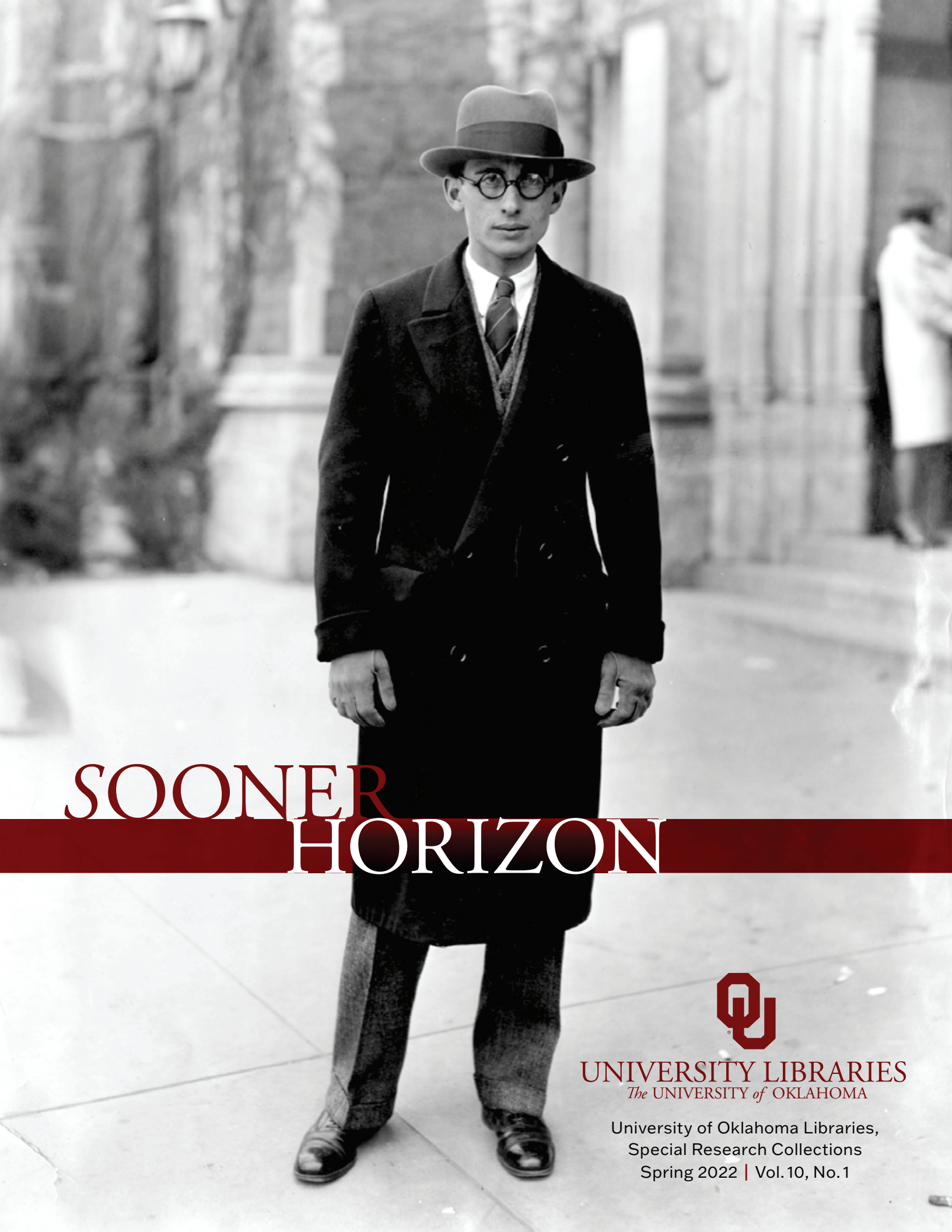




SOONER HORIZON



UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

University of Oklahoma Libraries,
Special Research Collections
Spring 2022 | Vol. 10, No. 1

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST SOONER HORIZON!



It is exciting to introduce the spring 2022 edition of the special research collections publication at the University of Oklahoma Libraries. I hope you enjoy this showcase of the newest updates and developments in this part of the UL.

In these pages, we honor an extraordinary former student at the university, R. Lynn Riggs, who began a phenomenal career whose work inspired the Broadway play every Sooner knows, *Oklahoma!*, after departing from Norman. His literary impact extends far beyond the Great White Way and we are proud to hold some of his papers in the Western History Collections. The WHC curator Todd Fuller’s advocacy to honor Riggs played an integral part in the university bestowing an honorary doctorate to Riggs at the spring 2022 commencement ceremonies.

Also this spring, OU Libraries and its History of Science Collections acquired papers and documents of some of the leading scholars in the history of geology. We now hold stunning renderings and works of some key figures like Mary Anning, William Smith, and Etheldred Benett. These works will continue to bring scholars from around the globe to our History of Science Collections, which we spotlight in this issue of *Sooner Horizon*.

Speaking of global relationships, the Chinese Literature Translation Archive opened an exhibit and held special readings in Taiwanese poetry this winter to mark its collaboration with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Houston, the Taiwan Ministry of Culture, and the College of International Studies. Featuring Taiwanese-American poet-translator Wai-lim Yip 葉維廉, scholar-translator Steve Bradbury offered his personal collection and translations that include some of Taiwan’s most innovative poets, editors, and poetry book designers.

Guided by a new strategic plan, the University Libraries have never been more important — or more relevant — in supporting inquiry, learning, and discovery for all scholars, ranging from university academics to members of the public. They will be key in facilitating the University of Oklahoma’s resolve to become a top-tier research institution.

OU Libraries continues to strategically develop our cultural heritage resources and will remain central to what we do, here at the University of Oklahoma as a research institution. There is, of course, more work to do. We are thankful for our friends who continue to help us develop and curate these documents and artifacts, now and into the future.

Onward!

DENISE STEPHENS
Peggy V. Helmerich Dean of University Libraries

“
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”

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SPECIAL RESEARCH COLLECTIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES

The University of Oklahoma Libraries’ special research collections supports the scholarly work of students, faculty, researchers, and visiting scholars with a wide range of unique primary and secondary resources, many of which are one-of-a-kind and unique to the University of Oklahoma. From rare books, manuscripts, and maps to photographs, sound recordings, and artifacts, the research possibilities are unlimited, and the collections will continue to increase in size and content.

The UL Special Research Collections include the Western History Collections, the History of Science Collections, the John & Mary Nichols Rare Books and Special Collections, the Harry W. Bass Business History Collection, the Bizzell Bible Collection, the Chinese Literature Translation Archive, and the Daniel J. & Ruth F. Boorstin Collection.

