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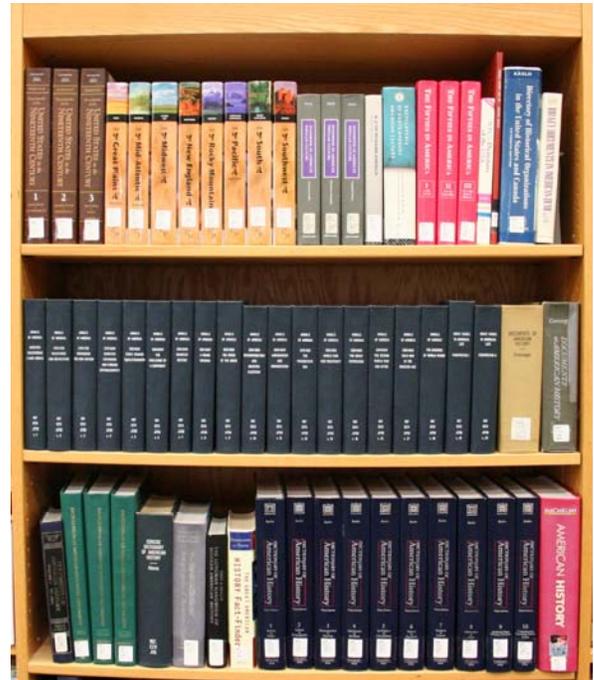
Resources in the USMA Library

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Very much at the heart of the service that the Library provides to the cadets and faculty is a collection of resources available both in paper and virtual format. This issue of the USMA Library Newsletter focuses on these collections in order to raise awareness of the dramatic change in service that has occurred in the past five years.

Virtual documents proliferate in our on line catalog. Nearly one thousand printed books are added monthly. Every cadet and faculty member has access to over five million volumes in more than a dozen academic libraries in New York State thanks to Connect New York. Hundreds of videos are available to be checked out from the Library. Music is available through a subscription service to Naxos. Government documents, once a voracious consumer of paper pulp, are now produced largely in the preferred digital format. Rare books are evidence that knowledge may be entrusted to print on paper with confidence that the contents will survive for hundreds of years.



The regularly updated Reference Collection of the USMA Library has a venerable past having served thousands of cadets for over 200 years. Planning for the move to Jefferson Hall caused the library staff to ask hard questions about the role of a collection of printed reference sources in the 21st century. While it is true that many reference sources have migrated to digital format, it is also true that many valuable reference sources are available only in paper format. After careful deliberation we decided that we need a collection of printed reference sources in Jefferson Hall but that the total number of volumes is unlikely to exceed 7000. Thus space was planned for a zero growth collection that would not exceed this number of volumes.

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Winter Open House



On the evening of 6 December over 150 cadets and faculty joined the library staff for seasonal celebration in the West Point Room. Staff brought in homemade refreshments and cadets provided musical entertainment. The walls were draped with evergreens and around the room were displays of photographs, letters and archival records, such as the Post Orders of December 31, 1838 noting that on “Christmas Eve and Day many gentlemen violated the regulations” (by tearing up the mess hall); such records remind us that December leave is a relatively recent institution. It is hoped that the Winter Open House, now in its second year, will become an annual occasion on which patrons and staff can mingle and discuss services, interests and concerns in a relaxed, congenial setting.



The USMA Library Catalog

In an earlier time, a library's catalog was a list of books that were on the shelves available to be borrowed and returned. The early 19th century version of the USMA Library Catalog was, in fact, a printed list of books with no call numbers to indicate item locations. As collections grew, the wisdom of using index cards to show a library's holdings caught on and the infamous card catalog took hold as the standard method of showing book holdings. So versatile was this card catalog that it found its way into Army Regulation 735-15 which cited the card catalog as the authorized method of accounting for book property. As groundbreaking and functional as it was in the 20th century, the card catalog had some considerable, if not highly visible, drawbacks. Every day a number of staff members started the morning by carrying stacks of cards to be filed into the catalog. With each book requiring at least 4 cards, the work was highly labor intensive. The accuracy of the filing needed to be supervised and reviewed. In spite of the care taken to do this every day, filing errors were not uncommon. Occasionally subject terms became socially incorrect and cards containing the offending subject terms needed to be removed, revised, and refiled.

