 Anatomy of
Excellence

Fountainhead of Learning

By CONNIE RUGGLES

A GREAT library alone will not make a great university—but such a university without the library is impossible. Recognition of this principle by University planners in years past has built the University of Oklahoma library system into one of the strongest elements of academic excellence O.U. has to offer.

As modern in conception and as large in total volumes as any library west of the Mississippi, the University library is the proud possessor of several special collections which are becoming world renowned. The much-publicized DeGolyer Collection in the History of Science and Technology is in a class by itself among scientific scholars. The Phillips Collection in Oklahoma and Indian History is becoming a prime source for the historians and writers of the Southwest. The fledgling Bass Collection in Business History is growing rapidly and promises to be a pacesetter in this expanding field.

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But the endowed collections are just part of the picture. Several little-heralded collections in the various scientific fields are equally as strong. More immediately important to the vast majority of undergraduates, however, is the store of basic information and the greatly improved facilities which house them.

The modern addition to William Bennett Bizzell Memorial Library, which contains approximately 75 per cent of the University's library materials, was completed four years ago, and the result was a near-revolution in student study habits. The Bizzell library had been small and crowded, operating under an outdated system in a 1929 plant sadly lacking in essential study and research facilities for students and faculty. The prized special collections were crammed into tiny vaults that offered no room for expansion and no opportunity for display. The main body of books was accessible only to the library staff. The browsing of library patrons was restricted

to the card files where they chose books sight unseen and waited for an attendant to bring them to the check-out desk.

In 1957 Bizzell tripled in size, both in bookshelf space and study facilities. That year the volume of books checked out of the library doubled, largely due to the modern open stack system which at last brought the books and potential readers together. Daily use of the library by students increased four or five times. Today an estimated 600 books are checked out by the nearly 3,000 students and faculty members who use the library each day. The heaviest use is at night. Students have responded to the library's quiet relaxed study atmosphere where all the resource materials are at hand, expert help is available for the asking, study space is plentiful, and complete air conditioning assures maximum comfort.

Expanding the facilities and use of the library has raised problems too. A larger library staff became necessary when the stacks were opened to the public. A new circulation system had to be devised; books had to be arranged in more convenient subject matter areas. One of the baffling problems has been a lack of adequate parking for the library; the solid line of cars ringing the South Oval is more reminiscent of football Saturdays than nightly study sessions.

The library has come of age in many other areas as well. In terms of staff qualifications the number of master's and doctor's degrees represented has grown considerably. In terms of service to the students, there is almost no basis for comparison with the old days. Students needing information from reference books or magazines that cannot be removed from the library can make use of a quick-copy service which reproduces any form of printed material at 10 cents per page. The growing microfilm collection of manuscripts and newspapers has solved one of the big storage problems. Special typing rooms on each floor allow for these study aids without disturbing the hush of the library. Small study rooms have been provided for faculty members, black-board-equipped conference and seminar rooms are available, while individual study desks are assigned to graduate students.

Among the thousands of volumes in the library, special treatment has been accorded the endowed collections. The three major collections represent nearly 40,000 vol-

umes, each carefully chosen over a period of years to achieve distinction in special fields of study.

The DeGolyer Collection, one of the world's finest in the field of the history of science and technology, was founded in 1949 through a donation from the late E. L. DeGolyer, '11geol. Its international prestige is due to its comprehensive content and the rare works it contains. Most recently the collection's fame was enhanced by a 7-page article in *Fortune* magazine. The collection has grown from an initial 500 volumes to nearly 19,000 and includes the first published editions of the basic works in the history of science, supplemented by later editions, critical secondary works, translations, journals and working copies.