Western History Collections ▶

Curator: TODD FULLER, PH.D.

Associate Curator: LINA ORTEGA, M.L.I.S.

The Western History Collections is an internationally known center for study of the American West. The Collections contain more than 80,000 books, 2,700 manuscript collections and 2 million historic photographs that are a rich resource for scholarship and teaching. These focal collections are complemented by maps, sound recordings, graphic materials and ephemera that illustrate the colorful, complex history of the American West from the early 19th century to the present. Visitors can access these treasures in the reading room of Monnet Hall, where exhibits display intriguing collection items.

The Western History Collections also houses other collections, including the University of Oklahoma Archives and the Diplomatic Archive. The University Archives contain the official and personal papers of OU’s presidents, administrative records and official publications such as yearbooks and directories. The Diplomatic Archive, established in 1997 by President David L. Boren and Ambassador Edward J. Perkins, features official declassified and personal papers, books, photographs and memorabilia of former U.S. ambassadors and



presidential appointees with Oklahoma ties, such as Everett F. Drumright and Jeane J. Kirkpatrick.

◀ The History of Science Collections

Curator: KERRY MAGRUDER, PH.D.

Founded in 1949 with an initial gift from Everette Lee DeGolyer, the History of Science Collections at the University of Oklahoma is a premier research collection. Its holdings include nearly 100,000 print volumes and current publications in the field. The Collections supports multidisciplinary research in every chronological period, geographic region, and subject area of science, technology, and medicine. Among the oldest items are a cuneiform brick (ca. 1300 BCE), a small number of medieval and early modern manuscripts, and the Collections’ oldest printed book, Hrabanus Maurus, *Opus de universo* (1467). Astronomy, physics, natural history, geology, technology, and science and religion are traditional areas of strength for the print holdings. Areas of recent concentration include women in science, Islamic science, star maps, and science and technology in Asia. Archives support research in the history of geology, meteorology, technology, and physics, among other topics.



The Daniel J. & Ruth F. Boorstin Collection

The Boorstin Collection is used for quiet study and reading books from the collection of Daniel J. Boorstin, one of America’s most distinguished and influential historians and author of more than 20 books. He was awarded the Bancroft Prize for American history in 1959 and the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1973. Boorstin served as the 12th Librarian of Congress from 1975 to 1987. His wife, Ruth Frankel Boorstin, collaborated with him as editor and was a full partner in all of his endeavors. The facilities for the Daniel J. and Ruth F. Boorstin Collection were made possible by a generous gift from ConocoPhillips Inc.



▲ The Bizzell Bible Collection

William Bennett Bizzell, president of The University of Oklahoma from 1925 to 1941, purchased his first old Bible for \$1 while a col-

lege student in Boston. That Geneva Bible is just one of the 665 Bibles included in the Bizzell Bible Collection.

In addition to more common European languages such as Greek, Latin, German, French and Spanish, President Bizzell collected many Bibles in numerous other languages such as Cherokee, Muskogee, Hindi, Swahili, Javanese, Mongolian, Tartan, Mooltan, and Turkish. Additional related works include commentaries, textual studies, illustrations, geographies and histories of the holy land, works on the life of Christ, prayer books and hymnals. The collection includes several incunabula (books published in the infancy of printing, before 1500). The oldest book is a hand-painted manuscript prayer book written on vellum in the fifteenth century.

The collection was given to the University in 1949 by Bizzell’s family, with the provision that it be kept intact. Since 1987, the collection has been housed in the Gaylord Room of the Bizzell Memorial Library. President Bizzell’s love for scholarship and books is reflected in his drive to complete the University Library in 1930. A statue of President Bizzell gazes perpetually on the south entrance to the library which now bears his name.

The John & Mary Nichols Rare Books and Special Collections

Curator: JOANN PALMERI, PH.D.

Named for John and Mary Nichols, longtime supporters of the University of Oklahoma and OU Libraries, this collection is composed of more than 15,000 rare books and special materials in English, European, and American literatures dating from the 15th century to the present. These holdings offer outstanding opportunities for research and teaching over a wide range of fields, including fine arts, folklore, history, law, literary studies, politics, publishing and book history, religious studies and theatre.

The university established the collection in 2001 to promote scholarship in the field of English literature and to provide stewardship for the general collection of rare books within the library system. The collections contain a broad spectrum of key titles and authors in English literature from 17th century through the 20th century. Most major

English literary figures are represented, often by first edition or rare limited editions of their works. Among these is the rare Smithwick first issue of Shakespeare’s *Second Folio*, published in 1632, and the 1678 edition of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Also present are works by Jane Austen, Lewis Carroll, Cervantes, Dante, Arthur Conan Doyle, Victor Hugo, Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley, and Mark Twain. A collection of general rare books, including incunabula, bibles, books on English history, and 17th- and 18th-century English plays, complement the focal literature collections. In addition to the Dickens Collection, several named collections are held within the Nichols Collections, including the Bob Burke Bible Collection and the Lois Lenski Children’s Literature Collection.



◀ The Chinese Literature Translation Archive

Curator: JONATHAN STALLING, PH.D.

The OU Libraries Chinese Literature Translation Archive provides students and scholars with a wide range of rare books, reference materials, translation drafts, correspondence, notes, ephemera, and other historical materials that provide context for Western readers to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese literature. The archive currently houses nearly 10,000 volumes and thousands of documents from some of the greatest translators of modern Chinese literature in the West, including Howard Goldblatt, Wolfgang Kubin, Wai-lim Yip and the “William Bikales and Margaret Eliot Grady Collection” of Arthur Waley.

The mission of the archive is to improve the material conditions for translation students and for comparative and world literature by providing the materials necessary for historically informed research supported by the richly textured intellectual environments within which translation takes place.



Lynn Riggs from the WHC's Betty Kirk Collection



Riggs at Yaddo, from the Walter Campbell Collection

Lynn Riggs (1899-1954):

Lynn Riggs, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, was born near Claremore, Oklahoma, in 1899. He graduated from the Oklahoma Military Academy in 1917 and attended OU from the fall of 1920 to December of 1923. He left without attaining his degree.

Between 1917 and 1920 Riggs worked a variety of jobs, including reporting for the *Wall Street Journal*, sweeping Wall Street offices, and selling books at Macy's for \$10.00 per week.

During his time at the OU, he first pursued fine arts, then switched his focus to English, where he excelled. He served as poetry editor of the *University of Oklahoma Magazine*; wrote and produced his first play, *Cuckoo*; wrote poetry and published poems in national journals, including *Poetry*, *Smart Set*, and *American Mercury*, among many others; performed in the glee club (along with noted OU alum Joseph Benton); and taught freshman-level classes.

