

Duane Roller, curator of the DeGolyer Collection, examines a letter from Charles Darwin to a friend, in the vault that contains the rare volumes.

O.U.'s Prized Possession: The DeGolyer Collection



DOWN THE LIBRARY CORRIDOR, a small sign offers the information, "E. DeGolyer Collection in History of Science and Technology." A student passing by, saw the sign and asked his companion, "What's in there?" With only momentary interest, and no answer, the two passed by.

But "what's in there" is a memorial to the intellect and generosity of a University of Oklahoma graduate and an exciting adventure in knowledge.

Here is a page that was hand-decorated with gold gilt. Here is a text that employed 3-D by pasting hundreds of illustrative foldups in each volume long before the movies vulgarized the notion. Here is the only volume of a book by Galileo in which he penned a note on the title page to the leading poet of the day. Here the past of science is as close as the bookshelf.

And what of the man who made the collection possible? E. DeGolyer, '11ba, Dallas

geologist and geophysicist, had collected the books for his personal library. Others he purchased especially for the O.U. library. He brought all 11,000 volumes together to provide one of the best collections on the history of science in U. S. As a means of perpetuating the books' usefulness to greatest number, he in turn established the collection that bears his name in O.U. library.

The collection now numbers approximately 11,000 volumes. Dr. Duane Roller, curator of the collection and assistant professor of the history of science and technology, watches over the collection. His job is to promote the fullest use of the books while protecting them for future use. To this end, "The collection is divided into three parts: the browsing, the research and the rare," he explains.

The division is readily understandable. The browsing area is composed of valuable but replaceable books which may be checked out in a manner similar to other library books. The research area is confined to books that would be difficult to replace: these books must be used under controlled conditions. The rare area is kept under lock and key. Some are on display in a glass case in the collection room. Others are kept secured in a vault. Only scholars whose work demands reference or study of the original may use them. Later editions of the same books are available in the browsing and research areas.

An idea as to why the books are so carefully protected is indicated in the estimated worth of the DeGolyer Collection. It is believed to be worth \$250,000 and no one knows the true monetary worth. Only by placing the collection on the market could a definite money tag be affixed. But there

are a great many people who understand the educational worth to the University.

Able, young Curator Roller says, "Combined in this list are rare original editions of the great classics in the development of science, plus thousands of volumes of critical commentaries, translations, new editions and modern attempts to interpret the meaning and direction of science. This collection has international significance and value."

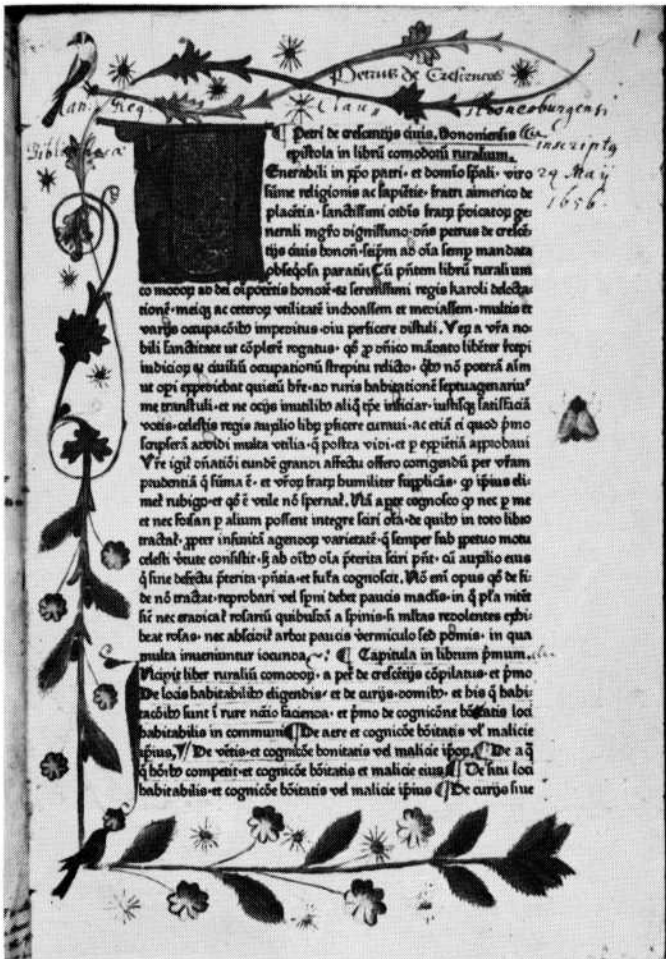
If an alumnus wished to use the collection, he would find it available to him. He would enter the collection room and note a guest book. All who enter are requested to sign in. He would see a set of rules applicable to use of the collection. Among the rules is a request to refrain from using pen and ink while in the collection room.