Not long into the second half of the 20th century it became evident to the library community that the days of the card catalog were numbered and work began on what was called a machine readable cataloging method. The Library of Congress provided the leadership and in the 1960s the so-called MARC record format was adopted by the library community as a standard method of codifying the content of a catalog card. Each element of the bibliographic record became a data field with a numeric designator. (This coding can be viewed for each of the bibliographic records in the USMA Library catalog by clicking on the "MARC display" tab.) Creation of the MARC format was an important milestone in cultural history because it made possible the widespread application of the On Line Public Catalog or the OPAC that in now ubiquitous in academic libraries and is common in most public libraries.

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of the MARC record format. Since it became the prevalent form of inventory control, the card catalog was locally produced. Each library would devote staff time to preparing and writing or typing the cards that went into the catalog. Now, with a standard format, this catalog work could be accomplished at a central location and the cards could be delivered to the institution. As the online catalog began to replace the card catalog, bibliographic records could be delivered electronically rather than in paper format.

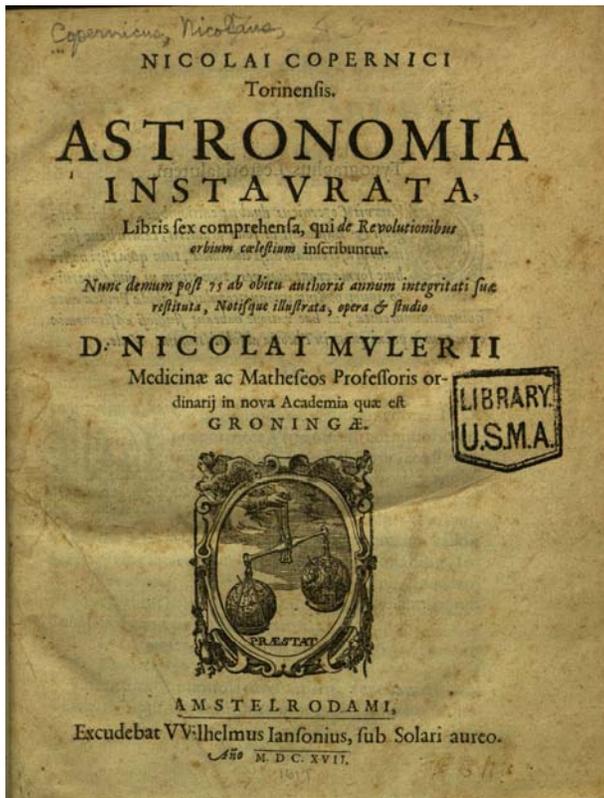
The development of an electronically delivered standard format document also presaged the delivery of full text documents to the end user. Now, as is the case in the USMA Library, patrons often find the bibliographic record linked to the document that has been indexed. This clean and elegant solution gives direction to library service today. It is more often the fact that a bibliographic record for a recently acquired government document is attached to the virtual representation of the product described in the record.

Although many of the digital products that are linked to bibliographic records are subscription products that reside on host servers outside West Point, the Library has also been producing its own digital products tailored to the West Point community. The major resources used for biographic research on Academy graduates have been digitized and are available through the catalog as are several classic works about the Military Academy. One of our earliest digital projects presents class albums from the 19th century linked to the bibliographic entry titled "class album".

Aside from local product, the Library collection includes: a large film collection in DVD and VHS formats, over five thousand electronic books, current and retrospective government documents, journal holdings as well as our collection of over three hundred thousand paper books. Can't find what you need? Then go to Connect New York, a catalog of over five million items from thirteen academic libraries in New York State that promises 48 to 72 hour delivery.

Today's library catalog is a far cry from the card catalog of years ago. In the past, the catalog was an index to the paper contents of one building. As the number of digital products increases, more full text will be linked to the bibliographic record. The catalog will be transformed from a limited application index to a search engine for hundreds of thousands of items, many of them in locations outside the walls of West Point.