In 1923, Riggs left the university for a combination of reasons, usually related to mental health and/or physical health issues, and relocated to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There he took up with a lively group of fairly like-minded artists, which included Witter Bynner and Spud Johnson. They formed a kind of informal workshop group dubbed *The Rabble*, after the French writer Rabelais.

Riggs' time in New Mexico proved highly productive. From the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, Riggs began to write plays and poetry at a prolific clip, authoring *Knives from Syria* (1925), *A Lantern to See By* (1925), *Big Lake* (1927), *Rancor* (1928), *Roadside* (1930), *Sump'n Like Wings* (1931), and *Green Grow the Lilacs* (1931). He also published a poetry collection, *The Iron Dish* (1931).

Even with the Broadway success of *Green Grow the Lilacs* — it ran for 64 performances — Riggs continued writing. Then, in 1943, the collaborative team of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein adapted the play into a musical that would become *Oklahoma!*, which became one of the longest running and most beloved Broadway shows of all time. The creative duo won a special Pulitzer Prize in 1944. Riggs is formally credited with writing the play that served as the basis for the musical and later the Academy Award-winning film (1955).

The University of Oklahoma honored Riggs' memory by granting him an honorary doctorate at the Spring 2022 commencement ceremonies.

“SPRUNG FROM THE DAWN”

Oklahoma's most famous — and most unknown — writer receives honorary OU doctorate

Just like his play *Green Grow the Lilacs* that took place in 1900 and became the basis of the world-famous musical *Oklahoma!*, Rollie Lynn Riggs was born at the turn of the 20th-century in Claremore, Oklahoma.

In 1923, Riggs set out from the University of Oklahoma to New Mexico. By the time of his death in 1954, he was one of the most well-known writers in the United States.

Now, Oklahoma's most famous — and yet, most obscure — poet, playwright, and writer received a posthumous honorary doctorate from the University at the spring 2022 commencement.

The Western History Collections at the University Libraries is the only other location besides the museum in Claremore, Oklahoma, and Yale

University with Riggs' papers, offering invaluable insight for researchers into a figure who was once as notable and renowned as Eugene O'Neill, Paul Green, and other 20th-century creative luminaries.

“The underlying tensions between Cherokee identity, personal identity, and family place in Riggs' work create unanticipated intersections representing the United States' cultural tapestry,” said Todd Fuller, curator of the Western History Collections. “In his work, we see complexities of tribal identity interacting with 20th-century social expectations in ways that are not neatly fixed. Honoring Riggs acknowledges his place in American literary canon and its connection to Oklahoma. I am overjoyed to see this come to fruition. We are completing unfinished business.”



OU Board of Regents Chair Frank Keating stands with Edrye Riggs Doman and OU President Joe Harroz

RETURNING HOME

Nearly a century after leaving the University of Oklahoma, Lynn Riggs receives his posthumous honorary doctorate

Family members and dignitaries alike gathered Spring Commencement Weekend 2022 to honor the legacy of playwright, author, and poet Lynn Riggs. Riggs' nieces Edrye Riggs Doman and Amy Sperry traveled to Norman to accept the degree in his name. Former curator of the Clare-

more (Oklahoma) Museum of History in Claremore, Oklahoman Andy Couch and his spouse, Katey, as well as Todd Fuller, Western History Collections curator, and Crag Hill, professor of instructional leadership and academic curriculum at OU, also attended the university's luncheon the morning of commencement.



TOP RIGHT: (from left to right) Katey Couch, Andy Couch, Amy Sperry, Edrye Riggs Doman, Todd Fuller, Crag Hill at the honorary degree luncheon before Spring 2022 Commencement

MIDDLE: Riggs' niece Edrye Riggs Doman at Commencement

BOTTOM RIGHT: Doman and Regent Keating



LYNN RIGGS WEEK CELEBRATES LEGACY, IMPACT OF CHEROKEE WRITER

In a collaboration between the Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma Libraries and the Mark Allen Everett Poetry Series, as well as the Native Nations Center and Native American Studies, Lynn Riggs Week in November 2021 highlighted the life and writing of one of Oklahoma’s most prolific yet under-appreciated authors.

To celebrate the centennial of Riggs’ attendance at the University of Oklahoma, project collaborators brought together scholars, poets, and performers from across the country for a week-long series of presentations, discussions, readings, and performances.

The performers and presenters for Lynn Riggs Week represented a cross-section of the scholarly expertise on and impact of his work, speaking to the prestige these collections bring to the University of Oklahoma Libraries and WHC.

“Lynn Riggs Week was amazing,” said Crag Hill, professor of English education in the the Department of Instructional Leadership and Curriculum in the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences. “It was like we had a miniature Dream Course on Lynn Riggs. The presenters and performers provided insights about Lynn’s life and work that were illuminating, uplifting, and smart.”

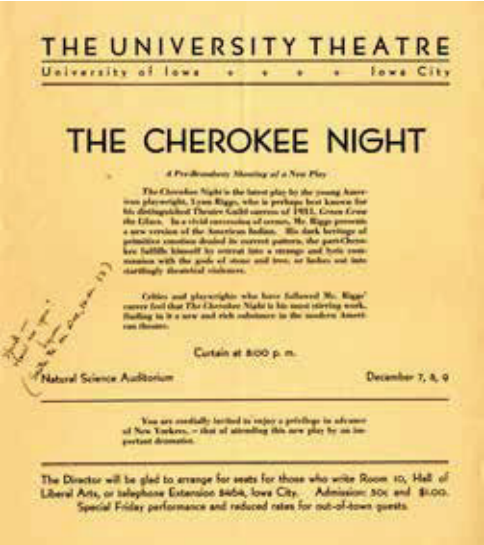
Across four events, nearly 100 people attended both virtually and in-person. Faculty, staff, students, and the general public were delighted to hear from four scholars and performers, who included Anna Smist (Sac & Fox Nation of Oklahoma, Deer Clan), John Dennis Anderson, Sy Hoahwah (Yapaituka Comanche/Southern Arapaho), and Craig Womack (Creek/Cherokee).

Presenters and performers discussed a variety of topics based on Riggs’ life and work, from his being a closeted Cherokee writer to the ways his Cherokee identity informed various plays and other writing.

The collaborators carried out these activities as one way to commemorate Native American Heritage Month at the University of Oklahoma and to highlight various Riggs-related holdings at the University Libraries’ special collections.



Comanche poet Sy Hoahwah performs at the Lynn Riggs Memorial reading during Lynn Riggs Week



LEFT: A playbill of The Cherokee Night from the Lynn Riggs Collection

“To celebrate the centennial of Riggs’ attendance at the University of Oklahoma, project collaborators brought together scholars, poets, and performers from across the country for a week-long series of presentations, discussions, readings, and performances.”

