

Mechanical Engineering Yesterday and Today

By W. H. CARSON, Director

BOYS, do you remember way back in 1926 when we were confronted with the problem of moving the equipment of the mechanical engineering laboratory to the new Engineering building?

Well, the accompanying photograph should refresh your memory of the good old days back at O. U. If your thoughts are still hazy, perhaps you recall we decided to do double time in our laboratory work and complete the course in the first half of the semester so that during the second half the equipment could be disassembled, moved, and reassembled in the new location. That course was M.E. 161 and you signed the following agreement:

"We the undersigned understand that moving the mechanical engineering laboratory is not a requirement of the regular laboratory course given at this hour, but agree to assist in this moving and setting of machines for only what we gain from the experience: W. A. Kirven, Glynne E. Casteel, Ernest L. Garton, W. K. Ritter, W. A. Sparks, J. Sam Wantland, J. A. Diffendaffer, L. T. Huffman, Joe Leeds, B. D. Wells, G. B. Brady, E. R. Houghes, John C. Glaze, C. D. Alworth, T. J. Alworth, Ed. Durbeck, C. B. Day, P. C. Keipen, D. R. Davis, Johnnie Lorenzen, Otis L. Stevens, L. P. Smith, R. L. Mallory, Lendon Hunt, Wm. Dinwiddie, Earl Jackson, Byron Cook, Duane Landon, Sullivan, R. J. "Hank" Keeler, Roben R. Crowdus, C. E. Stinson, Walter H. Dwinnell, W. K. Ritter, Lloyd L. Gray, John Speck, Dave Fields."

All of this happened in the early days before we had an efficiently organized department of utilities. Funds were available for purchasing the necessary materials of construction, but there wasn't any money for the labor. The above students, many of whom are now holding responsible positions in the industry, stepped in and filled the breach. It was a tedious task working at odd times and moving piece by piece, by the pipe-roller method, over the con-

crete walks, across the street, and down the incline into its new home. This was the fall semester of 1926 and many of the boys were so enthusiastic about the work that they stayed here during the Christmas vacation and completed most of the steam piping work.

The organization which controlled the movement and installation of the equipment was rather a loose affair. Comparing it with the set-up that normally exists in the industry I suppose I was the superintendent; Lloyd Gray the foreman; Carl Ritter, J. A. Diffendaffer, and William Dinwiddie, straw bosses; with Dave Fields acting as chief draftsman. Say, wasn't it a grand and glorious feeling when we turned the steam on and there wasn't a leak in the entire system. You remember the doubting Thomases who had gathered to laugh at us when the steam was turned on and the pipe joints should begin to spew? And you know how they left, one by one, not saying a word either complimentary or derogatory about the set-up. Then you recall, we went in a group from machine to machine and when the steam was turned on the engine started perfectly—with, of course, one or two exceptions. The old D-slide valve engine did run backwards but we soon remedied that. The Corliss refused to start, however, this too was only momentarily as we found

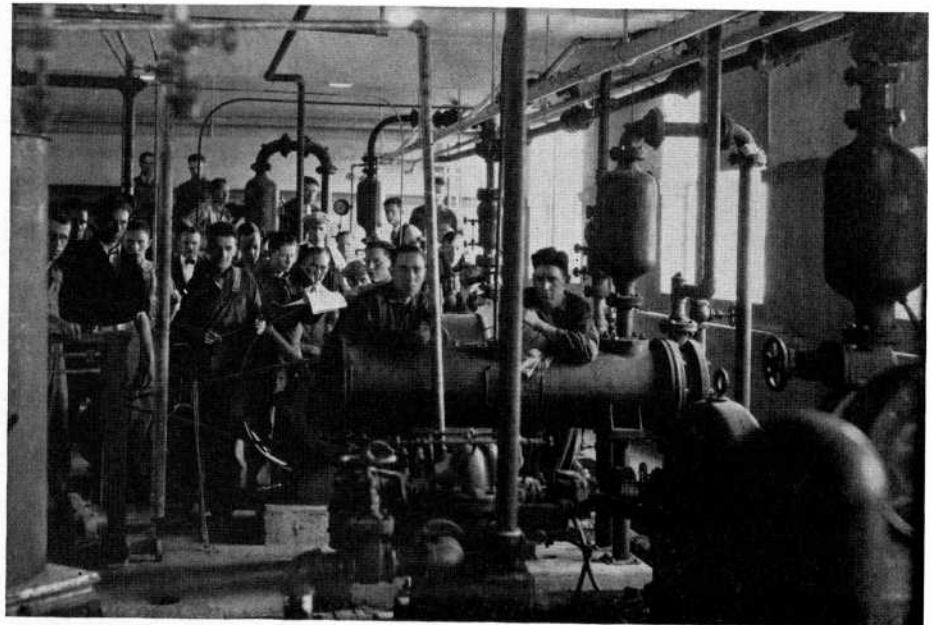
one of the boys had failed to open the exhaust valve. Not one man received an injury during the moving and constructing of this equipment, nor was any of the material damaged.

A great service was rendered in installing this laboratory. Many students have had the opportunity of applying their thermodynamic theories to the operation of these machines. We have all of the engines freshly painted, all fittings are colored according to the A.S.M.E. code. I certainly wish each and every man who participated in the construction of this equipment could be with us on this St. Pat's Day.

There were three bays left for future expansion, however, that was back in 1926. Today all space in the original laboratory has been used for new equipment. The mechanical engineering laboratories have expanded rapidly. We have the large southeast corner room in the old Engineering laboratories, which houses our fluid meters equipment, as well as a new 80-horsepower Frick-Reid Diesel engine. The adjoining room west is now occupied by the air conditioning laboratory, which Mr. Dawson developed during the past semester. There is a 6,000 square foot outdoor laboratory, just south of the Old Engineering building, which consists of oil-country type Superheat boilers, compressors, regulators, gas-lift equipment, airplane engines, and many other pieces of valuable equipment.

Our enrolment has increased in proportion to the laboratory expansion. We are now face to face with the fact that we can not expand further until more building space is available.

May I remind you that we are still graduating students and if you hear of any jobs about June first, let us know about them. Be sure to come in and see us when you are in the vicinity of Norman.



Here are the students of mechanical engineering who nine years ago spent a semester moving the equipment of their school into a new building. The story of their trials and tribulations is told here by Professor Carson.