

An Artisan Is Inspired by His Task

A Letter Reveals the Story Behind the Beautiful Decorative Seals in the Windows of William W. Cook Research Building

IN this modern age of speed and dehumanised American industry, it is not usual to find, even in the artistic side of architectural design, a work created and evolved out of an intense love of the task itself, a burning desire which is so strong that it completely overshadows any purely commercial considerations. Quite by accident, a case of this type has been revealed in connection with the design and completion of the stained glass university and college seals which are a vital part of the effective color scheme of the recently completed William W. Cook Legal Research Building.

Probably very few of the thousands who gaze in awe upon the magnificent Law Quadrangle ever fully appreciate the extensive investigations, the exhaustive preparations and the many hours of planning and working that have been necessary for the erection and decoration of any of the structures in the new Michigan legal unit. Instancing the new Law Library we find that the blending of color and design in the many windows alone is an example of expert craftsmanship and of deep artistic feeling which expresses itself only in small part to the average passerby.

An interesting letter revealing some of the inside story of the conception of the windows now beautifying the Cook Library building is ample illustration of the age-old seeking for what Pater aptly terms "art for art's sake." It was written to Mr. Philip Sawyer of the New York architectural firm of York and Sawyer, designers of the Legal Research Library. The letter came from Otto W. Heinigke of Heinigke and Smith, stained glass makers. It runs:

Dear Mr. Sawyer:

In answering your several questions about the windows we wish to make record of the fact that, among many pleasant experiences of a long career of dealing with pleasant people, the designing and building of the windows of the Legal Research Library at Ann Arbor stands out as one of the most pleasant.

Probably no library would furnish a greater number of seals and coats of arms of institutions of learning than the one founded by my father, and

added to from time to time when we have been called upon to furnish the material for windows and other decorations of buildings devoted to education.

Nevertheless when this contract was awarded to us, the beauty of the building and the generous and friendly spirit of every one with whom we were brought into contact, drove from our minds all thoughts of saving of effort, so we added to the prescribed subject which would have permitted repetitions of a short list of institutions of learning and grouped them geographically and with regard to the several types of insignia and curriculum.

Such discrimination rendered fifty per cent of the

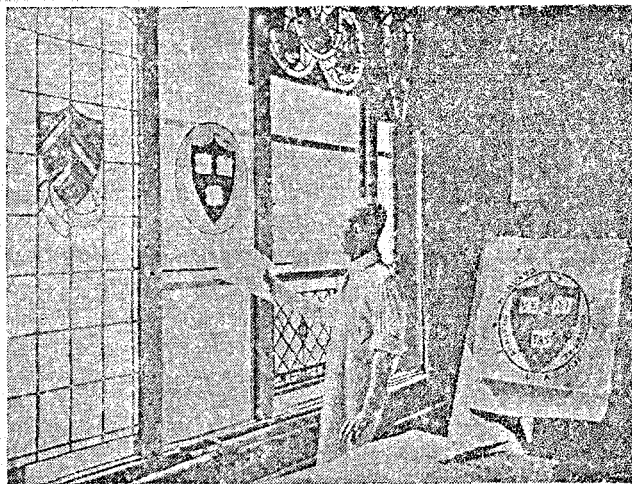
material in our own library unavailable and it became necessary to select a list for geographic distribution which would be ample to cover the wasteage due to some designs being unsuitable for use as architectural decorations and failure on the part of some institutions to furnish us with copies of their arms or seals.

Remarkably few of those we asked did not respond in some way and most were very helpful. Some located within a few hours train ride, took longer to reply than those

in India, China and Australia. Only two out of over two hundred responded in a language other than English.

Almost without exception the American colleges responded with pasters or impressions of their seals together with scraps of ribbon to demonstrate the accurate colors of their war paint. Almost as generally, European institutions sent either accurately colored prints or hand colored drawings of their arms. Some of these latter were so well and carefully done that we felt called upon to return them to the senders, after carefully making record of them for our files.

One of the accompanying photographs shows Mr. Withers, who admits himself chiefly to blame for the beauty of the windows, making a cartoon from the "Material" at hand. On the wall are drawings of the four types of design to which we fondly expected to adhere, for the sake of economy in pattern cutting. The eventual list of types contained somewhere between twenty and thirty.