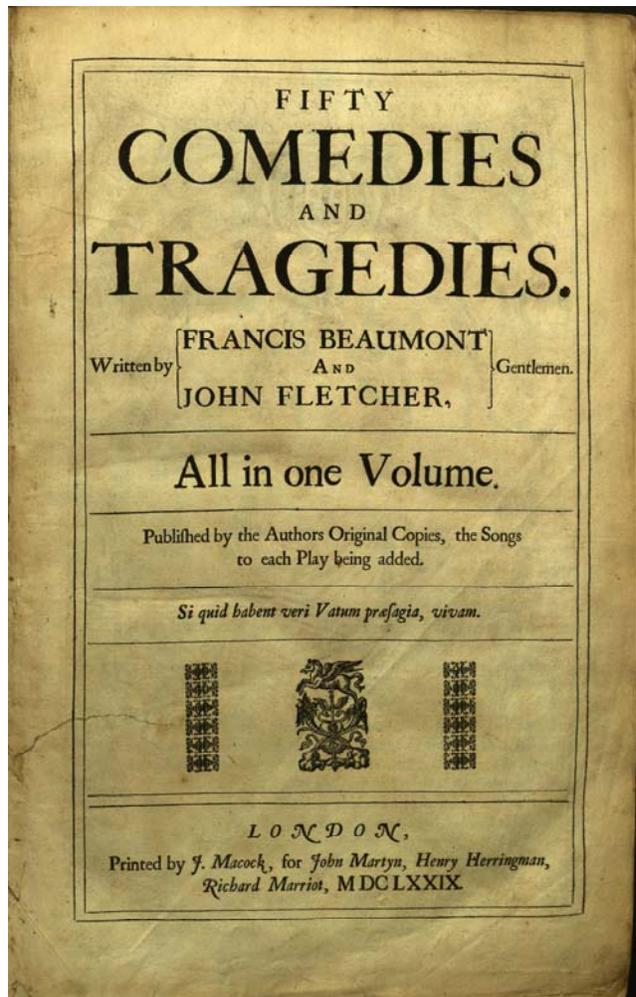
Early European Imprints A Special Collection of the USMA Library



Pictured here are title pages from books collected by the USMA Library over the past two centuries. Copernicus changed the common view of the world with the publication of *Astronomia Instaurata*, better known by a part of the subtitle, *De Revolutionibus* or, *On the Revolution of Heavenly Spheres*. As was a common practice, the work was published in Latin in a vain attempt to keep the knowledge confined to an elite group of scholars.

Overshadowed by their near contemporary, William Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher collaborated to write plays that are masterful in their emotional expression. The volume in the Library collection was published in 1647, twenty two years after Fletcher's death. It contains 50 of the 55 plays attributed to the pair.

