

THE ROAMING HISTORY OF **LIBRARY STORAGE**

Author: **Ben Walker**
Associate Dean Discovery,
Digital Services & Shared Collections

Fig. 1 1960, University archives holds this intriguing image of books being stored in the Century Tower though the details of this project have been lost to time.

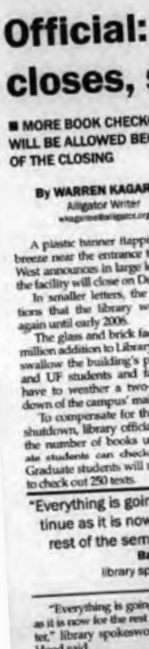
FROM LOCAL NEEDS TO REGIONAL & NATIONAL SOLUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The George A. Smathers Libraries has a more than 60-year history of utilizing remote storage for library materials. Throughout that time, there have been drastic changes in how storage has been managed. It has historically been a somewhat opportunistic endeavor, utilizing facilities designed for other purposes and acquiring and renovating spaces as funding allowed.

Originally, remote storage was seen as a way to move low-use materials off campus to make space for high-use materials. However, as physical collections and construction budgets decline, it has become a way to move materials off-campus to allow for the repurposing of limited space for other uses. This has allowed for more student study and collaborative space, new services, and work space for personnel. During the early period, storage was also seen as a local issue. It was primarily viewed as an answer to relieve capacity issues on the UF campus. As the Libraries continue to evolve, storage has shifted from answering these local needs to focusing on larger scale, regional solutions. Of particular importance to the Libraries is ensuring that adequate copies are retained in secure environments. This movement, known as shared print retention, is now the focus of national efforts in the U.S. and around the world, and UF is at the forefront of those conversations.

Fig. 3



THE LOCAL SOLUTION: 1990s TO 2007

UF began utilizing remote storage in the 1960s. Records of where and what was kept off-site are extremely limited. In 1978, material from the various on- and off-campus locations was consolidated into new compact (moveable) shelving installed in Smathers Library. Movable shelving increases capacity by eliminating the space for dedicated aisles. This added capacity was not enough to meet the demand. Other locations used on campus include Flint Hall (1980-1981) and the Nuclear Science Building for the Engineering Library (1984-1985). In the late 1980s there was even an old sausage plant, the Copeland Sausage Plant in Alachua, Florida, that was available but apparently only used for records (personal correspondence). Around 1995, the Libraries contracted with Hill's Storage to store materials in their warehouses. Hill's was not an air-conditioned space, which presented its own challenges for the preservation of materials due to concerns over deterioration and mold blooms. Further complications included the lack of a comprehensive inventory prior to sending materials to Hill's and the use of forklifts to retrieve materials. Both of these factors contributed to loss and damage of materials. In 1996, the Libraries moved material from Hill's to Yon Hall, a former dormitory for male athletes within the footprint of the UF football stadium. Again, it was not an ideal environment, with inadequate environmental conditioning for the materials. In 1997, the Libraries leased the old Maas Brothers department store on 13th Street and moved materials from Yon Hall to this location. This facility was named the Limited Access Depository (LAD) and would remain in use until 2005. By 1998, there were more than 300,000 items stored at LAD.



Fig. 2 1990, packing books for Hill's storage.

The next major change occurred in 2003, when the University was given a Florida Department of Transportation warehouse on NE 39th Avenue. This would become the Auxiliary Library Facility (ALF). At the time, Library West was preparing to undergo an extensive renovation, with a \$35 million, 60,000 square foot addition (Fig. 3 - *The Independent Florida Alligator*, Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2003). This necessitated closing Library West and finding a temporary home for the approximately 1.5 million volumes housed there. Further complicating this plan was the commitment to make the material requestable by patrons, with four campus deliveries throughout the day (Fig. 4 - *The Independent Florida Alligator*, Tuesday, Jan. 6th, 2004). Staff from Library West were split between the Marston Science Library and the Smathers Library. This was a two-year plan, with the majority of materials returning to campus in 2006.

During this time, the Libraries maintained two storage facilities. In 2005, the lease for LAD was not renewed because of a planned Lowe's in that location. This necessitated a scramble to find a temporary solution. Fortunately, the

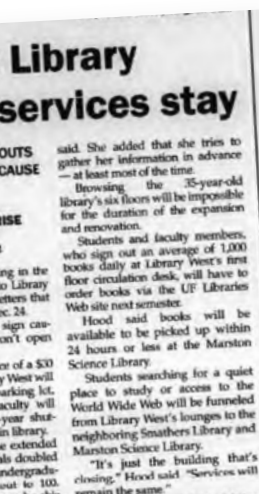


Fig. 4



Fig. 5
Traditional
shelving.