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Lynn Riggs Week Presenters and Performers:

ANNA SMIST (Sac & Fox Nation of Oklahoma, Deer Clan) graduated from Yale College in 2021 with a bachelor of arts degree in English and history of art. Her presentation derives from the research she did associated with her senior thesis for English on the Cherokee playwright Lynn Riggs, who wrote the work that inspired the seminal musical *Oklahoma!* which served as her senior thesis for the English major. Smist discussed Riggs’ remembered Oklahoma and the complex tensions inherent in his own cultural and sexual identity as a closeted Cherokee writer.

JOHN D. ANDERSON, professor emeritus at Emerson College, will conduct a Chautauqua performance of Lynn Riggs, which he did most notably during the state’s centennial celebration.

JOHN DENNIS ANDERSON, a native Texan living on Cape Cod, is a performance studies scholar and professor emeritus in the Department of Communication Studies at Emerson College. He appeared as Lynn Riggs in the Oklahoma Centennial Chautauqua in 2007 and has also performed in Oklahoma as Henry James, William Faulkner, Washington Irving, Ernest Hemingway, and Marshall McLuhan. He will present Christopher Isherwood in 2022. He also performs as Robert Frost, Louis Bromfield, and Henry Beston. Anderson is a non-Native performer who conducts Chautauqua performances of Riggs.

SY HOAHWAH (Yapaituka Comanche / Southern Arapaho) is the Lynn Riggs Memorial Reader for 2021. He will be reading new and published works from his latest collection, *Ancestral Demon of a Grieving Bride* (University of New Mexico Press, 2021). Hoahwah is an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma. He received his master of fine arts degree in creative writing from the University of Arkansas. Hoahwah is the author of three collections of poetry, *Ancestral Demon of a Grieving Bride* (University of New Mexico Press, 2021), *Night Cradle* (USPOCO Books, 2011), and *Velroy and the Madischie Mafia* (West End Press, 2009). In 2013, Hoahwah was a recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship.

CRAIG WOMACK (Creek / Cherokee) presented via zoom on various aspects of Rigg’s life and writing as they are connected to his Cherokee identity. (He was introduced by OU associate professor of Kimberly Wieser.) Womack received his doctorate from the University of Oklahoma in 1995. He was appointed to the Emory faculty in 2007 as associate professor of English. Womack is a leading figure in Native American literary studies, and among his published works is the widely influential *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, as well as the novel *Drowning in Fire*.



FROM TOP: Original film poster for Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Oklahoma!; March 8, 1955 article honoring Riggs in The Daily Oklahoman



Professor Kirstin Squint and LeAnne Howe at the Celevent of Howe's papers becoming accessible

WHC CELEBRATES AVAILABILITY OF NATIVE AUTHOR LEANNE HOWE'S PAPERS

Howe's papers marked the start of the WHC's Contemporary Native American Authors Collection

By **TODD FULLER, PH.D.**
Western History Collections Curator

The Western History Collections, University Libraries, and the Mark Allen Everett Poetry Series hosted an event to celebrate the research availability of the LeAnne Howe Collection as part of the Native American Authors Collection. Howe's donation was the first one, which then established the WHC initiative in 2019.

Speakers at the event included University Libraries Dean Denise Stephens, WHC Curator Todd Fuller, Professor Joshua Nelson, Professor Kirsten Squint, Phil Morgan, and LeAnne Howe. Approximately 40 people attended the event, which took place in Oklahoma Memorial Union.

During the event, which was attended by Professor Howe's family, other friends, and the public, presenters discussed the creative impact of the author's work. Joshua Nelson, professor of English at OU, showed an extended clip of the documentary Howe and he worked on, *Searching for Sequoyah*, which aired on PBS in 2021. Kirsten Squint talked about the power of working with Howe on two books, *Conversations with LeAnne Howe* (2022, UP of Mississippi) and *LeAnne Howe at the Intersections of Southern and Native American Literature* (2018, Louisiana State UP).

Of the event, Howe shared, "This is one of the best nights of my life – to have my papers sharing the same space with the likes of Peter Pitchlynn at the Western History Collections and celebrating all of it with my family and friends, is a great honor and is so humbling."

“
Establishing the Contemporary Native American Authors Collection will allow the WHC to assist authors and tribal nations in their efforts to preserve legacies of sovereignty, culture (including language), history, creativity, and scholarship.
”

CHARLOTTE VILLASANA

Howe read from a novel on which she is presently working, tentatively titled *1918*. The story is about her grandmother's lived experience during the 1918 pandemic.

After, a small gathering of friends and family met at a local restaurant to continue the celebration.

The purpose of the broader Native American Authors Collection is to focus on the distinctiveness of Native creativity in and around Oklahoma, centering on:

- Reexamining the primary/dominant narratives of the American West by identifying underrepresented perspectives, including those of Native authors
- Establishing collaborations with individuals and organizations that seek to celebrate Native/Indigenous creative expressions and intellectual pursuits
- Creating dialogues with Native/Indigenous authors, scholars, and others that will result in the WHC preserving individual and cultural legacies for future research
- Raising awareness about Native/Indigenous authors and their work through programming activities, including lectures, exhibitions, publications, presentations, traveling classrooms, and via the web
- Serving as an inclusive research destination for scholars, researchers, students, and tribal citizens and tribal historians for inquiry about Native/Indigenous creative expression
- Developing a space that provides visual acknowledgement of multiple narratives, including Native narratives and histories

By working toward an inclusive special collections, the WHC seeks out Native authors, scholars, activists, and other creatives whose perspectives and knowledge will positively deepen and broaden narratives of the American West. Establishing the Contemporary Native American Authors Collection will allow the WHC to assist authors and tribal nations in their efforts to preserve legacies of sovereignty, culture (including language), history, creativity, and scholarship.

CHARLOTTE VILLASANA



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”

CLASS OF '59 OU ALUM GIFTS UNIQUE LETTER, \$2 MILLION TO WHC

WHC receives alum's letter from Russian author, a historic donation

By MARYANN MARTIN
University Libraries

Ronald Keith Jones, OU Class of 1959, went from a brokenhearted college student and athlete, typing letters to legendary *Dr. Zhivago* author Boris Pasternak in the bathroom of his fraternity house, to a successful Dallas banker.

Now, he gives back to his beloved alma mater with a monetary gift and unique treasure: the letter Pasternak wrote back to a lovelorn undergraduate.

Jones told guests at his presentation in September 2021 how he had studied up on Pasternak's works to impress the girl he had asked to his fraternity date party. After she broke it off with him, Jones locked

himself in the bathroom of his fraternity house and wrote a letter to Pasternak, asking the writer what *Dr. Zhivago* really meant.

