**History of the Nencki Library**

The history of the Institute's library began with the establishment of the Marceli Nencki Institute in 1911. Until then, individual research departments had their own small book collections for their own needs. Researchers also used the Central Library of the Warsaw Scientific Society, or the University Library. The merger of the Institute's two departments - neurobiology, physiology, and general biology - in 1920, created the basis for organizing a Central Library on its own. The field stations located outside Warsaw also had their own book collections, but they were organisationally connected with the Central Library, which was located in the building at 8 Śniadeckich St. Apart from that, these were the collections of the Library of the Hydrobiological Station in Wigry, the Marine Station in Hel, the Department of Biometry, the Department of Neurobiology, and the Biological Station in Pinsk.

**1920s-1939s**

According to first reports, the Library's book collection was very modest, and in 1920, it consisted of only 695 volumes. However, in 1927, it had 7,040 volumes (periodicals, continuous publications, compact prints and prints). The last published data concerning the Library's activity comes from the end of 1937. The Central Library of the Nencki Institute had 1,765 scientific works in 3,600 volumes, 350 titles of both domestic and foreign journals in 8,000 volumes, over 8,500 participants, of which over 5,000 were catalogued and arranged. The main source of the collection was the Institute's exchange of publications with scientific centers in Poland and abroad. The Library exchanged its own publications with 36 countries, 203 foreign institutions, and 47 domestic institutions. It subscribed to 30 journal titles. It also made purchases to fill out missing volumes of journals. About 400 periodical titles (330 foreign and 70 Polish) were received on a current basis. The Library's collections were used on a regular basis by around 100 scientists, and about 1,000 volumes were borrowed from outside the Library each year.

In the early year, the Library was staffed by junior researchers: Stanisława Dembowska, Genowefa Szwejkowska, and Stanisław Gartkiewicz, who in 1925 compiled a "Catalogue of foreign biological journals held in Polish libraries". It contained data from 95 Polish libraries, and listed 965 titles of journals held within those libraries, providing information on the volumes and yearbooks contained. In 1925, Tadeusz Kulisiewicz designed an exlibris for the Nencki Library, which is being used until today. In 1929-34, the position of librarian was held by Maria Pochapinska, an administrative employee of the Institute. In November 1933, Aniela Gruszczynska (Szwejcerowa) was hired. She was the first professional librarian of the institution. She organized the Institute of Experimental Biology Library from scratch. She worked on collecting, compiling, and making available, the book collection. She strived to link library activities with related institutions, so that the resources of the entire country could be accessible to the staff of the home institution. She was active in international cooperation in the exchange of publications with nearly 200 foreign institutions. It also provided scientific information on sought-after journal items. Further successful development of the Central Library was hampered by the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, and the occupation.

**1940s-1990s**

The outbreak of war caused the destruction of the Library, and its valuable book collection. The collections in the Research Stations of the Institute were also completely destroyed. Only a few dozen volumes have survived to the present day. After the end of the Second World War, a group of surviving Institute staff members came together and undertook to rebuild the Institute. These were Professors Jan and Stanisława Dembowski, Jerzy Konorski, and Liliana Lubińska, Włodzimierz, and Stella Niemierko. Aniela Szwejcerowa (née Gruszczyńska), the pre-war Director of the Library, was also among them.

Until 1954, the Institute and the Library were located in Lodz. The reconstruction of the Library was started from scratch, not only in terms of the book collection, but also staff, equipment, and modest financial meanings. In the initial period, there was a lack of publications to exchange, as the first post-war volumes began to appear regularly only in the 1950s. Starting with a zero volume collection in Lodz, by the time the Library was moved to Warsaw, it already amounted to over 10,000 volumes, and about 700 periodical titles were received on a regular basis. The Library returned to information and documentation work.