For a visitor to use the collection he would probably be asked to remain in the room. Comfortable reference and study areas, while limited, offer a chance to read and study in the usual library hush. Or if he just wanted to browse, he would note portraits of famous O.U. personalities looking down at him. Included in the array is a portrait of the late President William Bennett Bizzell, himself a lover of fine books and for whom the library is named.

There is a belief in academic circles that a university is known by the library it keeps. Few can deny books are the indispensable item in education. If this is so, and few will question it, E. DeGolyer, patron of letters (he is chairman of the board of *The Saturday Review*), internationally known geologist and geophysicist, and educational philanthropist, has made an important contribution to the prestige and growth of the University.

An estimated 11,000 volumes worth \$250,000 is one appraisal of the collection. But its worth in academic prestige cannot be calculated.



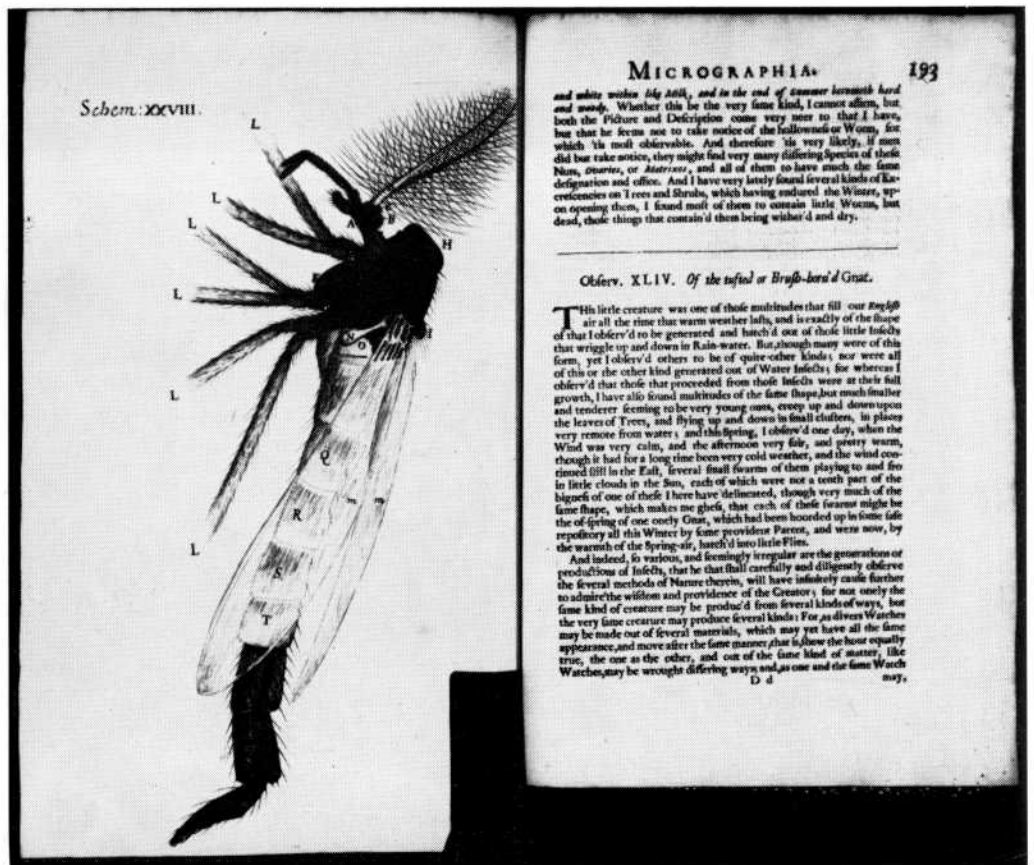


"Opus Ruralium Commodorum," first printed book on agriculture and animal husbandry (1471), is decorated with ornate, gold leaf title page.