Fig. 6 “Lighting” new high density shelves at ALF in 2018. Each shelf has a unique barcode applied which is then scanned into the software. When a book is requested, the software tells staff exactly which shelf the item is on.

UF Legal Information Center renovation was completed during this timeframe, and the old Publix building in Butler Plaza that the law library had used during construction was available. This would be a temporary site, as the goal from the outset was to return the circulating material at ALF to Library West and to consolidate all of the storage collections at ALF. This transition was accomplished in 2006, and Library West once again opened to the public. Library West staff returned to a building that had significantly increased and improved public and office spaces, with compact shelving that maximized the available shelf space. The focus of the storage operations to this point was very much on relieving campus space pressure within the George A. Smathers Libraries.

THE REGION & BEYOND: 2007 TO PRESENT

In 2007, with the arrival of a new Dean of University Libraries, Judith Russell, storage entered a new phase. At this point, materials were still stored on shelves in call number order (Fig. 5) – by subject as they are in libraries and all materials stored at ALF belonged to the UF Libraries. However,

Dean Russell recognized the potential to build a more efficient facility that would serve the collective needs of the state university libraries. The Council of State University Libraries (CSUL), created a task force to begin exploring these ideas. The task force gathered data about storage needs from the other state university libraries. All of this information was used to develop a proposal to the Board of Governors (BOG), which “oversees the operation and management of the Florida public university system’s twelve institutions” and is responsible for presenting a higher education budget to the Florida Legislature each year. This project was particularly interesting to the BOG because it served all of the state universities. Despite the positive feedback, it was not funded in 2007/2008. The proposal was submitted again in 2008/2009, with more supporting documentation. As in the previous year, it was not funded. This process would continue until 2009/2010, when \$2 million in funding was granted for further planning. Also in 2010, the staff at ALF implemented an inventory control system, which allowed books to be stored by size in trays (Fig. 6). The new software facilitated shelving more books in the

DON'T LOSE ANYTHING

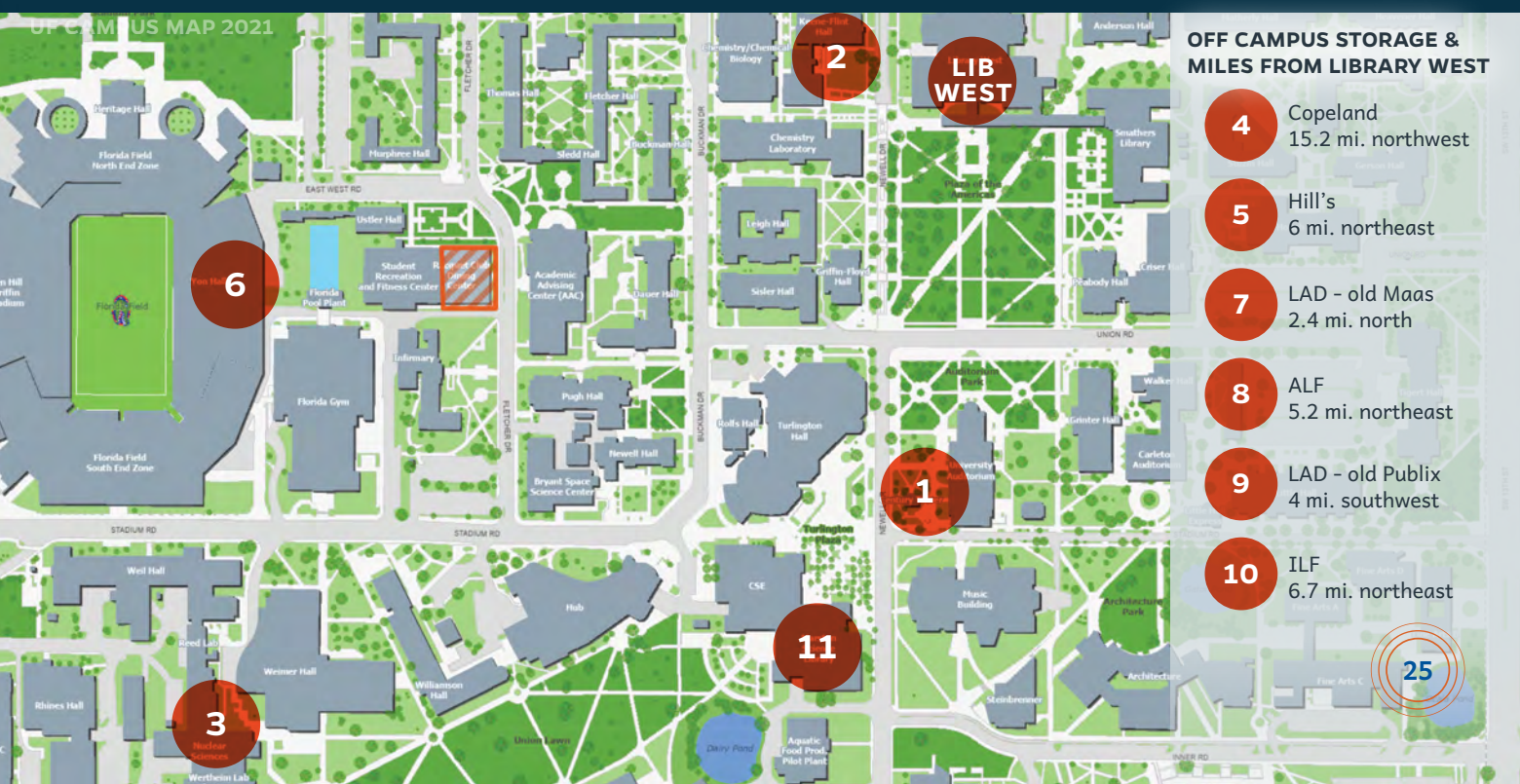
It has historically been a somewhat opportunistic endeavor, utilizing facilities designed for other purposes and acquiring and renovating spaces as funding allowed.