He never expected Pasternak to respond, but as Jones often retells, he received a handwritten reply from the author — as well as a visit from federal agents, suspicious of the correspondence from Pasternak in the then - USSR.

Over 50 years later, Jones gifted the original letter, and \$2 million, to the Western History Collections. He joined an audience in the Bizzell Community Room to present and discuss the letter in September 2021.

TRAVIS CAPERTON/UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA



Ron Jones as a little boy in Lawton with his favorite gear



FROM SEA MONSTERS TO STARS

The History of Science Collections at the University of Oklahoma Libraries again fortified its position as a preeminent resource for scholars of the history of geology and astronomy, acquiring new documents and papers from the world’s most renowned scholars in each field.

From the works of a 16th-century astronomer to massive, beautiful renderings of ancient dinosaurs that look eerily similar to the Loch Ness monster, the HOS’s new acquisitions will impact research — and the university’s place as a top-tier research institution — for generations to come.



Axmouth landslip, from W. D. Conybeare and W. Dawson, Ten Plates (1840)

AN EYE TO THE STARS

New history of astronomy acquisitions fill out UL’s Tycho Brahe works

Astronomers today revere Tycho Brahe as the greatest observational astronomer of early modern Europe. Among its most prized treasures, the History of Science Collections holds many of Tycho’s original works, including *Astronomiae instauratae mechanica* (Nuremberg, 1602); *Epistolarum astronomicarum* (Uraniborg, 1596); *Opera omnia* (1648); and *Historia Coelestis* (1666). In spring 2022, the Collections acquired a first edition, second issue, of the single most important work by Tycho that it lacked, *De Mundi Aetherei* (Uraniborg, {1588} 1603). This new addition to the Tycho collection is one of the fundamental documents of the Scientific Revolution. It sets forth for the first time Tycho’s cosmology in which the planets revolve around the Sun (as in Copernicus) while the Sun itself revolves around a central Earth (as in Ptolemy). Significantly, the solid celestial spheres which astronomers from ancient times through Copernicus had taken for granted are done away with. For Tycho, planets swim through fluid heavens as fish swim through the sea. The Tychonic cosmology immediately became the most widely adopted cosmological system and remained so throughout the first half of the 17th century.

“In spring 2022, the Collections acquired a first edition, second issue, of the single most important work by Tycho that it lacked, *De Mundi Aetherei* (Uraniborg, {1588} 1603). This new addition to the Tycho collection is one of the fundamental documents of the Scientific Revolution.”



John Christianson (left) showing HOS Curator Kerry Magruder books being donated



A selection of rare books donated by J. R. Christianson with two of his monographs in the foreground

John Robert Christianson Collection

In March 2022, scholar John Christianson donated a collection of 180 Tycho-related books. Only about 30 titles are in English; many are hard-to-find publications in Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian languages and not found in North American libraries. Some of the volumes contain interesting annotations, including an explanation of Tycho’s cosmology entitled *Astronomorum Coryphei* by Pierre Gassendi (a contemporary of Galileo), which was previously owned by the renowned historian of astronomy, J. L. E. Dreyer (1852-1926). Christianson’s book *On Tycho’s Island* explores the lives and works of the various students and colleagues who went to the island of Hven to work with Tycho. Christianson’s recent study, *Tycho Brahe and the Measure of the Heavens*, places Tycho in the context of humanist scholarship and culture. Christianson there explains that Tycho “elevated astronomy from an elementary academic subject into a prestigious focus of courtly natural philosophy,” and “Tycho’s leadership and generous willingness to collaborate... transformed astronomy into a collective endeavor linking courts and philosophers across Europe.” Christianson’s generous donation and the acquisition of *De Mundi Aetherei* reinforce the reputation of OU as a research destination for scholars from around the world interested in Tycho and the history of astronomy.



Ichthyosaur, from Thomas Hawkins, Book of the Great Sea Dragons (London, 1840)



On the Danish island of Hven, Tycho Brahe built Uraniborg, a “castle of the stars”

HISTORY OF GEOLOGY COLLECTIONS ACQUIRE RUDWICK, TORRENS, TAYLOR PAPERS

Works of Mary Anning, William Smith at center of new acquisitions

To launch a collecting initiative in the history of geology, the History of Science Collections at the University Libraries acquired the papers and books of eminent historians of geology, including Martin J. S. Rudwick, Hugh S. Torrens, and Kenneth L. Taylor. The news turned heads in history of geology circles when Rudwick and Torrens in the United Kingdom decided to send their papers and books to OU, confirming OU’s status as an international center for research in geology and the history of geology.

Rudwick is the most distinguished and influential historian of geology internationally. In the 1960’s, as Cambridge’s youngest don, an early advocate of the concepts of mass extinctions, plate tectonics, and the snowball Earth, before these ideas became widely adopted. Then he turned to the history of science and made pioneering contributions to the history of geological mapping, visual illustrations, the social construction of geology, and the rise of geohistory.