"Opus de Universo," written by famous medieval cosmologist, is collection's oldest book. It dates from 1467 or earlier.

Extremely rare copy of Robert Hooke's "Micrographia" (1665) was one of the first books reporting use of the microscope.



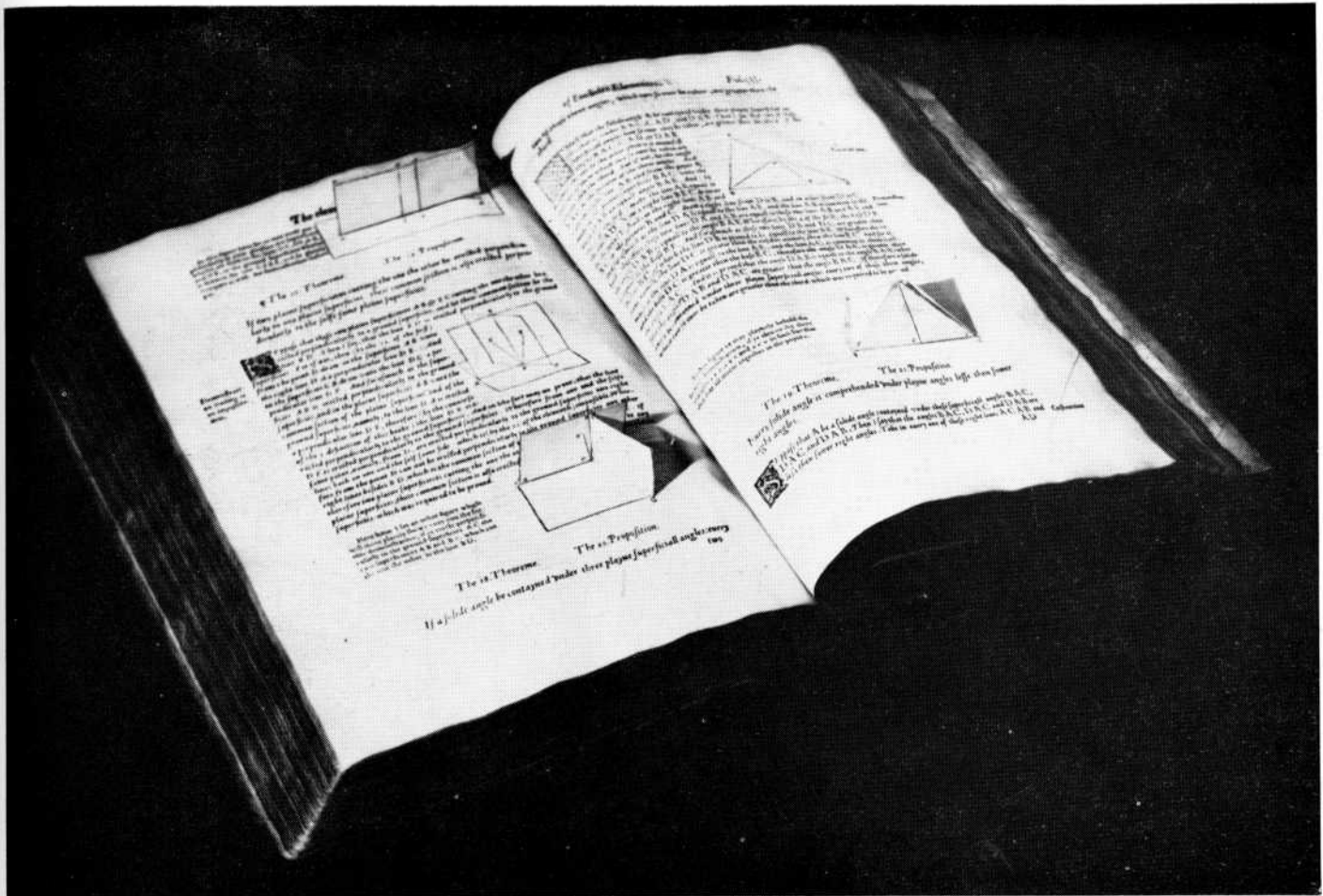
MICROGRAPHIA.

and white within the shell, and in the end of summer beneath hard and muddy. Whether this be the very same kind, I cannot affirm, but both the Picture and Description seem very near to that I have here, that has been not so rare under the following-kind of Worm, for which is most observable. And therefore is very likely, if men did but take notice, they might find very many differing Species of these Nits, Ovaries, or Asters, and all of them so have much the same designation and office. And I have very lately found several kinds of Eggs, on Trees and Shrubs, which having endured the Winter, upon opening them, I found most of them to contain little Worms, but dead, those things that contain'd them being wither'd and dry.