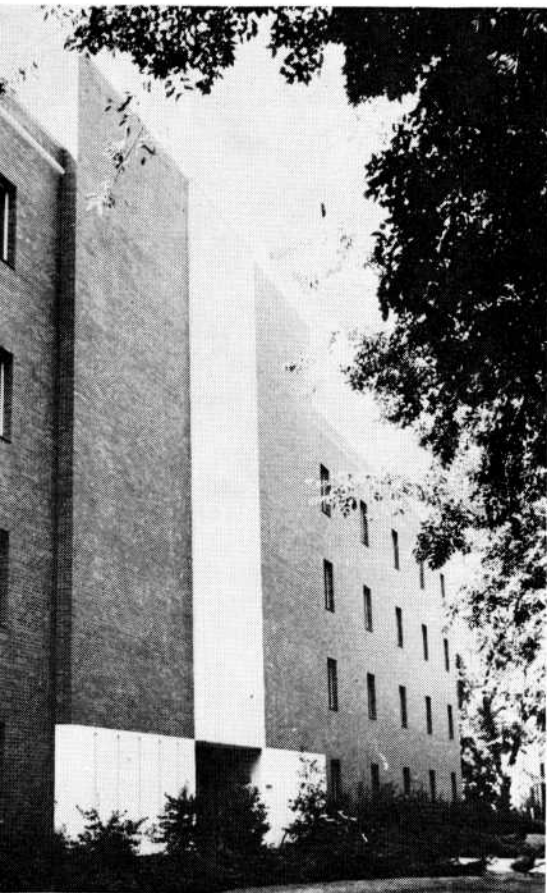
Among the rare books in the collection are Galileo's *Siderus Nuncius*, which contains first reports of an astronomical telescope with a title page inscription by Galileo; an extremely rare copy of Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665), which was one of the first books reporting the use of the microscope, and John Dee's English translation of *Euclid*, which appeared in 1570 and features handmade paste-in illustrations which stand up to give a three-dimensional effect.

Dr. Duane H. D. Roller has been curator of the collection since 1954. Currently he is on leave for study in Europe and is securing additional volumes there with a \$10,000 grant from the University of Oklahoma Foundation.

The Phillips Collection in Oklahoma and Indian History and the Bass Collection in Business History are less widely publicized than the DeGolyer Collection, but they are in many ways even more basic to this area of the United States.

The Phillips Collection is the oldest of the three major collections and rightly so, for it is a chronicle of Oklahoma history. Even the three-dimensional mural which fronts the collection (in color on page 3) suggests Oklahoma heritage. Created by O.U. art professor James L. Henkle, the mural is 8 feet high and 18 feet long and depicts the Oklahoma story in the colors, materials and textures readily identifiable with the state.

Behind the mural is the collection itself, established in 1927 with a \$10,000 gift from the late Frank Phillips. Dr. E. E. Dale was curator until his retirement in 1952, and the



This modern entrance to the Bizzell addition stands in sharp contrast to the gargoyled front.



Imposing Bizzell Memorial Library is the most symbolic of O.U. landmarks, the focal point of learning for generations of Sooner students.

present curator is Dr. Arrell M. Gibson. The number of volumes has grown to more than 13,000. The difficulty in housing such a stock of books and manuscripts caused the collection to be shifted around the campus for 35 years until the new library addition provided a permanent home. The precious books and manuscripts and artifacts were moved into specially designed fourth floor quarters complete with new furnishings in Southwestern colors, native wood paneling and western paintings.

In founding the collection Frank Phillips had a dream: "to institute and encourage historical inquiry and to inculcate interest and pride in our history; to mark the passing of a race of people and the genesis and growth of a new civilization; to perpetuate western American traditions and ideals, and to teach rising generations our debt to those who have gone before, and our responsibilities to the future."

Phillips' initial gift gave the library a good start in building a comprehensive stockpile of Oklahoma history, and after his death the Phillips Foundation contributed substantially to the accumulation of volumes. Some University library funds were diverted to the collection, but the greatest advances have come from indi-

vidual gifts. The Phillips Collection is distinguished for its information on the Indians of Oklahoma and the Southwest, Oklahoma history itself, notes on travel from diaries and journals, materials on industries, law and order in the pioneer days and maps of the Oklahoma area.

Within the stacks of Phillips books are single volumes worth \$500 to \$600 each and sets of valuable editions worth \$2,500 to \$3,000. As with most collections of this size, the exact value is difficult to estimate since many volumes cannot be replaced at any price.