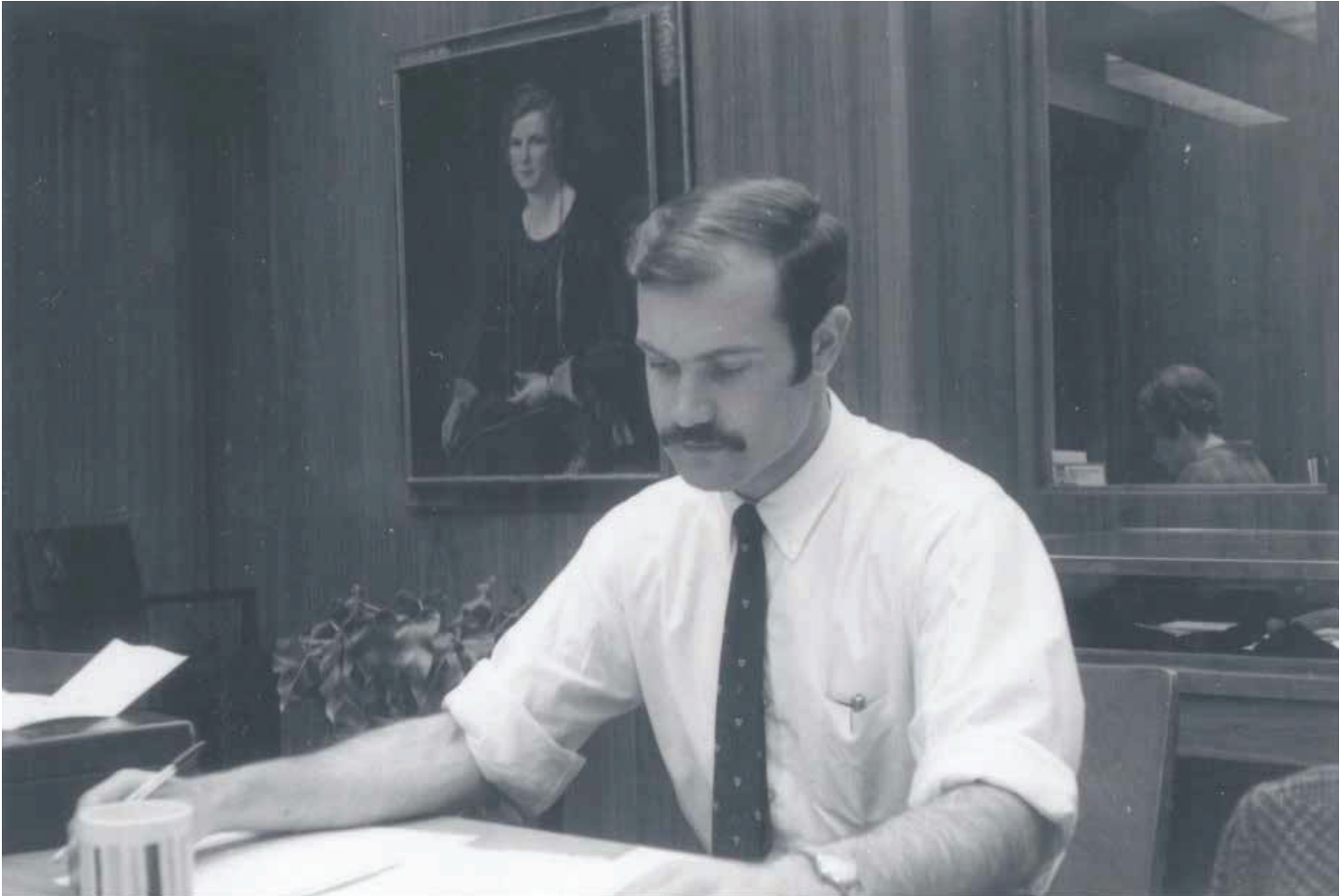
In a demonstration of Rudwick’s renowned generosity, curator Kerry Magruder collected 35 large boxes of papers and books from Rudwick’s home in Shropshire in June 2019 and another 35 boxes in November 2021. In addition to his papers, Rudwick donated more than 1,200 print volumes, including Rudwick’s own annotated copy of Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833). In addition to research notes and correspondence, the papers include original historical items such as disbound portraits and hand-colored plates.

Torrens has devoted considerable scholarly attention to William Smith

and Mary Anning. Smith, creator of the single most renowned geological map, was a working-class canal surveyor by trade, whose famous map led not to honor but to confinement in debtor’s prison. Anning, a working-class discoverer of dinosaur fossils near Lyme Regis, in Dorset, made a lot of gentlemen geologists famous. The Torrens archive is rich in materials related to these figures and their associates and contemporaries. Curator Kerry Magruder collected a total of 105 large boxes of papers and books from the Torrens home in Staffordshire on three occasions in 2018, 2019, and 2021.

Professor emeritus of Keele University, Torrens’ nearly 400 publications cluster around a common theme of the historical relations between industrialization and geology. Torrens’ passion has been to recover the voices of invisible and forgotten figures who may have left no books but whose labors led to major discoveries and achievements in geology, whether an iron worker in the English Industrial Revolution or a British mining engineer whose expertise was coveted around the world. Torrens reconstructs their lives and contributions from a signature on a machine, a debtor’s note, a travel log, or a bill of sale.

The Collections’ holdings of relevant printed works include six books of William Smith, including Smith’s famous map. In another work, Smith explained his stratigraphical system in detail. The Collections’ copy contains elaborations written in Smith’s own hand, based on further fieldwork and identified by Torrens during a trip to OU in the 1990s.



Kenneth L. Taylor working in the History of Science Collections after coming to OU as one of the early faculty members in the Department of the History of Science, Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences.

KENNETH L. TAYLOR COLLECTION

That the University of Oklahoma history of science program is known worldwide for the history of geology is due to Kenneth L. Taylor, OU Professor Emeritus of the History of Science, who joined the faculty in 1967.

Taylor’s explorations in the history of geology began with Nicholas Desmarest, an early advocate for the igneous origin of basalt and the subject of Taylor’s dissertation at Harvard University. Professor Taylor’s research in the disciplinary, national, and intellectual contexts for the emergence of geology produced classic papers that remain foundational to subsequent research on science in the Enlightenment and the history of French science. Taylor’s many publications on Desmarest and Buffon began to rehabilitate the frequently dismissed tradition of Theories of the Earth. His early studies of geological mapping demonstrated the importance of attending to illustrations as intellectual achievements in their own right at a time when the visual dimensions of texts were too often disregarded as merely decorative ornamentation. With these and other investigations, Professor Taylor’s *oeuvre* centered the history of geology in broader conversations about the role of natural regularities and historical contingency in the history of science.

Professor Taylor has received recognition for distinguished lifetime achievement in the history of geology with the Mary Rabbit Award

from the Geological Society of America in 2007, the Sue Tyler Friedman Medal from the Geological Society of London in 1998, and the Prix Wegmann from the Societé Géologique de France in 2018.

At OU, Professor Taylor was honored with Glenn C. Couch Scholars’ Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in 1969 and held a C. B. Hudson/Torchmark Presidential Professorship. Professor Taylor served on 41 graduate committees, 11 of which were doctoral committees that he directed. These 11 include several notable historians of geology today as well as three who went on to become curators of OU special research collections: Marilyn Ogilvie, the second curator of the History of Science Collections, was his first doctoral graduate in 1973; JoAnn Palmeri, currently librarian and curator of the Nichols Collection; and Kerry Magruder, the third curator of the History of Science Collections.

“Professor Taylor’s oeuvre centered the history of geology in broader conversations about the role of natural regularities and historical contingency in the history science.”



William Smith, A Delineation of the Strata of England and Wales (1815), detail

TRAVEL FELLOWSHIPS SUPPORT RESEARCH IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE COLLECTIONS

Works of Mary Anning, William Smith at center of new acquisitions

After a period of disruption for visiting researchers during the pandemic, the travel fellowship program of the History of Science Collections has sprung back to life this year. Below are descriptions of seven visiting fellows for the first half of 2022. Two hail from Italy, one from Scotland, and others from, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Mississippi.