Observ. XLIV. Of the larva or Brush-head'd Gnat.

This little creature was one of those multitudes that fill our Earth all the time that warm weather lasts, and is easily of the shape of that I observ'd to be generated and hatch'd out of those little Insects that wriggle up and down in Rain-water. But, though many were of this form, yet I observ'd others to be of quite other kinds; nor were all of this or the other kind generated out of Water Insects; for whereas I observ'd that those that proceeded from those Insects were at their full growth, I have also found multitudes of the same shape, but much smaller and tenderer, seeming to be very young ones, creep up and down upon the leaves of Trees, and flying up and down in small clusters, in places very remote from waters; and this Spring, I observ'd one day, when the Wind was very calm, and the afternoon very fair, and pretty warm, though it had for a long time been very cold weather, and the wind continued still in the East, several small swarms of them flying to and fro in little clouds in the Sun, each of which were not a tenth part of the bigness of one of these I here have delineated, though very much of the same shape, which makes me guess, that each of these swarms might be the offspring of one cooily Gnat, which had been hatched up in some safe repository all this Winter by some provident Parent, and were now, by the warmth of the Spring-air, hatch'd into little Nits.

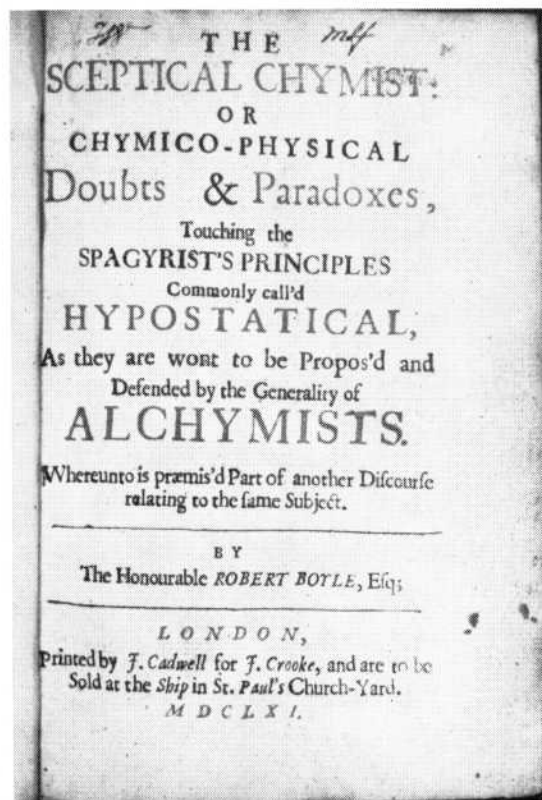
And indeed, so various, and seemingly irregular are the generations or productions of Insects, that he that shall carefully and diligently observe to administer wisdom and providence of the Creator; for not only the same kind of creature may be produc'd from several kinds of ways, but the very same creature may produce several kinds: For as divers Witches may be made out of several materials, which may yet have all the same appearance, and move after the same manner; thus likewise the horse equally true, the one as the other, and out of the same kind of matter; like Witches, may be wrought differing ways; and as one and the same Witch may,