Copeland Sausage Company
1955

THE LIBRARIES STORAGE TIMELINE & MAP ON AND OFF CAMPUS THROUGH THE YEARS.

- 1960** - Century Tower (1)
- 1980-81** - Flint Hall (2)
- 1984-85** - Nuclear Science Bldg., Engineering Library (3)
- Late 1980s** - Copeland Sausage Plant, Alachua, Florida (4)
- 1995** - Hill's Gainesville-storage Facility (5)
- 1996** - Yon Hall in Football Stadium (6)
- 1997** - Limited Access Depository (LAD) in old Maas Brothers Department Store (7)
- 2003** - UF Auxiliary Library Facility (ALF) building (Florida Dept of Transportation warehouse) donated to UF & renovation begins (8)
- 2004** - Library West closed
 - Books transferred to ALF
- 2005** - Limited Access Depository (LAD) closes
 - Books moved to old Publix building, Butler Plaza (9)
- 2006** - Library West reopens
 - Publix books moved to ALF
- 2007** - Planning begins west for statewide storage facility

- 2010** - UF receives state funding
 - ALF establish inventory control software & sizer
- 2012** - Interim Library Facility (ILF) established, houses Digital Support Services & Conservation/Preservation (10)
 - Statewide shared collection named FLorida Academic REpository (FLARE)
- 2014** - Major renovation of ILF
 - Marston Science Library renovation (11), transfers Government Documents to ALF
- 2015** - FLARE begins lending nationally
- 2016** - Over 1 million FLARE items processed
- 2017** - UF/FLARE commit 100,000 monographs to HathiTrust
- 2018** - Major renovation of ALF including HDF shelving
- 2019** - FLARE joins EAST (Eastern Academic Scholars' Trust, shared print collections)
 - Commits 251,000 monographs to HathiTrust
- 2020** - FLARE 30,000 sq. ft. structure
 - Over 5.2 million items in FLARE & room for expansion
 - Materials from over 10 Libraries





three-dimensional shelf space by grouping like-sized items together. Since books were assigned to a cardboard tray with a specific number and location rather than being in call number order, material could be added in any order. At this point, ALF was moving away from a browsable arrangement and focusing on maximum efficiency of the building footprint. This transition was a substantial undertaking, meaning each of the many items would have to be pulled, measured, inventoried, and trayed before returning to a shelf.



Fig. 7 A sizer is used to measure books. Books of similar height are stored together, minimizing wasted space between shelves.

As planning for the anticipated new facility continued with the state funding, the Libraries began looking for interim storage so a statewide shared collection could be established. ALF could not meet the current space demands, especially with shipments from other libraries. In 2012, with financial support from the UF Provost, the Libraries leased warehouse and industrial space less than two miles from ALF. This facility was named the Interim Library Facility (ILF). In addition to materials, these two adjacent buildings would even-

tually house the storage operations and the Preservation and Conservation, and Digital Support Services departments. The move of those staff allowed for other shifts in campus Libraries, including the renovation and move of the Latin America and Caribbean Collection (LACC) to a more user-friendly and appropriate space in Smathers Library. During this period, the statewide storage program received a new name, the Florida Academic REpository (FLARE).

By 2013, the final design for the shared facility was completed and showed a 30,000 square foot concrete structure, with ceilings more than 35 feet high (Fig. 8). It would be connected to the existing ALF building, which would be renovated for office space and would house the departments currently placed at ILF. This new facility, with a capacity of 5.2 million volumes and room for future expansion, was designed to serve the needs for all of the state university libraries. Although the proposal would be submitted for final funding in 2014, 2015, and 2016 (a \$26 million proposal designed to be completed in 15 months), it was never funded beyond the initial \$2 million planning money.

