955.

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