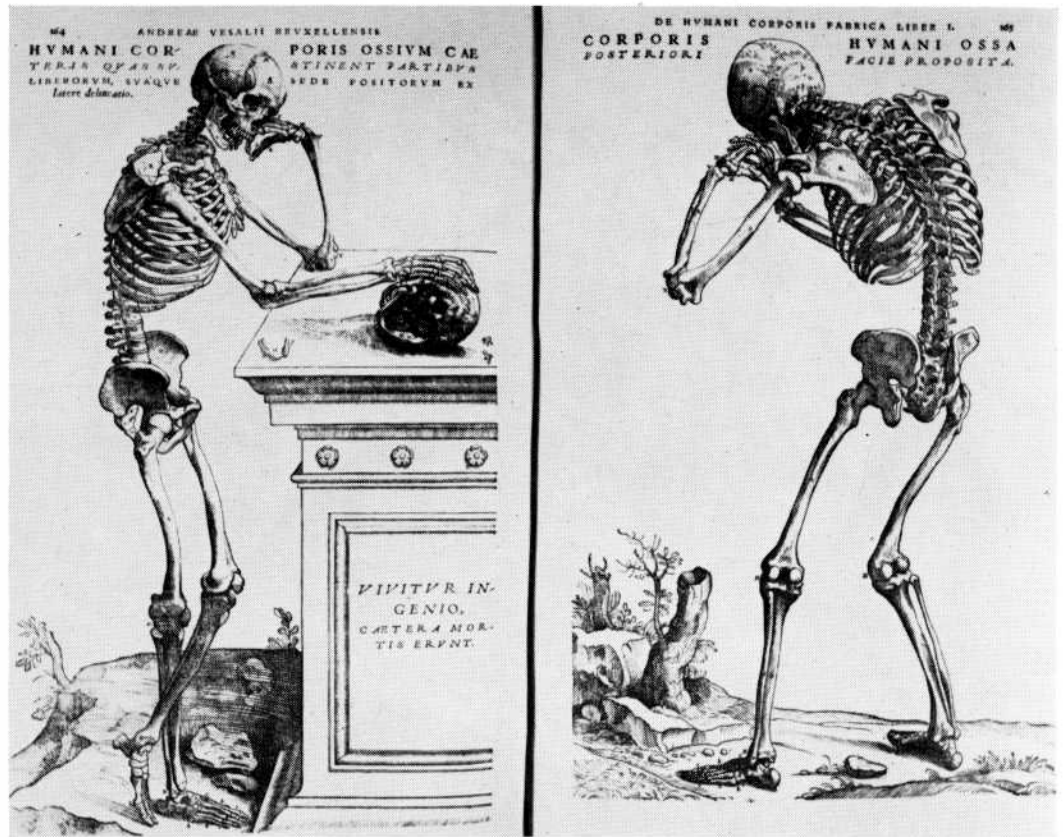
John Dee's English translation of "Euclid" appeared in 1570. Note: Paste-ins stand up to give third dimension effect to the drawings.



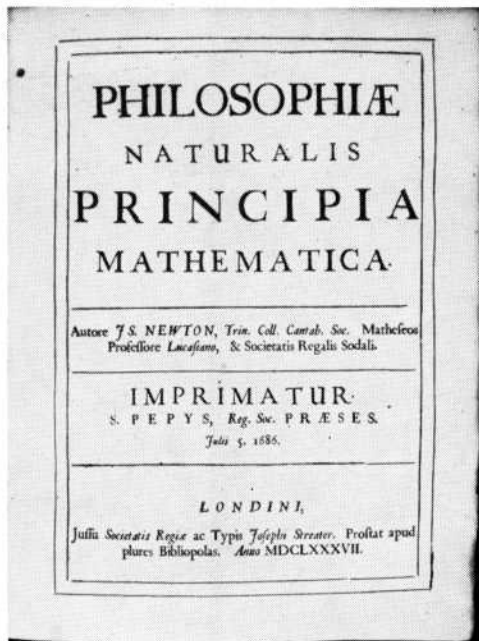
Galileo's "Sidereus Nuncius" contained first reports of astronomical telescope. Note inscription by author at bottom of title page.



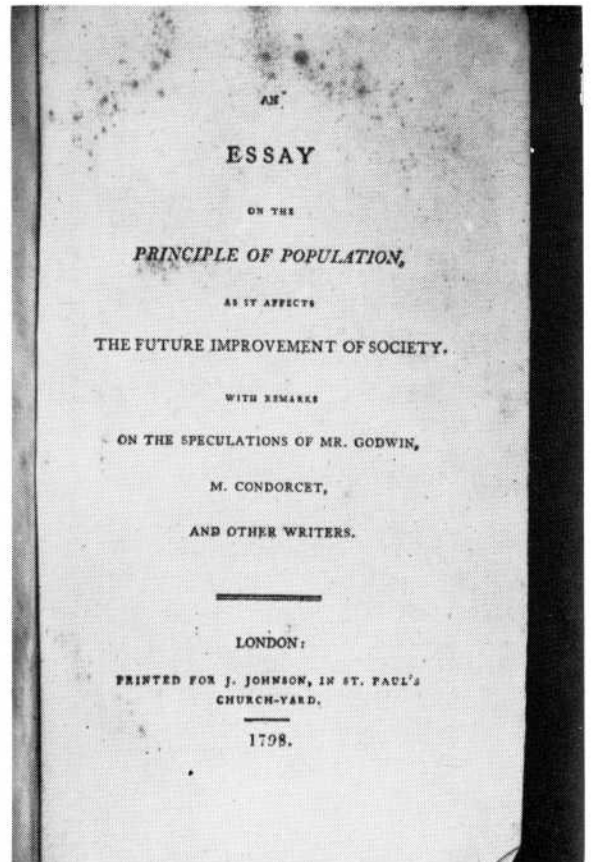
Robert Boyle's "Sceptical Chymist" appeared in 1661. Only eleven copies are known to exist. The book reintroduced idea of element in chemistry.



