



JOHN AND MARY NICHOLS

RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES



The University of Oklahoma Libraries have actively sought to collect rare books and research materials in support of the academic curricula since the earliest days of the university. In the tradition of this commitment to scholarly endeavor at the University of Oklahoma, the University Libraries established the John and Mary Nichols Rare Books and Special Collections in April, 2001. The collection is named for John and Mary Nichols of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who are longtime supporters of the University of Oklahoma and the University Libraries. The collection was founded by the University Libraries to promote scholarship in the field of English literature, and to provide stewardship for the general collection of rare books within the library system.

Located on the fifth floor of Bizzell Memorial Library, the collections are comprised of rare books and special materials in English literature and related subjects, dating from the 15th century to the present. Although the collections focus primarily on English literature, a broad range of American and European literatures are represented as well. A collection of general rare books, including several incunables, and a Bible collection complement the focal literature collections. These collections offer opportunities for interdisciplinary research in such fields as literary studies, the history of printing, and religion.

The mission of the John and Mary Nichols Rare Books and Special Collections is to collect, preserve, promote, and make available its rare and special materials in support of scholarly research. The University Libraries encourage faculty, students, and other researchers to use the collection materials.

The John and Mary Nichols Rare Books and Special Collections join three existing special collections within the University Libraries. The History of Science Collections, the Harry W. Bass Collection in Business History, and the Western History Collections are established research collections which offer rare and specialized materials to scholars. The John and Mary Nichols Rare Books and Special Collections complement these libraries by expanding the scope and depth of research materials available at the University of Oklahoma.



*John W. Nichols, Dean Sul H. Lee and
Mary D. Nichols*

John W. Nichols, a 1936 University of Oklahoma business alumnus, and his wife, Mary Davis Nichols, a 1937

alumna, are strong supporters of the University of Oklahoma's academic mission. Mr. Nichols is chairman emeritus of Devon Energy Corporation, and director emeritus of Liberty National Bank and Trust Company. Together, Mr. and Mrs. Nichols have fostered an enduring relationship with Bizzell Memorial Library through their continued interest in its services and programs.

THE LITERATURE COLLECTIONS

The collections contain a broad spectrum of key titles and authors in English literature from the 17th century through the 20th century. Most major English literary figures from these periods are represented in the collections, often by first edition copies or rare limited editions of their works. Among these is a rare Smithwick first issue of William Shakespeare's *Second Folio*, published in 1632, and a 1678 edition of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Also present in the collections are the standard works of Alexander Pope, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, and Jane Austen, among others.

American and European literature titles complement the English literature collections with a selection of standard and rare works. Highlights include a rare 1884 copy of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*, illustrated by noted engraver Gustave Doré, and a first edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, printed in 1922. Other authors of note in the collections include Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio, and Victor Hugo.



THE GENERAL RARE BOOKS COLLECTION

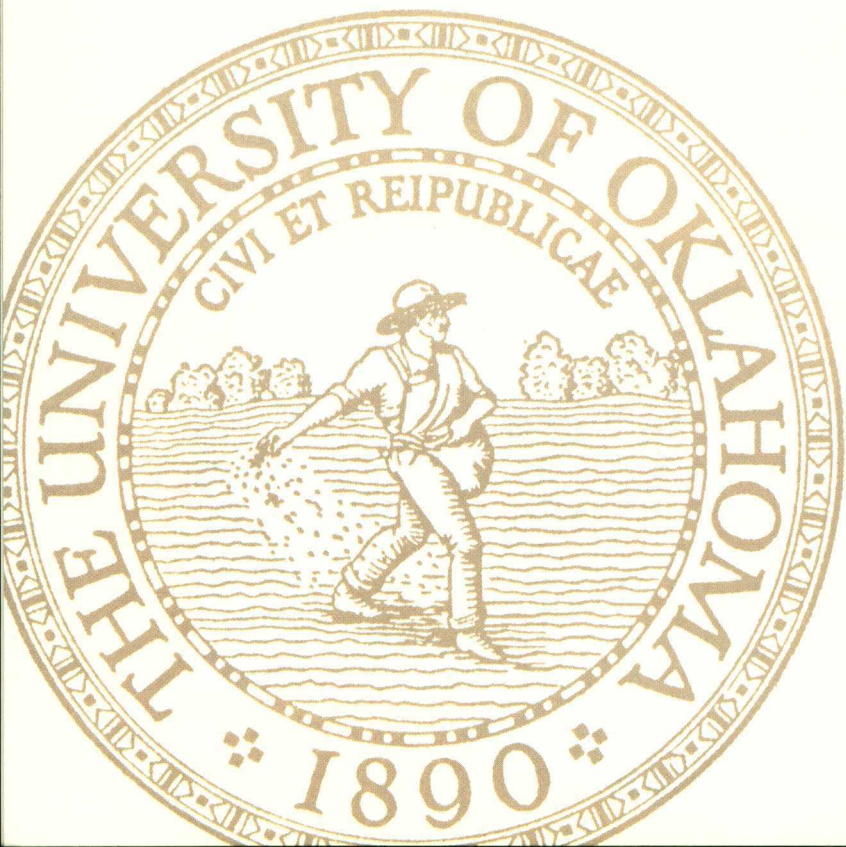
Bibliophiles will find among the collections' treasures several incunabula, or books printed before 1501, in the earliest stage of printing history. Primary among these is Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum*, also known as the *Nuremberg Chronicle*. Anton Koberger printed the *Liber Chronicarum* in Nuremberg in 1493, and Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff illustrated it with nearly 2,000 woodcuts. As a result, many regard the *Nuremberg Chronicle* as the best illustrated printed book of the 15th century.

In addition to the incunables, the collections hold many other rare publications of note, including a first folio edition of Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, 1614, and a limited edition, twelve portfolio set of *Denkmäler des Theaters*. The latter, printed in 1926-1930, consists of both text and matted plates of theater scenery and costume illustrations.

The incunables and rare books complement the literature collections by adding depth to the level of research possible in the collection. The history of book printing, and the histories of England and the world add context to the study of the written word.

THE BIBLE COLLECTION

The collection holds numerous volumes of the Bible and related works, spanning the period of 1648 to 1980. These materials include a Martin Luther Bible printed in Tübingen, 1729, as well as a limited edition copy of William Blake's *Illustrations to the Bible*, published by Trianon Press in 1957. Blake, an English poet, painter, and engraver of the late 18th century, is noted for his colorful and unique style of illustrated verse. A wide range of books on religion and theology accompany the Bibles.



ACCESS

Access to the collections is available to students, faculty, and other researchers. The University Libraries encourage use of the materials.

Collection materials are maintained in a secure environment with monitored environmental conditions. Temperature and humidity are held to appropriate levels for the preservation of special materials. Materials do not circulate from the reading room.

SERVICES

The University of Oklahoma online catalog contains full descriptions of collection materials. An author-title card catalog located in the collections also contains a complete record of its holdings.

For further information about the John and Mary Nichols
Rare Books and Special Collections, please contact:

CURATOR

John and Mary Nichols Rare Books
and Special Collections

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
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