In spite of the construction funding setback, FLARE continued to grow. In 2012, the University of Miami (UM) joined bringing additional funding to the program.





Fig. 9
Chiller
room

The preservation of stored materials for future generations requires a special climate:

a temperature range 50° - 65° and relative humidity (RH) from 35% - 55%. By comparison, office areas are typically 71° - 75° with an RH up to 60%. Without the special climate materials are at risk of mold blooms and other forms of deterioration.



Fig. 10
Climate
meter

DICKSON

In exchange, UM began transferring materials for storage at ILF. Also of note, the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) one of the largest regional research library consortia in the United States, launched a multi-institution shared print program for serials. This was one of the first and largest attempts at creating a regional collection. Under this model, the Libraries committed to retain specific titles until 2035, allowing other ASERL libraries to make decisions about discarding local copies based on a formal commitment from another library to make the title available to their users (www.aserl.org/programs/j-retain). The elimination of duplicative content would free vast amounts of space across the membership. UF leadership in establishing this agreement was critical. To facilitate tracking this information, the Smathers Libraries developed a new application, the Journal Retention and Needs Listing (JRNL) program. This would prove to be a bigger step in FLARE's transition on the national stage than some initially realized.

The Libraries recognized that to maximize the storage capacity at ILF, different shelving was needed. Serendipitously, the President of UF was looking for additional student study space on campus. Recognizing the opportunity, the dean provided a scenario that involved renovating the ground floor of Marston as student space. The challenge was that the ground floor contained over 18,000 shelves of science periodicals and government documents, the Government Documents Department staff, and the entire Map and Imagery Library. Other wrinkles included the need to complete the Latin America and Caribbean Collection move to the 3rd floor of Smathers Library, move the Cataloging and Discovery Services and the Acquisitions and Collection Services Departments from the 1st floor of Smathers Library to the former LACC space on the 4th Floor of Smathers Library, and to temporarily relocate storage materials to make room for the renovation at ILF. Multiple departments were involved, with materials, equipment, offices, and staff moving to various locations. This was an extraordinarily complicated project and final approval to proceed was not received until February 2014. This left only six months to accomplish the project, which incredibly, finished on time. At the completion, the Libraries had renovated multiple spaces, added seating for over 700 students at MSL with new services and amenities and



Fig 8. CSD concept study



ufdc.ufl.edu/source



increased capacity and efficiency at FLARE. This project, while hugely important to the on-campus community, also allowed FLARE to begin accepting transfers from other institutions. Without this project, one could argue that FLARE would not have been able to move beyond local storage.

In 2015, over 1 million items were processed and requestable from FLARE. Another notable event was a transfer from the University of Central Florida (UCF), which added over 80,000 volumes to the collection. By this point, UM had transferred several shipments to FLARE, making it the second largest contributor behind UF. Significantly in this year, the Rosemont Shared Print Alliance began. FLARE was invited to participate in this unique collaboration, which included other major programs like ASERL/Scholars Trust, the Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST), and the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). The goal of this program was to coordinate efforts between these programs to begin building a national collection, thereby ensuring access to materials for the long-term, while potentially allowing members to withdraw items based on these commitments (<https://rosemontsharedprintalliance.org/>).

The next few years saw an increase in these types of activities. FLARE became more and more involved on the national front,

increasing participation in shared print programs and adding partners in JRNL. Each of these shared print initiatives furthered the goal of securing unique titles nationally, with binding and comprehensive documentation. By this point, nine partners were contributing funds annually to maintain the FLARE collection. New shelving in ALF allowed for more efficiency over the existing traditional library shelving that was installed in 2003. As 2020 closed, FLARE had more than 1.6 million items processed and requestable, with contributions from more than 10 libraries in Florida.

CONCLUSION

Looking forward, the need for a larger building still exists. Although physical acquisitions are declining across the country, there are still books that need to be retained for future generations. Over time, FLARE partner financial contributions have declined, leaving UF and UM to shoulder the burden for maintaining these collections. The nationally distributed model of shared print retention continues to accelerate, with Rosemont and other programs continuing to increase print retention agreements. The demand for more public space in campus libraries continues. Without additional construction funding and space to build new buildings on campus, the obvious solution is remote storage. Looking back over the history of storage at UF, the Libraries have invested substantial effort and money in trying to resolve these space issues, most notably with the FLARE legislative proposals. The inability to secure that funding certainly has impeded progress, but FLARE has found other ways to be an important partner in the storage and shared print movement.