Although the strength of the collection is in Oklahoma Indian history, notably the Five Civilized Tribes, no area of Oklahoma's heritage has been neglected—from the most famous to the least known. The stock contains many rare books dating back to the early 1800's, long out of print but giving invaluable descriptions of the times. Among these books are *Banditti of the Plains* by A. S. Mercer; a book by the Creek poet Alexander Posey, and another book of poetry of John R. Ridge, a Cherokee, who went west during the Gold Rush and became poet laureate of California. The collection dotes on rare and out-of-print books also being sought by other collectors,

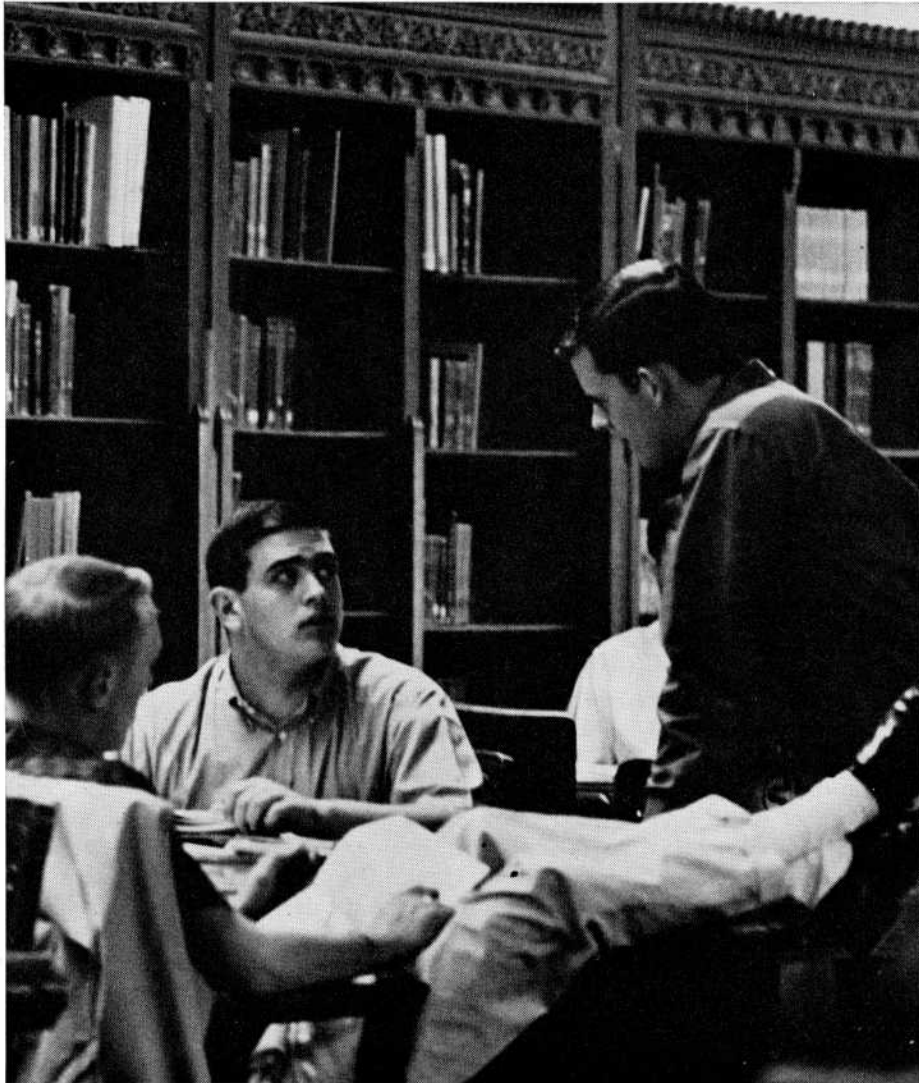
although current titles are occasionally included.