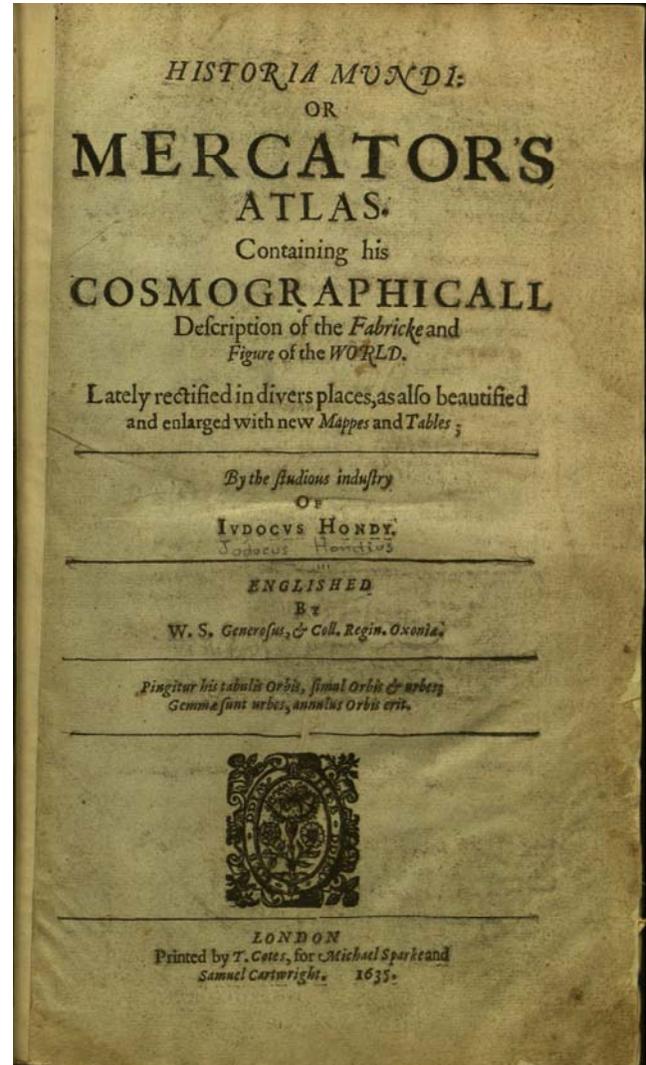
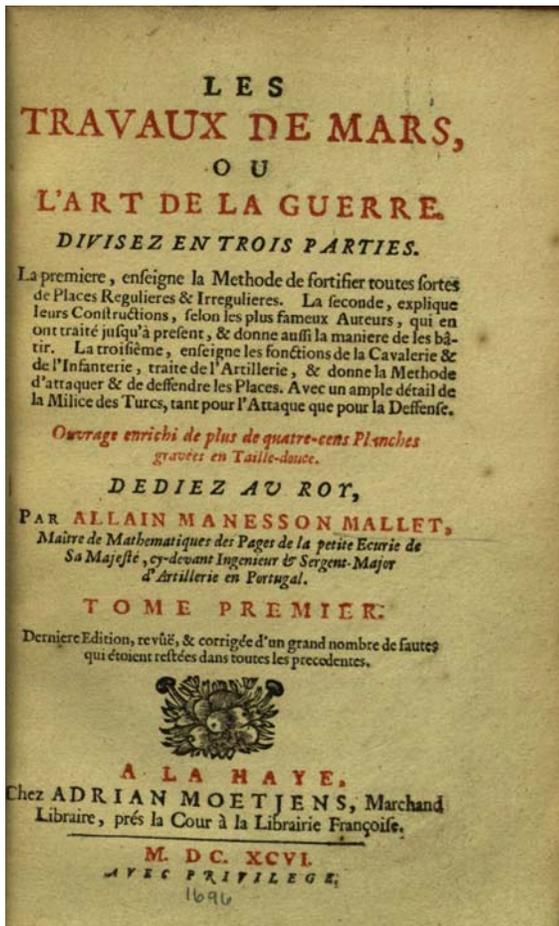
Fifteenth century technological innovation created movable type and the world was profoundly changed forever. The printing press was the world wide web of its time. With the availability of multiple copies of books containing the wisdom of centuries, libraries could be built in multiple locations. As is the case today, large collections of books attract scholars and scholars attract students. It is no exaggeration to suggest that the development of the university as a place of research and study was made possible because of prestigious collections of books located in libraries.



Early European Imprints Continued

According to Webster's Dictionary, Gerhard Mercator is credited with first using the word atlas to indicate a bound collection of maps. His inspiration allegedly came from numerous depictions of Atlas holding the globe. Mercator's role in producing his maps was in the creation of the engraving plates used to print his atlases. After his death Jacobus Hondy purchased these printing plates and in 1635 produced the volume pictured here.

Better known as a cartographer, Allain Manesson Mallet was also an engineer who served under Louis XIV in seventeenth century France. Below is the title page for a volume of Mallet's drawings of military fortifications published in 1696.



The Special Collections and Archives Division of the USMA Library where these and many other early European Imprints are housed is an important and indispensable part of the educational experience at the Military Academy. Few academic libraries of equivalent size have the wealth of intellectual resources that are available here for students and faculty.

RFID in the USMA Library

Inventory control of large numbers of small items has always been a challenging task for both libraries and large retail merchants. After years of research and testing, technology has provided a solution and the USMA Library is about to implement Radio Frequency Identification, commonly known as RFID, as a method of controlling its book inventory. Over the course of the next few months individual RFID tags linked to the bibliographic information in the Library's database will be installed in each book. When the project is complete over 300,000 items will be tagged.

The decision to undertake this large-scale task was prompted by the forthcoming move into Jefferson Hall, scheduled for the summer of 2008. Now is an opportune time to tag the books so that when the move is complete, there will be an automated inventory control system in place. RFID enables library staff to scan the shelves and read the information that is broadcast from each volume when it comes into proximity with the scanning wand. The captured information is compared to the inventory data that is sorted into the order that the books appear on the shelves. Books that are not in place are compared to the database of books in circulation and any missing books are identified. Books that are improperly shelved are also identified.

Some controversy relating to privacy issues has surrounded the use of RFID tags in Libraries. The system that the USMA Library will employ utilizes what is known as passive tags that are activated only when these tags are in proximity to the scanning inventory wand, when the book is checked out, and when it passes through the security gate. Contrary to some misinformation, these tags do not track the location of the book either inside or outside of the library building.



