

freshmen, we could locate a sign on the reference desk or have the reference desk staff wear buttons that would convey a message inviting ENG 112 research paper questions. In this way our desire to provide service to them would become more visible, just as the separate service location had been. We could also encourage the reference librarians to become more involved with the paper topic selection process. If we hired an ENG 112 instructor to help staff the reference desk, he/she could train us in learning how to better assist students with topic

selection questions.

Given our present staffing level and the nature of the library instruction program for the freshman composition course, we will continue to provide this needed research paper assistance as a complement to regular reference service. Next spring we are considering adding a third person to the reference desk to determine if the same level of user satisfaction can be attained as that which was documented at a separate service location. ■ ■

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## Cataloging rare book backlogs

By Jill Harcourt

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### *The rise and fall of a Title II-C grant at the University of Oklahoma's Western History Collections.*

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The Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma has one of the finest libraries on the Native Americans of North America and the history of the Trans-Mississippi West. The major focus of its collection development is the history of the Southwest and its Native American population. The Collections acquire materials in a wide range of formats, from photographs to manuscripts to microforms and books. In 1982, the Library Division of the Western History Collections had 63,673 volumes (monographs and serials), in both the LC and Dewey classification schemes. The Division also had accumulated an uncataloged backlog of 42,000 volumes.

The inertia of this backlog became so great that the Collections applied for a HEA Title II-C grant. The first-year objectives of this grant were:

1) To catalog and record in national databases approximately one half of the uncataloged published book holdings in the Western History Collections. At the time of application, the uncataloged

backlog consisted of 42,000 volumes.

2) To increase the availability and use of the Western History Collections by national and international scholars.

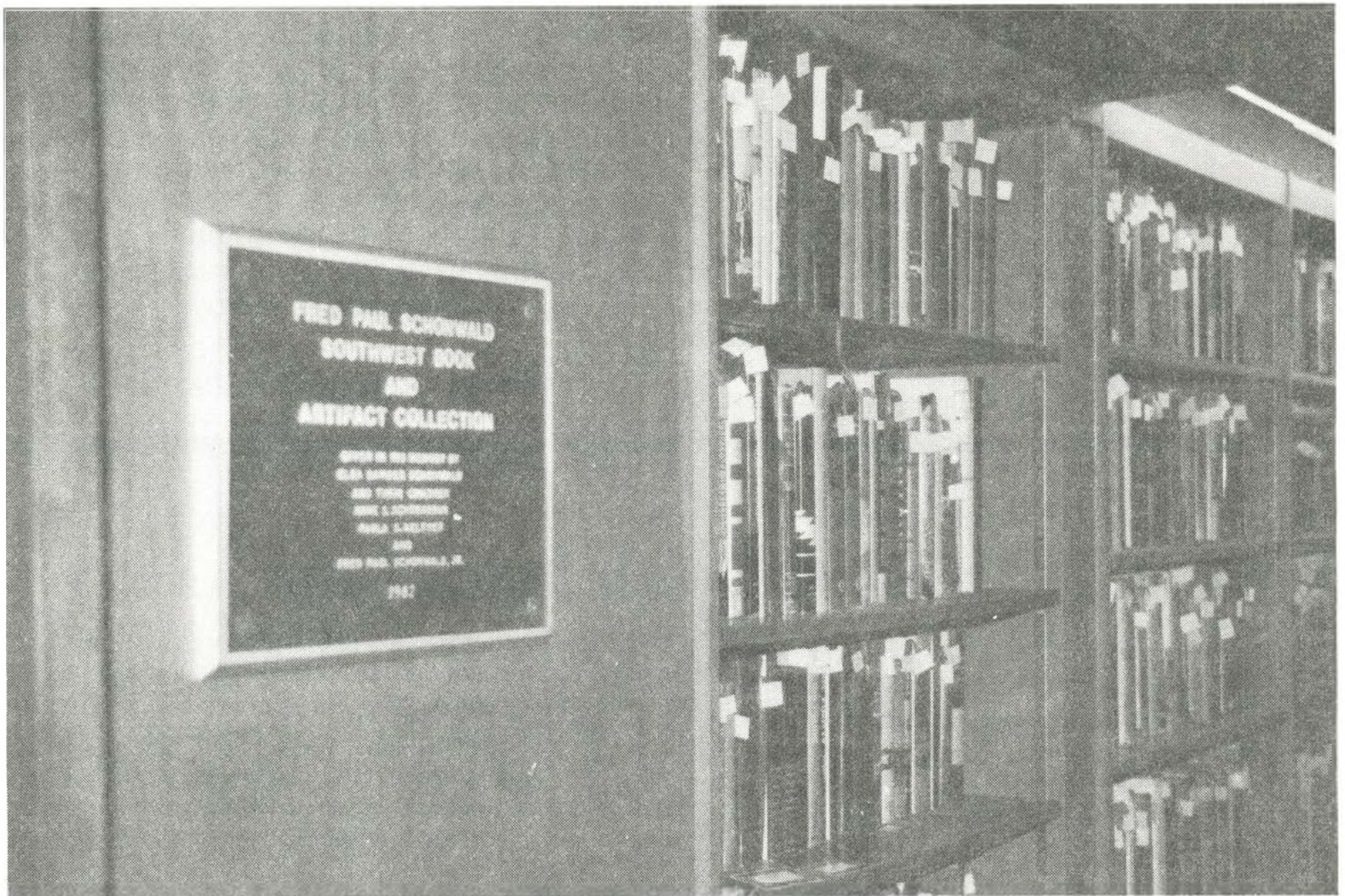
3) To facilitate the bibliographic control of this special research collection by placing our holdings in an in-house circulation system.