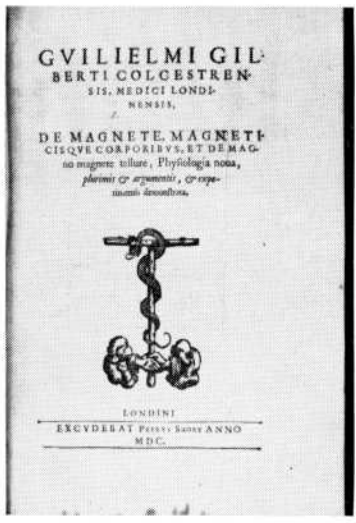
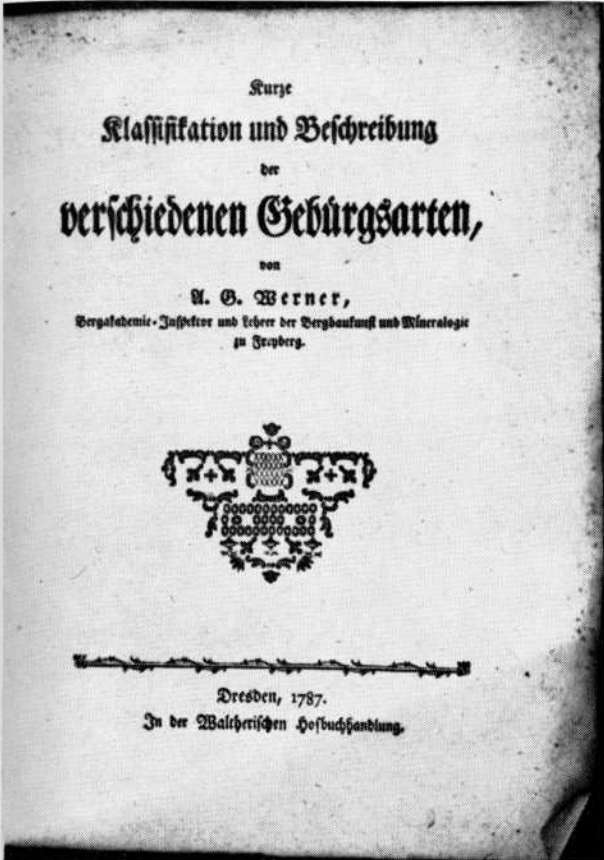
"De Fabrica," one of the first great works on anatomy, appeared in 1543. It is noted primarily for the excellent drawings by Jan Stefan Van Calcar.



Isaac Newton's "Principia," published in 1687, is perhaps the most important book in physics. It proposed the theory of universal gravitation.

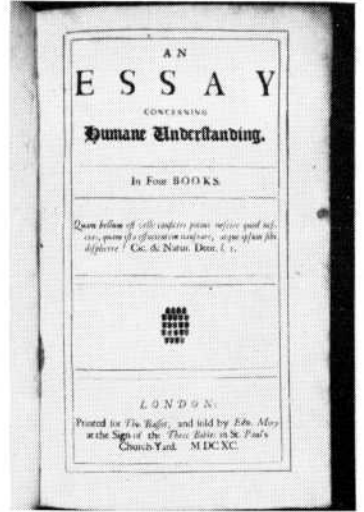


T. R. Malthus' "Essay on the Principle of Population" appeared in the year 1798. It was first major work on the subject. The book introduced the Malthusian Theory.

