

McLean County Museum of History

Game Designers' Workshop Collection

Processed by

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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1980 to 2020
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

Game Designers' Workshop, also known by its initials GDW, was organized June 22, 1973, on the Illinois State University campus. The company took pride in the s-apostrophe in their name denoting several designers in its organization. Four ISU students were the original founders: Paul Banner, Loren Wiseman, Marc Miller, and Frank Chadwick. Their passion for simulated war-games first led to a university-funded project that allowed them to create specific games professors could use in a classroom setting as an alternative educational tool. GDW expanded into an internationally successful company. From 1975 to 1994, GDW was located at 203-1/2 North Street in Normal. The company was active from 1973 through February 29, 1996, when its designers moved on to other projects. Many of their games are now published by other publishers.

Game Designers' Workshop was originally established to publish the Europa Series of World War II board war-games. It expanded to other war-games, science-fiction games, and ultimately role-playing games. Originally their main effort went into The Europa Series of monster war-games, of which *Drang Nach Osten!* was the first, but they brought out a considerable number over the years. By rough count, GDW published one new product every 22 days for 22 years. (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgamepublisher/181/game-designers-workshop>)

In a retrospective interview included in the McLean County Museum of History's 1999 exhibit (see Folder 1), founder Marc Miller opined that although GDW was producing hundreds of games and winning national awards for design excellence, most local people did not even know of their existence. GDW did not advertise locally; and it was not the kind of business that people would tour. Most of their contacts were by telephone and fax and at conventions and business trips.

Scope

The **Game Designers' Workshop Collection** contains material about the war-games and science fiction games industry, with particular attention to the GDW. It includes handbills and descriptions of specific GDW games, information about the history of GDW, and complete list of its games and publications.

Traveller is a series of related science fiction role-playing games, the first published in 1977 by GDW. Marc Miller designed Traveller with help from Frank Chadwick, John Harshman, and Loren Wiseman. The original Traveller gamebooks were distinctive half-size black pamphlets (the so-called "Little Black Books" or "LBBs") produced by GDW. The main rules were detailed in three such booklets, sold as a boxed set, while the same format was used for early support material, such as the Adventures, Supplements and further Books. Later supplements and updated versions of the main game system introduced full-sized booklets, complete re-writes of the game system, and significant changes to the Third Imperium. The original version was designed and published by GDW in 1977, sometimes called "Classic" Traveller. The core rules originally came as three distinctive "Little Black Books," in a boxed set. Supplemental booklets included "advanced" character generation, capital ship design, robots, and more.

Folder Inventory

Folder 1: History and Information

- 1.1 "A History of GDW," *Challenge*, 1993, p. 70.
- 1.2 Game Designers' Workshop - June 22, 1973 to February 29, 1996: How Many Have You

Played? Complete list of games and magazines published by GDW during its lifetime, 2 copies.

- 1.3 City Directory listings for GDW, 1975-1994.
- 1.4 "Workshop-Talk: A Conversation with Marc Miller" by Greg Costikyan, *Moves*, June-July 1980, pp. 29-30,33. Entire issue of magazine.
- 1.5 Transcript of oral history interview with Marc Miller, included in McLean County Museum of History's "Made in McLean County" exhibit 1999, 35pp. Interview covers Miller's biography, inception and development of GDW's games, and Miller's commentary on war-games phenomenon.
- 1.6 Promotional card for Marc Miller, Hall of Fame Winner.
- 1.7 Four designer playing cards, a commemoration recognizing GDW's four partners: Marc Miller, Frank Chadwick, Rich Banner, and Loren Wiseman, 2010. Each card has a brief statement of publications and accomplishments.