INTERPRETING INTO GLASS COLORS
THE CARTOONS OF THE SEALS

In making our list of subjects we gave preference in a given geographic division, to a university stressing or offering special facilities in training for the practice of the law. Next, as a qualification, was age or renown, and, other things being equal, size was considered.

When this material had been assembled for a group and the long titles fitted nicely into the circular bands and the shorter ones into the ribbons, if the predominating colors did not balance or dispose into an orderly arrangement; then a question arose as to whether the decorative or the sentimental was entitled to more consideration.

In some cases where the lack of color harmony was very decided and the J. V. substitute was good material, the temptation to the decorator in us was too strong to be resisted and the "spotting" of colors was given preference.

In most cases however, by changing the position of several of the coats of arms in the group, it was possible to harmonize both color and subject without substituting less interesting ones.

The accompanying photograph of Mr. Motherwell interpreting the colors of the cartoons into glass colors convicts him of a large share of the responsibility for the final result.

Each of us seems willing to assume rather more than his share, whereas the greatest credit should

go to him who acted as moderator and prevented us from doing anything except what was done,—the only man big enough.

In order that you may have a record for your archives, we are sending with this copy of the list of institutions and a chart of the locations of the windows by number.

The cartoons are all in our files and we can readily make repairs or changes at any time if occasion demands.

We are very grateful to you for your help from start to finish and hope that we have been able to express it in the service we have given.

Alphabetical Index to Arms of Colleges and Universities

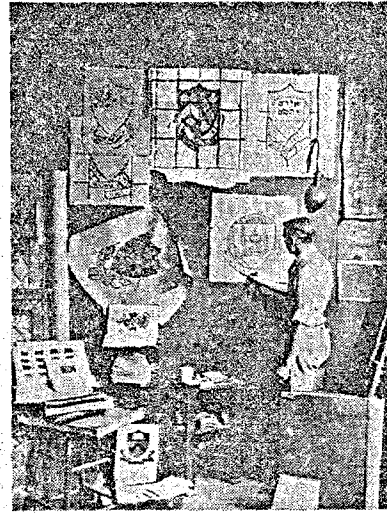
University of Aberdeen, University of Adelaide, University of Alabama, University of Alberta, All Souls College, Amherst College, University of Amoy, University of Arizona, University of Arkansas.

Balliol College, Barnard College, Beloit College, University of Berlin, Birmingham Southern College, Brazenose College, University of British Columbia,

Bryn Mawr College, University of Buffalo, Butler University.

University of California, Cambridge University, Carnegie Institute of Technology, University of Chicago, Christ's College, Christ Church College, University of Cincinnati, Clare College, University of Colorado, Columbia University, Cork University College, Cornell University, Corpus Christi College (Cambridge), Corpus Christi College (Oxford).

Dartmouth College, University of Delaware, Downing Col-
(Continued on page 14)



PRODUCING THE CARTOONS FROM MATERIAL RECEIVED FROM COLLEGES

League Administration Staff Is Reorganized

A NEW year, a new administration, prospects for a highly successful season—these present themselves to executives of the Michigan League building at the opening of the present semester. The administrative staff of the building, headed by Mrs. Grace B. Hollister, Manager, has been completed with the addition of several prominent women who have already fitted themselves into the capable organization which is required for the smooth and efficient running of such an institution.

Most outstanding among Mrs. Hollister's new assistants is Mrs. Beach Conger (Lucille Bailey, '04), recent resident of Grand Rapids. Mrs. Conger, a member of the Board of Directors of the Alumnae Council and a distinguished alumna, will be in charge of the main desk of the Michigan League Building. She will be assisted by



LUCILLE BAILEY CONGER, '04

Miss Jean Levy, a senior student from Detroit.

Miss Helen Cheever, '31, of Detroit, who was President of the Pan-Hellenic Association while on the Campus, will succeed Amy Loomis as custodian of the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater. For its new Food Director, the League has secured Miss Beatrice Goodman from the exclusive Fortnightly Club in Chicago. Miss Dorcas Schneider, a graduate of Ohio State University and recent manager of the Lazarus Tea Room in Columbus, will manage the cafeteria. One other addition brings Miss Twilla Miller, a graduate of Milliken University, as Secretary to Mrs. Hollister.

With the arrival of Mrs. Conger, Miss Marguerite Chapin, '20, is now able to devote herself entirely to her work as Executive Secretary of the Alumnae Council, with offices in the League building.