

History of the Glickman Family Library Building

Abstract: The Library building was built in 1919 as a bakery and operated as such until 1954 after which it was occupied by several businesses, but primarily Johnson's plumbing supply company. Once a state-of-the-art baking facility, the building had the load-bearing capability to house a Library. The University purchased it in 1991 and the renovation turned it into a Portland landmark

The building today know as the Albert Brenner Glickman Family Library was built in 1919 as a bakery.

Thomas Huston began his career driving a bakery wagon in Portland, moved to Auburn where he founded the T. A. Huston Company and built a bakery. When the Auburn bakery burned down, he returned to Portland and built what would become know as the "Down East Bakery" at 314-318 Forest Avenue. It took several years for Huston to negotiate for the right land, but finally in late 1915 the land was secured from E. D. Winslow and Henry Deering and the city allowed use of land reserved as a railroad right of way and a spur track.

Contemporary newspaper accounts described the Huston bakery as "a mammoth, sunlight bakery...one of the largest and most completely equipped baking establishments in the East...a vast industrial wonderland." Indeed the bakery's construction was modern and farsighted. The building was made of flat-slab, steel-reinforced concrete poured on site, a material chosen for its weight-bearing capability. Such a construction would easily support the four brick ovens in the building, each measuring 20 feet wide by 25 feet high and weighing 300 tons. The concrete construction also meant that the floors, walls, and columns were fireproof. The interior was painted with white enamel creating an environment that was easily cleaned. Finally, steel sash windows, very modern at the time, were used. They allowed the maximum area of glazing to ensure the interior would be well lit. Many articles praised the clean, sanitary, and safe conditions of the bakery.

The Huston bakery turned out biscuits and cookies, and a variety of candies. Their slogan "Made in Maine--For Maine--By Maine People" advertised the fact that they used only the freshest ingredients and only shipped their goods as far as they could without the products losing their freshness. One of their most well-known products was the Sebago Lunch Biscuit, made only with water from Sebago Lake which government chemists had rated the "purest" lake water in the United States.

In 1931, the Huston Company sold the bakery to the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco), who operated it until 1954. By then, what had been the largest and the best bakery, did not "lend itself to Nabisco's modernization program," according to factory officials. In 1955 the Portland City directories listed the occupants as the Johnson Supply Company, wholesalers of everything in plumbing, heating and electrical. Johnson Supply continued to inhabit the building through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, but shared the space with other businesses, such as Sebago Moccasin, Cushioned Bellaire Shoe Company, and Maine Industrial Supply Company. Although the Johnson Company continued to occupy the building until 1988, the building had been sold in 1954 to Deering Village Corporation, who in turn sold the property in 1985.

When the building was purchased by USM in 1991, then President Plante stated that its load-bearing capacity of this heavy, massive construction made it ideally suited for a library. The purchase and renovation were both made possible by an University bond issue passed by the State in 1988. Since the cost of the building was higher than expected, an innovative approach was taken to keep the cost of renovation within budget. JSA Inc., Architects Planners of Portsmouth, N.H. were awarded the contract based on their proposal to use Kalwall, a fiber reinforced plastic cladding. The walls would be pre-fabricated offsite, transported, and installed on the building. If traditional brick walls had been used, the budget would only have allowed for the renovation of one floor, but with Kalwall, four floors could be done. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University was used as design inspiration because of it's innovative use of marble slabs to bring

diffused natural light into the building, thereby reducing operating costs. Kalwall was even more attractive as a translucent material because it contains fiberglass insulation, reducing the need for an interior and exterior wall. The cladding was designed to reflect the building's original industrial heritage and the translucent glow at night from the inside lights would ensure the building became a landmark for passing motorists on I-295. The building won design awards from the National Association of Homebuilders and from the New Hampshire Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The Library opened in the fall of 1993 and was in October 1997 dedicated as the Albert Brenner Glickman Family Library.

The exterior was landscaped with beech, bradford pear, austrian pine, and other trees and shrubs given by a variety of donors. The front courtyard facing Forest Avenue was used as a setting for an installation piece, "Grid Stones", by David Phillips. Grids were carved into stones and inset with bronze straps. With the assistance of GIS (geographic information system) readings, the stones were placed so the grids formed a north-south and east-west axis. The geographic coordinates of the library are given on a plaque incorporated in the overall design.

In 2000, the University mounted a capital campaign that raised \$3,100,000 in private donations from alumni, friends, corporations and foundations to renovate the top three floors of the building for the Library's expansion. With the growth of the collections and library operations, increased digital resources, and the University's need for an event room, the space was urgently needed. SMRT Architecture Engineering Planning of Portland designed the new spaces, including a special collections facility, an electronic classroom, computer labs, group study rooms, a café, a great reading room, and an event room. Construction began in Spring 2003 and was completed by April 2004.