Of what use are these rare books, old manuscripts, pictures and miscellaneous historical data? The sign-in book at the door shows that the collection has doubled in use every year for the past four years. Last year over 2,000 people signed in. The University students give the Phillips stock heavy use, and the material is becoming increasingly popular among writers, researchers, scholars and television personnel. Extensive use was made of the Phillips resources in preparing such television shows on Oklahoma history as WKY-TV's prize-winning "101 Ranch" and KOCO-TV's "Expedition Oklahoma" series. Writers Edna Ferber and John Joseph Mathews, '20ba, Western Heritage Award Winner Fred Grove, '37journ, and novelist Al Dewlen, '52-'55, researched their books in the Phillips collection. In addition to its research function, the Phillips staff also receives requests for illustrations and documentation of material to be used in publications throughout the country.

The Phillips Collection is providing temporary housing for another area of University pride—the Bizzell Bible Collection,

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the most valuable collection is a practical research tool, not merely an exhibit



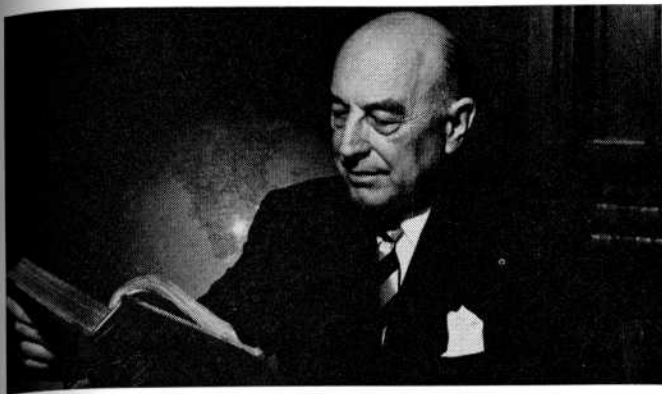
With a variety of study facilities available, the library has become a place for discussion as well as quiet study. These students are taking a break from their books in old reading room.

which will be displayed permanently in another part of the library. This is one of the most remarkable Bible collections in the Southwest and is unique in containing copies of most of the notable editions of the Bible from all over the world dating from 1479 to modern times. The 665 Bibles were given to the University in 1949 by the heirs of the late W. B. Bizzell, O.U. president from 1925 to 1941. Several additions have been made to the collection since that time, notably more than 600 books on religion donated two years ago by Mrs. V. E. Harlow and including codices of the Bible, works on philosophy and history and numerous other books, both modern and ancient, on various aspects of religion.

The Bass Collection in Business History, housed behind a very business-like mahogany and glass front, is the youngest of the big collections, founded in 1955 through the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Bass, Dallas, Texas. In addition to the collection of books, Bass is the donor of the Robert Dean Bass Scholarships in government and economics, awarded annually at O.U. in memory of his nephew who was killed in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II.

The philosophy governing the collection is a broad view of business history embracing materials calculated to establish the importance of business life and development as a vital element of the whole social order. The 7,000-volume collection is under the curatorship of Dr. Ronald B. Shuman, research professor of business management. Dr. Shuman estimates that between 30,000 and 35,000 carefully selected books will be necessary to put the Bass group among the top three or four in the field.

"The strength of our collection," he says, "is that it takes a broad view. The best collection is not just histories of companies and men, but much more." The Bass collection, for instance, includes a couple of books on witchcraft which furnish valuable material on the atmosphere or business climate in early-day Massachusetts and New



Donor H. W. Bass examines a volume from business history collection.

England. The collection is not restricted to a particular period, and material dates back to pre-historic times.

"We try to get material that will help answer questions such as when did the private property concept originate, where was the first authority in organization, who were the first business and professional people," Dr. Shuman explains.

To answer these questions several rare books have been obtained, but Dr. Shuman does not collect rarities for the sake of rarity. He has a lengthy list of needed books and usually has 500 or more volumes on order. Many of the desired books are out of print, and the usual collector's problem exists in getting to the source with the money before someone else grabs up the book. However, few of the volumes have cost more than a few hundred dollars. This is partially due to the recognition that the cost of original documents is out of proportion to actual physical usefulness to scholars. With a young collection money can be better utilized in acquiring a comprehensive backlog of material to help students understand the entire historical concept. The collection was founded on the premise that "ours is in a very important sense a business civilization," and that "an understanding of the record of business achievement, while fundamental to a rounded appreciation of the nature of our society, has been too often neglected in institutions of higher education."