Jefferson Hall Progress

Construction of Jefferson Hall began in Fall 2005 and is expected to be completed late in 2007. Pictured here is the view of the construction as it is in January 2007 next to the artist's rendition of the building from the same viewpoint when it is complete.

Reference Librarian Finds First USMA Novel

Long time member of the USMA Library reference staff Paul Nergelovic has discovered a previously unrecognized work about West Point that was published in the nineteenth century. It took a reference librarian's persistent curiosity combined with technology to uncover this arcane piece of West Point's literary legacy.

Arthur Tremain: or, Annals of Cadet Life is a novelette that first appeared in a periodical titled *The Military and Naval Magazine of the United States* over a period of months beginning in 1834. The work is attributed to Francis Vinton, USMA class of 1830, and it reveals aspects of cadet life that were probably learned while Vinton attended the Academy. It was not uncommon for works of fiction to appear in serial fashion in the nineteenth century and this short novel slowly unravels over the course of a dozen issues.

Vinton was a cadet at the same time that Jefferson Davis and Joseph E. Johnston attended the Academy. In the years following his graduation Vinton studied law while he was stationed at Fort Independence in Boston. It was during this time that Arthur Tremain appeared in print. When he left the Army, Vinton entered the Episcopal Seminary and was ordained in 1839. He achieved some fame as a clergyman and wrote a book entitled, A Manual Commentary on the General Canon Law and the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church, that was published in 1870. The Christian Idea of Civil Government, a twelve page pamphlet containing a sermon written by Vinton, is available from the Library of Congress as part of the American Memory website.

The search that resulted in this discovery employed several of the many subscription data bases available on the USMA Library website, <http://www.library.usma.edu>. Read the complete story of Vinton's literary venture in USMA Library Bulletin number 20, available at the reference desk.



You have seen this logo on the page of our on line catalog, but have you tried to use the service? Connect New York is a cooperative project involving thirteen academic libraries in New York State. In addition to USMA, some of the participating institutions are: Vassar College, Rensselaer Polytechnic, Pace University, Colgate University, and the Rochester Institute of Technology. The combined collections of the thirteen libraries exceed five million items. Delivery time, long the weak link in interlibrary loan, has averaged 48 to 72 hours due to an innovative in-state delivery system. Not one of these libraries would aspire to amass a collection this large on its own but thanks to the technology built into our integrated library system, no library has to devote resources to building a book collection this large.

Some Statistics

According to State Library Data 2001-02, there were 1.1 billion visits to US public libraries. According to Statistical Abstract 2002, the total number of people attending sporting events numbered .2 billion.

OCLC states that six times more people have library cards than driver's licenses.



The Library Gun Door

A familiar sight to thousands of cadets walking to Thayer Hall every day is the gun door of the USMA Library. Mounted on the left side of the door is the so-called Alpha cannon, named because it is alleged to have fired the first round in the Civil War. The caption states: "The small gun fired the first shot of the Civil War in the west at Vicksburg several days before the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861". The right side of the door shows the Omega cannon alleged to have fired the last shot of the war. The caption for this piece reads: "The large gun was the left piece of Captain Elder's Battery B First US Artillery and fired the last shot at Appomattox April 9 1865".

Designed by the architect to be an emergency exit for the library, the gun door has been pressed into service on at least two occasions in recent years. During the renovation of the Library's heating and ventilation system in the years 1995-1999, there was a time when the main entrance was closed to permit extensive duct work. For two semesters the gun door became the main entrance to the Library. A temporary circulation desk was set up inside the door, along with a turnstile entrance and exit apparatus. More recently, in preparation for the bicentennial the main entrance was again closed, this time for only one semester, to permit removal of the efflorescence that appeared on the limestone that surrounds the entrance portal.

It is not by accident that the main entrance to Jefferson Hall lies directly opposite the gun door. After the renovation of the present library (building 757) into laboratory and classroom space to support the Academy's science program, the door will lead into the Archives and Special Collections of the Library. By design some twenty thousand square feet of space was allocated for the purpose of housing the rare and valuable items that constitute these collections. Placing the door of Jefferson Hall opposite the Gun door makes it possible for a graceful transition between buildings.