

*Introducing a Special Series*

# The First Century of Air Conditioning

By **Harry M. Will**, Member ASHRAE  
Coordinating Editor

The invention of air conditioning cannot be ascribed to a certain date. Its developments, as Willis Carrier noted, "is the natural outgrowth of busy, intelligent minds aiming towards improvement" occurring over an extended period of time. Although crude forms of air conditioning appeared hundreds and even thousands of years ago, its true beginnings as an art and science began at the end of the 19th Century.

To capture the significant advances and technological achievements of this remarkable chapter in the history of engineering and science, ASHRAE's Historical Committee has initiated a series of articles providing historical research, personal anecdotes and reprints of landmark papers. This series commemorates a century of innovation in the arts and sciences of air conditioning, heating and refrigeration and at the same time salutes the start of a new millennium, which will undoubtedly be marked by further progress and growth in the HVAC&R arts and sciences. This series also coincides with the Stay Cool



exhibit, which opens May 1 and runs through Jan. 2, 2000 at the National Building Museum in Washington. The exhibit describes how air conditioning has transformed the way we live, work and play.

Beginning in the 1890s and continuing into the early 1900s, a spurt of technological development marked the true start of air conditioning as we now define it. Since then, steady progress has made the 1900s the first air-conditioned century. As we approach the start of a new century, and indeed a new millennium, air conditioning has evolved from a curiosity to a necessity, literally transforming the way that much of the world lives.

This series is a testament to these achievements. Our current abilities are well founded on the initiative, engineering skill and enterprise of those who helped define and develop air conditioning. All involved today in professions that provide environmental control and comfort should be justly proud of the industry that grew from the contributors of these pioneers. ■

## The articles appearing in this series are...

John Gorrie, The Visionary; by **John Gladstone**, Fellow/Life Member ASHRAE

Application of Electric Power in HVAC&R Systems; by **Bruce L. Flaniken**, P.E., Member ASHRAE

Comfort from a Block of Ice—A History of Comfort Cooling Using Ice; by **Bernard Nagengast**, Member ASHRAE

Early Twentieth Century Air-Conditioning Engineering; by **Bernard Nagengast**, Member ASHRAE

Carbon Dioxide Systems; by **William S. Bodinus**, P.E., Fellow/Life Member ASHRAE

Sleeping Soundly on Summer Nights—A History of Air Conditioning in the Home; by **Michael T. Pauken**, Ph.D., P.E., Member ASHRAE

The Evolution of Air Conditioning and Modern Office Building Design, Parts 1 and 2; by **David Arnold**, P.E., Member ASHRAE

History of Automotive Air Conditioning—Part 1, Comfort Heating, and Part 2, Comfort Cooling; by **Mohinder S. Bhatti**, Ph.D., Member ASHRAE

Air Quality, Ventilation and Comfort; by **John E. Janssen**, P.E., Fellow/Life Member ASHRAE

A View of IAQ as the Century Closes; by **Arthur E. Wheeler**, P.E., Fellow/Life Member ASHRAE