

Acquisition of the one millionth volume by the University Libraries at UCSD celebrated during a ceremony in the Central University Library lobby on the campus

December 28, 1973

A major milestone in the development of the University Libraries at the University of California, San Diego - the acquisition of the one millionth volume - was celebrated Sunday, December 9, during a ceremony in the lobby of the Central University Library on the campus.

Mrs. E. Laird Landon, President of The Friends of the UCSD Library, presented the "millionth" volume - John Ogilby's "America," a rare account of early American discoveries and expeditions - to Dr. William D. McElroy, UCSD Chancellor. The commemorative work was selected by The Friends and purchased with funds donated to the group by an anonymous donor.

The addition of the one millionth volume represents a rate of library growth not often equalled by a new university. The Libraries at UCSD reached a first plateau, 50,000 volumes, only 12 years ago, in September, 1961. By April, 1963, there were 100,000 volumes and by May, 1965, 250,000 volumes. The half-millionth book arrived in May, 1968. A ceremony was held three years ago, November 24, 1970, to celebrate the gift of the 750,000th volume from The Friends.

"America," a large folio printed in London by Ogilby in 1671, is an important volume in American history since it contains one of the first descriptions of the discoverers' voyages to the new world and the conquest of Mexico and Peru. The gilt-ruled and leather-bound folio contains six engraved portraits, 19 folding maps (California is shown as an island), and 32 folding engraved plates of views.

It was described 300 years ago as "America: being the Latest, and Most Accurate Description of the New World; containing The Original of the Inhabitants, and the Remarkable Voyages thither. The Conquest of the Vast Empires of Mexico and Peru, and other Large Provinces and Territories, with the several European Plantations in those Parts. Also Their Cities, Fortresses, Towns, Temples, Mountains, and Rivers. Their Habits, Customs, Manners, and Religions. Their Plants, Beasts, Birds, and Serpents. With an Appendix containing... a brief Survey of what hath been discover'd of the Unknown South-Land and the Arctick Region."

The volume received by UCSD holds additional importance in that it is the dedication copy containing a specially printed extra leaf dedicating the volume to Ogilby's patron, "The Right Honourable, Anthony, Lord Ashley, Chancellor of His Majesty's Exchequer... one of The Lords-Proprietors of Carolina."

Ogilby; who bore the title "His Majesty's Cosmographer," was born in 1600 and died in 1676. He was the printer of a number of fine books in folio and translator of many of the classics. During the last years of his life he devoted himself to the production of books on geography and topography, with fine engravings and maps. Although "America" bears his name, the book is considered a translation from the work by Arnoldus Montanus, "De Nieuwe en Onbekende Weereld."

Melvin J. Voigt, UCSD University Librarian, called the addition of the one millionth volume to the collection the "coming of age" of the UCSD Libraries.

"By reaching one million volumes, UCSD has become the largest academic library south of Los Angeles and the fifth University of California library to reach that size," Voigt said. "This ceremony marks a real milestone for us."

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