In building this young collection, Dr. Shuman cites one primary purpose. "Our main interest," he says, "has been to build toward a library unit so rounded that it can constitute a practical, highly useful tool for study and research, not merely an exhibit for the casual visitor to stare at."

Several major library collections are unended but nonetheless have been built to a position of prestige with great skill and little fanfare. The geology collection, for instance, is considered the strongest single unit in the O.U. library system by Dr. Arthur McAnally, University libraries di-

rector. Its 90,000 volumes are housed in Gould Hall rather than in the main library. The collections in chemistry and biological sciences have likewise achieved a high degree of distinction.

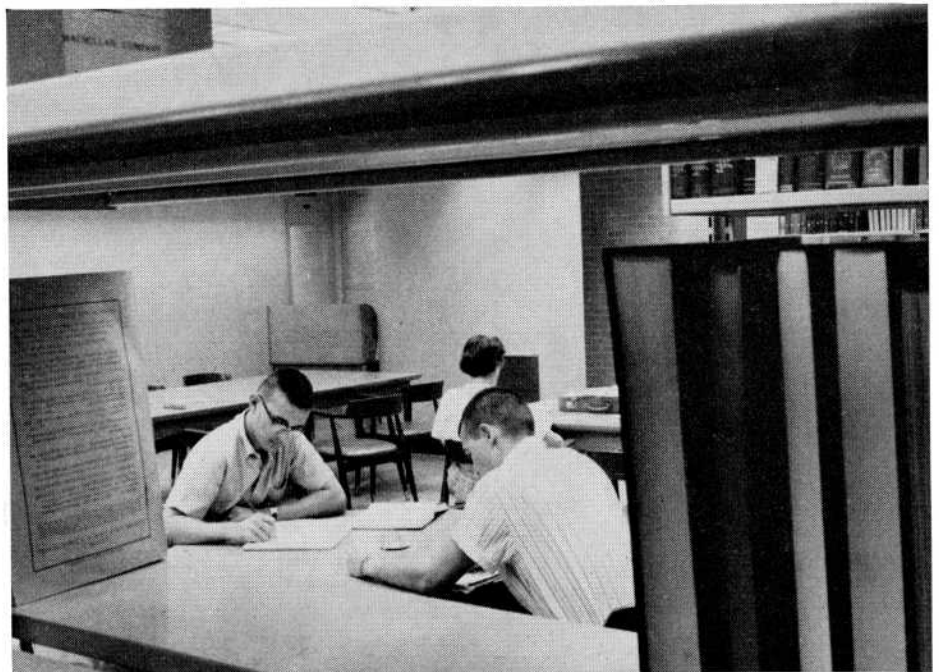
Special attention has been given other areas of library materials such as the journals and periodicals section and the manuscripts division. As a young university, O.U. got a late start in building adequate periodical files, but now receives more than 6,000 journals regularly, compared with only 2,500 in 1951. Manuscripts and archives division, located in the basement of the original library wing, is a storehouse of Oklahoma artifacts including personal papers, souvenirs, business and social records, letters, diaries, journals, photographs—material reflecting the history of Oklahoma and the University.

Dr. McAnally is acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the O.U. system. He knows the feel of budgetary strain,

the painful decision of which of the often-requested, vitally-needed books to buy and which to put off for awhile. Still in his first 10 years with the University, Dr. McAnally has seen the total number of volumes grow from 380,000 to 810,000, adding nearly 1,000 volumes a month.

"Purchases have been well chosen and fitted closely to the University needs through faculty cooperation in the selection processes," Dr. McAnally says. "This dramatic improvement in resources was made possible by the strong support from the University administration, by whole-hearted cooperation from the faculty and through the generosity of thousands of friends of the library."

These many benefactors have realized the key role which the library plays in the development of a university, and they have assured the University of Oklahoma of a great library upon which to build a great university.



More than 3,000 students and faculty find their way to the library daily to check out 600 books, pour over reference and periodical files or use the study desks, typing and conference rooms.