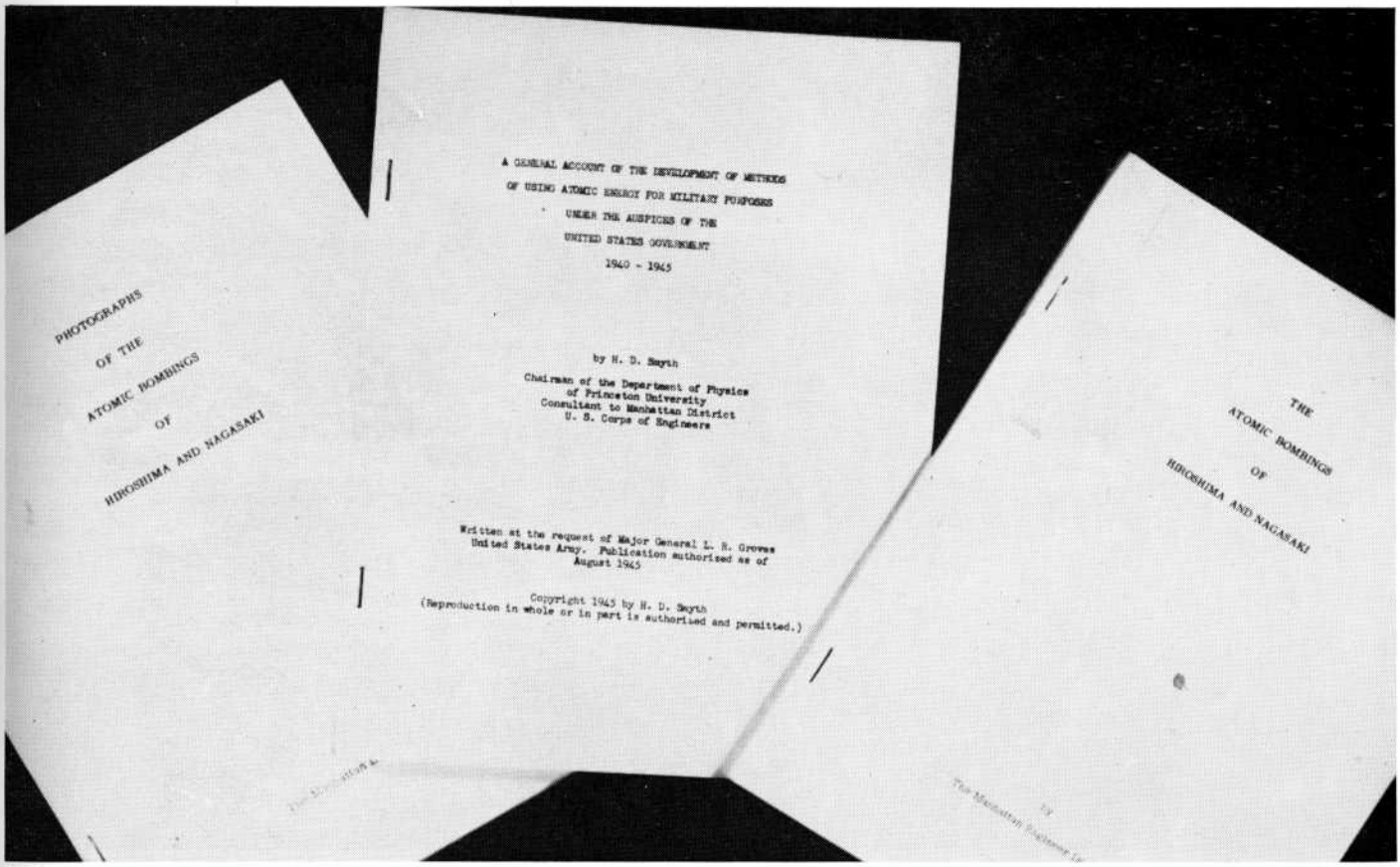


In 1600, William Gilbert, English scholar, theorized that the earth was a huge magnet in his "De Magnete."

Mr. DeGolyer searched 5 years to find a copy of extremely rare "Kurze Klas- sifikation," written by A. G. Werner.



John Locke's "Essay on Human Un- derstanding," dated 1690, indicates the vast scope of the collection.



An idea of range of DeGolyer Collection is indicated by rare works shown here concerning atomic energy. Smyth made first major report on subject.