4) To aid in the long-range planning and development of the Western History Collections.

5) To strengthen the major national bibliographic systems by inputting the specialized holdings of the Western History Collections into the RLIN and OCLC systems.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>University of Oklahoma Western History Collections. HEA Title II-C (dated January 2, 1982). *Strengthening University Research Library Resources Through Bibliographic Access for the Western History Collections*. Grant number 6008200688. Project number 091AH20057.



*Backlog, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma.*

By the time the grant was awarded, the backlog had grown to 45,000 volumes. This raised our statistical objective to 22,500 cataloged volumes for the grant's first year.

In February 1983 our cataloging operations began in a small area of the WHC Library Division. Grant personnel included two part-time administrators, one professional cataloger, three paraprofessionals and an allocation of 160 hours per week for student assistants. We had two RLIN Zentec 40 terminals for access and input into the RLIN system. Only basic cataloging tools were kept on-site. Others were available at OU's Bizzell Memorial Library, a two-minute walk away. For the first two months, we planned to concentrate on the grant's beginning activities. After training of staff, designing workflow and establishing grant procedures, we hoped to start cataloging the backlog.

By the end of July 1983 we had cataloged a total of 6,413 volumes, including microfilm as well as books. This expansion of the grant's coverage to the microfilm format became necessary because of our RLIN search rate. Only 18% of the books we searched had RLIN records that met our basic cataloging standards. We finished the initial processing of the six largest special collections within the Library Division, and began processing books for the Library Division's general stacks. A Dataphase terminal was installed in order to search OU's on-line holdings. Two paraprofessional vacancies extended the staff training period considerably.

By the end of January 1984 we had cataloged a total of 17,717 volumes. Our search rate on RLIN

remained low, at 19%. So we expanded our coverage again, beyond microfilm sets and books to microfilm analytic records. "Western Americana, 1550-1900: Frontier History of the Trans-Mississippi West"<sup>2</sup> was our choice because of its coverage of the Collection's major subject areas. The shift in the backlog from trade publications to more ephemeral volumes kept our RLIN search rate low. A third paraprofessional left, so we had to continue with staff training much longer than we anticipated.

At this time, a funding dilemma arose. We had submitted an application for a second year of the grant in November 1983. But we were caught between the change from the old to the new Federal fiscal year. To maintain continuity during this time lapse, we submitted a request for a no-cost extension from February to September 1984. When it was approved, we adjusted our operations, hoping for the approval of our second year's funding. Unfortunately, that application was denied.

By the end of September 1984 we had cataloged a grand total of 19,453 volumes, including microfilm sets and microfilm analytics. The search rate on RLIN improved slightly, to 21%. At least 80% of those six special collections in the Division had been cataloged. Only one third of the Western Americana analytic records were input in the RLIN system.

<sup>2</sup>*Western Americana, 1550-1900: Frontier History of the Trans-Mississippi West*. New Haven, Conn.: Research Publications, 1975.

During the last eight months the grant's priorities shifted towards improving access to materials in the Division. All books with LC call numbers had OCR labels placed on their book plates. This labeling project also served as an informal inventory. The numbers from the OCR labels were then linked with the corresponding bibliographic records in OU's Dataphase system. We linked about 3,000 records; the remainder was completed by OU's Catalog Department after the grant ended. To improve access through the Division's card catalog, we ordered extra sets of cards for selected records. We spent the last month dealing with all the myriad trivial details involved in closing down the

grant's operations.

The number of volumes that are cataloged has always been the measure of success in any cataloging operation. We did not catalog 22,500 volumes. But after twenty frantic months we had reduced the backlog to about 25,500 volumes. We also managed to characterize and partially organize it for future efforts. Access to the Division as a whole was improved, with increased online and card access. Overall, a substantial improvement was made in the control and availability of the materials in the Library Division of the Western History Collections. ■■

## First German-language Declaration of Independence discovered at Gettysburg College

What is believed to be the first German translation of the Declaration of Independence has been found by researchers in the special collections department of Gettysburg College's Musselman Library in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

The age of the document, which is being hailed as a major historical find, was verified by Werner Tannhof, a bibliographer from the University of Göttingen, Germany, in November. Tannhof was working under the direction of Dr. Karl J. R. Arndt, professor of German at Clark College, Worcester, Massachusetts, and Nancy Scott, retired Gettysburg College special collections librarian, when he discovered the translation among other German-language materials which had been owned by the library for at least 90 years and possibly longer.

The document is a broadside measuring 16 inches by 12.75 inches on ordinary laid paper without a watermark. The piece is slightly damaged at the center because of an early, clumsy repair, but clearly legible. At the bottom center is the imprint, "Philadelphia, Gedruckt bey Steiner und Cist, in der Zweyten-strasse."

The discovery highlights the little-known fact that the famous Declaration, written in Philadelphia in 1776 to proclaim the independence of the colonies from the British crown, was printed in German at almost the same time as its publication in English.

One of the first newspapers to publish the Declaration was the July 5, 1776, edition of the German-language *Pennsylvanischer Staatbote*, owned by Philadelphia printer Henrich Miller. In an article published in the Summer 1985 issue of the University of Wisconsin journal *Monatshefte*, Arndt said that both the Gettysburg document and another, better-known printing, done by Henrich Miller on July 9, 1776, were probably translated by the same person, a Russian immigrant translator named Charles Cist. Cist had entered into a partnership

with printer Melchior Steiner, the Gettysburg document's printer, in 1775.

Although the broadside is undated, the possibility definitely exists that it is the first printing anywhere of the Declaration. The first English-language newspaper to print the Declaration in English was John Dunlap's *Pennsylvania Evening Post* on July 6, 1776. ■■



Declaration of Independence in German, 1776.

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