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The William W. Cook Legal Research Library, 1931

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The William W. Cook Legal Research Library, 1931

The Legal Research Building in about 1935, only four years old. The yew hedges were, according to legend, tended by a resident Japanese gardener and were a feature of Cook's estate in Port Chester, New York. A bird bath in the foreground lends a residential touch.

This building opened after Cook's death in 1930. Cook had not wanted his name on any of the buildings, but since he was no longer around to object, the Board of Regents named this building, and the entire Law Quadrangle, after him.



Legal Research Library, 1935

Source: Bentley Historical Library



Legal Research Library Entrance

Source: Bentley Historical Library

The beautiful entrance to Legal Research from the Law

Quad, taken about 1935. Note the lovely sconces on each side of doors, examples of the art metal work of Samuel Yellin. Note also that the building is closed: large wood sliding doors are pulled shut, concealing the revolving doors that were replaced in the 1990's with doors that provided emergency egress.

Cook Legal Research is the most magnificent of a grand set of buildings, with its spires, huge reading room, stained glass windows, and graceful metal work by the best metal worker of the time, Samuel Yellin. Originally built to hold about 350,000 volumes, it was expanded in the early 1950's by the addition of four floors to the stacks. The Reading Room was restored, and its lighting improved, in 2008.

Legal Research Building viewed from the southeast in 1956, showing the recently-added four new levels sheathed in aluminum. The underground addition was decades ahead. You can still see the drive leading down to the small parking area and loading dock.

Cook Legal Research contains faculty offices around and above the Reading Room, and on the periphery of the ten story stack building on the south side of the building. It also contains Cook's library, from his Manhattan townhouse.



Legal Research Building, 1956

Source: Bentley Historical Library