About the Collector: Merle Bobzien

Merle Russell Bobzien, a southern California native, has been gathering books and building his library for over fifty years, ever since early childhood. Over the years, Merle has been acquainted with most of the rare book dealers in Los Angeles, and worked for some of them in the capacity of cataloguer and salesman. His collecting has focused on the English Civil War period of the 17th century, from James I to James II, with a particular interest in Charles I. The library also has strong holdings in 19th century American literature, history and Manifest Destiny. Of course, the collection has ‘leaked’ into the 15th and 16th centuries in continental Europe, as well as holdings in early 20th century children’s series fiction. Owing to considerable domestic and foreign travel with his work, Merle has had the unique opportunity to scour bookstores all over the world. In strokes of good luck, he has been able to add many rare and unique pieces to his collection, some only held as a single other example in America.

Merle worked as the lab director for Los Angeles Mission College science department for several years. Later he changed career paths and worked as a programmer for the University of Hawaii, Operations Manager for Networks at Hughes Aircraft and TRW, and as global training manager for several private sector technology firms in Los Angeles and Honolulu.

About the Exhibition

This display of titles from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries cover a range of topics: magic, sorcery, prophecies, witchcraft, apparitions, spirits, astrology and physiognomy. Two highlights from the display are a 1672 copy of *The True Prophecies or Prognostications of Michael Nostradamus* and John Melton’s *Astrologator* printed in 1620.