In some ways the new cycle began the way it all ended: Francesco Luzzini, Ph.D., a historian of geology from Milan, Italy, was our final visiting scholar in 2020. Although temporarily stranded in Norman during the pandemic lockdown, he happily returned in better times for a short visit in March of this year. Meanwhile, he was awarded a prestigious Marie Curie Fellowship from the European Union to work at the University of Venice and Johns Hopkins University. His research focuses mainly on the Earth and environmental sciences, natural philosophy, and medicine in early modern Europe. His current project aims to understand how the debate on mineral generation in early modern Europe influenced the development of natural philosophy, the Earth sciences, and the role of humans as geological and environmental agents. His approach combines historical inquiry, laboratory replications, and the comparative exploration of mining sites.

Another visiting scholar just before the 2020 lockdown was Adam Mednick, M.D., from New York. Dr. Mednick is writing a book for young readers, *The Magic Calendar Chronicles: Meeting Mary Anning, November 6, 1812*. Mary Anning, a 19th-century English fossil collector who lived in Lyme Regis on the south coast of Dorsetshire, continues to attract visiting researchers to OU due to the growth of the Torrens Collection. Dr. Mednick states:

“I’m at Yale. I’d expect this [archive] to be in the northeast or at Chicago, and it just blew me away to find that Dr. Torrens sent his entire collection here. This is a very fine collection. I’m impressed and grateful to have had the opportunity to spend time here.”

Tom Sharpe, Ph.D., the former curator of paleontology of the National Museum of Wales, will be coming this summer from his home in Scotland to further his research on Anning. Sharpe is already the author of *Fossil Woman*, the most significant historical study of her to date.

Another researcher using the Torrens Collection is Renee Clary, Ph.D., professor and director of the Dunn-Seiler Museum in the Department of Geosciences at Mississippi State University. Clary researched Etheldred Benett, an elder contemporary and friend of Mary Anning in Lyme Regis who, like Anning, was known for her fossil expertise. The Collections holds a presentation copy of Benett’s only book, *A Catalogue of the Organic Remains of the County of Wilts* (1831). The book is quite rare; no other copy is located by WorldCat. The OU copy is inscribed and annotated by Benett herself.

Kathryn Carpenter, a doctoral candidate at Princeton University, used the meteorology archives in research for her doctoral dissertation in fall 2021 and is planning a return visit this summer. Her dissertation explores connections between expert and popular knowledge of severe weather, looking specifically at storm chasers. She focuses on the interaction between meteorologists and amateur enthusiasts in their pursuit of tornadoes. Meteorology archives in the History of Science Collections relevant to her research are the National Severe Storms Laboratory Archive, the Edwin Kessler Archive, the Ronald

K. Taylor Archive, the Douglas K. Lilly Archive, and the Neil Ward Archive, among others. Carpenter received the Taylor-Wei Dissertation Prize in the history of meteorology administered by the OU Department of the History of Science. The prize was created by a generous gift from Ming-Ying Wei. Wei and Ronald Taylor, for whom the prize is named, were prominent meteorologists trained at OU.



Kathryn Carpenter, in the History of Science Collections, fall 2021

Matteo Cosci, Ph.D., with the Department of Philosophy and Culture in Venice, Italy, arrived on campus in March to work with OU Professor Peter Barker and several other scholars. Their project is titled “The Ophiucus Supernova: Post-Aristotelian stargazing in the European context (1604-1654).” They are examining how the unexpected explosion of the “Kepler’s supernova” in European skies in 1604 fundamentally affected the development of Renaissance scientific thought from a historical, philosophical and cultural point of view. Cosci’s visit is funded by a Marie Curie Fellowship from the European Union.

Sam Schirvar is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History and Sociology of Science of the University of Pennsylvania. Schirvar visited OU in early May on a research fellowship funded by the international Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine, of which OU is a member. The field of the history of science is inherently multidisciplinary, as illustrated by Schirvar’s project, titled “Manufacturing Self-Determination: Cold War Electronics in Tribal Development, Black Empowerment, and Prison Industry.” His research will take him to the Western History Collections and the Oklahoma Historical Society as well as to other resources in the state.

Short-term travel fellowships are funded by a generous endowment from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through a collaboration between the the History of Science Collections and the Department of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. Additional fellowships are available through OU’s membership in the Consortium of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. These and other awards such as the Marie Curie Fellowship enable scholars from all over the world to visit OU to conduct their research.

World-class Resources, Scholarly Sanctuary at OU’s History of Science Collections

It’s not just the collections.

I make no mystery of my affection for the History of Science Collections and the OU Libraries in general. As an Earth-science historian focusing on the early modern period, it is natural for me to consider this institution as a sanctuary for good scholarship and real interdisciplinary research.

When it comes to libraries and archives, there are not many places where you can enjoy unlimited access to world-class resources while at the same time interacting with an extremely professional, yet friendly and relaxed environment. This combination is a rare privilege in an academic world too often deprived of scholarly passion and seized by metrics and meaningless buzzwords – a privilege that I encourage the community of historians of geology to discover and appreciate in its full value.

Francesco Luzzini

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow, University Ca’ Foscari Venice - Johns Hopkins University Research Affiliate, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin (Department I)



Scholars Stand on Shoulders of Giants in UL History of Science Collections

My research in the History of Science Collections surpassed my expectations! The collections’ helpful staff assisted with research and quickly retrieved my requested books and folders, facilitating an extremely productive experience.

The University of Oklahoma’s History of Science Collections recognized the value of papers and collections of exceptional historians of geology. By preserving these papers and previous research collections of Hugh Torrens and Martin Rudwick, researchers truly stand on the shoulders of those historians who have tackled these topics before. My research within the Torrens’ materials in OU’s History of Science Collections enabled me to move knowledge forward, without retracing the multitude of steps and multiple years of Torrens’ previous research.

The Torrens materials are not only resources in the history of geology, but they also provide an exceptional navigation tool to document what has been learned and secured, what is questioned, and what remains to be uncovered. Hugh Torrens systematically located and organized resources from multiple countries, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and the United States. Although the pandemic made international travel difficult, the OU History of Science Collections allowed me to utilize resources from multiple countries and across hundreds of years.

Whereas other history of science collections may choose to preserve books only, OU’s History of Science Collections archives annotated texts and compiled notes/resources of great historians. These collections are the most helpful I have yet encountered.

OU’s History of Science Collections amazed me with its scope; I was able to investigate several rare books that the OU staff helped me identify, some of which I was unaware before my visit.

Staff were helpful and OU History of Science Collections broad. Not only was my original research plan as a Mellon visiting scholar completed, but I also identified new research topics through other resources that staff recognized as relevant to my focus.

