The first library of the Institute consisted of a few reference books kept in the main office. For years after the foundation the only announcement of library facilities read, that “[there] is a small library of books of reference at the Institute.” [The] announcement was made in back [of the] catalogue. However, the facilities of the Worcester Free Public Library were at the disposal of the Institute students. Moreover the librarian of the library never failed to cooperate with the Institute in all its [works] adding new standard works in lectures [and] literature as they appeared. The authorities of the American Antiquarian Society and of the Worcester County Mechanics Association, too, were always liberal in their offers of assistance.

The small collection of reference books grew rapidly in one way at least; that was by the gift of numerous national and state government reports and other publications, which came through the friendly interest of members of the Board of Trustees and other friends of the Institute. Likewise there were many contributions from friends of files of technical periodicals, [transactions] of learned societies, etc. About the year 1889 contributions of money for the purchase of books for the Library began to be received. One of the most important of these was a gift of $200 from Hon. Edward L. Davis of Worcester. Again in 1892 President Francis A. Walker of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology should his interest in the work of this Institute by a gift of $50 for the purchase of books, and there were many other donations of smaller amount for the specific purpose of the Library.

The steady and rapid growth of the collection of books, now really deserving the name of “library”, demanded room for the storage of these books in some central accessible place. The President’s Office had long been outgrown. In 1889, therefore, when Boynton Hall was remodeled, room was found for the use of the Library of the Institute. This room has been previously used by Professor Kimball for his laboratory work in physics. This was, in fact, two rooms in Boynton Hall, north side, adjacent to the small inner room which was henceforth to be the President’s private office. These two rooms, thrown into one by opening the folding doors, were fitted with shelves on each side, and with [ladders?], the [ladder?] for periodicals and for readers. This Library, first really to merit the name, was ready for occupancy with the [beginning?] of the Institute year, September, 1889.

It was, of course, the new Salisbury Laboratories that made possible this new departure. The elaborate quarters provided for the Department of Physics and Chemistry set free in Boynton Hall the rooms now utilized. Moreover the large quarters now available made possible the small Departmental Libraries, which may be said to date from this summer of 1889.

The Trustees of the Institute recognize[d] the growth in importance of the Library by appropriating a regular sum for Library purposes. This sum was apportioned by the Faculty in 1903 in a fixed ratio, decided [whom] after a full consideration of number of students in each course, relative importance of [works] of reference and periodicals as [working] material in the [various] courses, with as generous provisions as possible for the general Library. This
appropriation of a fixed sum guaranteed a regular growth of Library facilities. Another great [impetus] to the growth of the Library was given when the Thompson Memorial Fund…was turned over to the Corporation, the only condition being that the [interest?] from it should be [expended?] in the purchase of books. This income amounts to about [???] a year, and is divided between the general Library and the Departments in the percentage mentioned above.

The steady growth of the Library demanded greater space. This was found, in 1895, by the additions of a third room in Boynton Hall, [contiguous?] to the two already in use, a room that had formerly been occupied by the Department of Language. This expansion of space provided for much growth in many years to come. Until this time, there had been no regular appointed Librarian. Book as they were purchased were entered through the Institute Office, and the President’s clerk in the Registrar—attempted to [place?] them and the periodicals in their proper places.

The first Librarian of the Institute was Miss Elizabeth K. Francis, who took [up] her work at the opening of the school year, in 1895. She arranged the books, classified and cataloged them, and brought the entire library into conditions for effective use. Miss Francis resigned in the Fall of 1900 and was succeeded by Miss Mary E. [Lincourt?], who served until April, 1902. Miss Con[stance?] Smith followed her, serving for a few months, and being succeed by Miss Emily E. Haynes, the present incumbent.

In the spring of 1914 the Library, which since 1889 had occupied the rooms on the first floor of Boynton Hall, was [moved] to the old Chapel in Boynton Hall. The change was made necessary by the demand for more office room for the administration [functions?] The change of books, etc., was accomplished during the spring vacation, and the new quarters have proved well for their purpose.

The present number of books in the Library is about 15,000 and in fair valuation would be $25,000. The Library is especially rich in files on engineering and scientific periodicals, some of which could not possibly be [replaced?] About one hundred and twenty-give periodicals are taken annual by the Institute.

Besides the main or general Library in the Chapel, Boynton there are the departmental libraries of the mechanical, civil, electrical, chemistry and physic departments. In these small collections are kept the periodicals and reference books of especial value to the individual departments. Each Department Library is housed in the buildings in which the work of the department is carried on.