Renee Clary

Professor and Director of the Dunn-Seiler Museum, Department of Geosciences at Mississippi State University





OU Libraries' Chinese Literature Translation Archive in Bizzell Memorial Library is hosted a public lecture last November by the Award-Winning translator Steven Bradbury entitled, "Contemporary Taiwanese Poetry and Material Culture" to kick off a year-long exhibit "Taiwanese Literature in Translation @ OU." The event is co-sponsored by the TECO's Houston office and Taiwan's Ministry of Culture.

NEW CLTA EXHIBIT FEATURES TAIWANESE POETRY, INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

By DR. JONATHAN STALLING

Curator of the Chinese Literature Translation Archive

A new, year-long exhibit titled "Translating Taiwanese Literature at OU" opened Nov. 23 at the Chinese Literature Translation Archive at Bizzell Memorial Library at the University of Oklahoma.

The exhibit celebrates and explores the work of the Taiwanese poets Hsia Yü 夏宇, Amang 阿芒, and Ye Mimi 葉覓覓 and the *Poetry Now* 現在詩 collective, which had evolved from an earlier poetry publication collective Modern Poetry 現代詩 that had centered on the work of second-generation Taiwanese avant-garde poet Shang Qin 商琴.

The exhibition, which is co-sponsored by TECO Houston Office and the Taiwan Ministry of Culture, OU Libraries, and the College of International Studies features works by Taiwanese American poet-translator Wai-lim Yip and the personal collection and translations of the American translator, Steven Bradbury, who spent the past two decades collecting, collaborating with, and translating third-generation Taiwanese poets associated with the post-digital movement to revitalize poetry print culture in the early 2000s.

Amidst the pervasive rise of online and print-on-demand poetry at the turn of the new millennium, many third-generation Taiwanese poets

sought to refocus on the materiality of book arts and worked to reimagine commodity culture as an intimate exchange of handmade objects and poetry between poets and enthusiastic readers, fans and collectors.

One of the many striking works featured in the exhibition is an original copy of *Poetry Now*, called "大字報" or "Big Character Posters," a special issue inspired by the hand-written, wall-mounted posters that came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution and subsequent "Democracy Wall Movement," in Mainland China. The "Big Character Poster" issue was the brainchild of the most prominent of the third-generation poets, Hsia Yü, and a then young graphic artist named Hong Yiqi.

The featured translator of the exhibition, Steve Bradbury, created a series of unique captions for the exhibit that delve into the history of each item and some of his personal reflections on translating the works. His public lecture, "Taiwanese Poetry and Material Culture," explores the last two decades of this unique moment in world literature through anecdotes and close readings of the treasures and can be viewed on YouTube. For more information contact the CLTA curator Jonathan Stalling at stalling@ou.edu.





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At OU Libraries, we strive for excellence in every aspect of the library experience, and we are grateful for your continued interest and support.

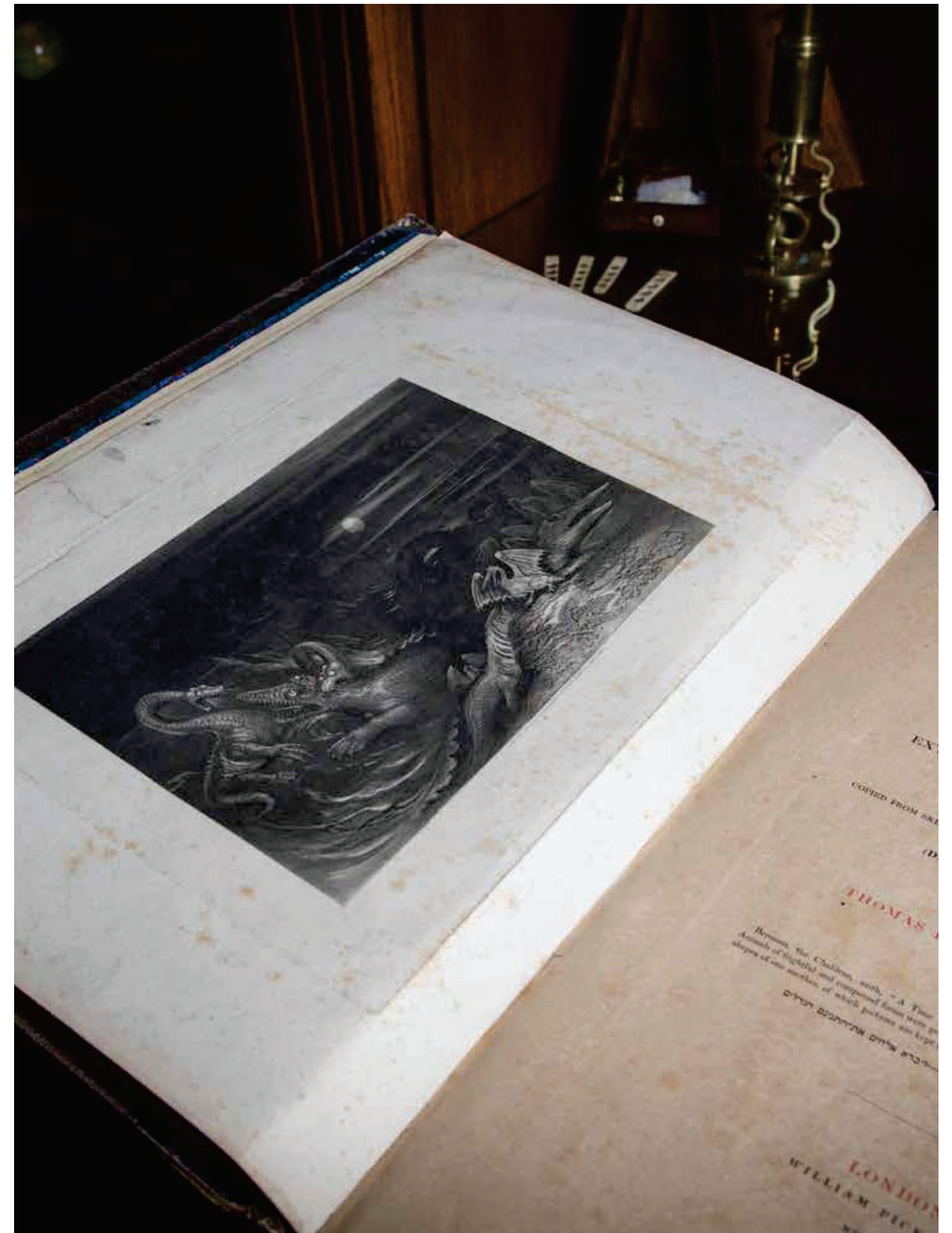
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DENISE STEPHENS

Peggy V. Helmerich Dean of University Libraries



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Thomas Hawkins, *Book of the Great Sea Dragons* (London, 1840)



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