Folder 2: Publications

- 2.1 Mailer. GDW's first bulk mailing in 1973 promoting the publication of three new games: "Coral Sea: Turning the Japanese Advance, 1942," "Torgau" and "Narvik." Coral Sea was a naval battle in World War II, Torgau was a battle fought by Frederick The Great in 1760, and Narvik was a campaign in World War II.
- 2.2 Handbill for "Harpoon," with excerpts, 1987. MCMH's former PastPerfect record attached.
- 2.3 "Classical" - booklet describing four types of games made by GDW. Categories of games are Classical, Europa, Modern, and Pacific Theater. 4pp, 8.5x11". MCMH's former PastPerfect record attached.
- 2.4 List of GDW games publications in McLean County Museum of History library, July 2020.
- 2.5 GDW Update and Collector Price List, *The Weekend Warrior* (Hollywood, CA), 1989. A third-party listing of games, terms of sale, price list and order form. The 1989 list of GDW Traveller products begins on p. 3. (See **Scope** for description of the Traveller role-playing game.)
- 2.6 "Battle for Moscow," free game and introduction to war-gaming, 1986, with mailing envelope and stickers.
- 2.7 *Game Designers' Workshop Game Catalog*, Bloomington, Illinois, no date.
- 2.8 *The Grenadier*, issue 20, Oakland, CA: Tibbetts & Son, 1984. Includes "Notes: Europa" by John M. Astell (pp.8-9 and ads for Game Designers' Workshop games.
- 2.9 *The Grenadier*, issue 22, Oakland, CA: Tibbetts & Son, 1984. Includes "Notes: Europa" by Jim Hambacher (pp. 28-30) and ads for Game Designers' Workshop games.

Folder 3: Excerpts

- 3.1 Excerpts from *Playing at the World* by Jon Peterson, San Diego, CA: Unreason Press, 2012. "From a vast survey of primary sources ranging from eighteenth-century strategists to modern hobbyists, *Playing at the World* distills the story of how gamers first decided fictional battles with boards and dice, and how they moved from simulating wars to simulating people." -- Amazon.
Photocopied are "The Fantasy Game" (pp.72-79), "Converting the Wargamers" (pp. 474-86), "The Summer Conventions of 1975" (pp. 522-35), "The Bully Pulpit of Lake Geneva" (pp.535-50), "Canonicity and Control" (pp. 550-51), "The Copyright on *Dungeons & Dragons*" (pp. 551-57), "*D&D* Among the RPGS" (pp. 573-93).
- 3.2 *Heroic Worlds: A History and Guide to Role-Playing Games* by Lawrence Schick, Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991, pp. 326-344. Photocopied list of Traveller games, citations include designer, description of game, and publication information.

- 3.3 "GDW: 1973-1996" excerpted from *Designers & Dragons: The '70s Credits* by Shannon Appelcline, et al, Silver Spring, MD: Evil Hat Productions, 2013, pp. 136-37, 157-84, 288.

Folder 4: Judges Build Publications

These booklets, published by Judges Guild Inc. in Decatur, Illinois, are approved for use with Traveller

- 4.1 *Ley Sector Guidebook*, 1980, 32pp.
- 4.2 *Darthanon Queen*, by Ray Harmes, Michael Reagan, and Dan Hauffe, 1980, 30pp.
- 4.3 *Marooned on Ghostring*, by Walter and Dorothy Bledsaw, 1981, 31pp.
- 4.4 *Amycus Probe*, by Dave Sering, 1981, 31pp.
- 4.5 *The Traveller Logbook*, by Dave Sering, 1979, 63pp.
- 4.6 *The Astrogators Chartbook*, 1980, 95pp.
- 4.7 *Fifty Starbases*, 1981, 95pp.

Folder 5: Traveller Game Books - I

- 5.1 Double Adventure 2: "Across the Bright Face" (22pp) and "Mission on Mithril" (20pp), Game Designers' Workshop, Inc., Normal, Illinois 1980.
- 5.2 Double Adventure 4: "Marooned" (23pp) and "Marooned Alone" (23pp), Game Designers' Workshop, Inc., Normal, Illinois, 1981.
- 5.3 Book 1: Characters and Combat, 2nd ed. Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1977, 1981.
- 5.4 Book 2: Starships, 2nd ed. Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1977, 1981.
- 5.5 Book 3: Worlds and Adventures, 2nd ed. Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1977, 1981.
- 5.6 Book 4: Mercenary, Game Designers' Workshop, Normal, Illinois, 1978.
- 5.7 Book 5: High Guard, Game Designers' Workshop, Normal, Illinois, 1980.
- 5.8 Book 6: Scouts, Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1983.

Folder 6: Traveller Games by Other Publishers

- 6.1 *Wanted: Adventurers* by John Marshal, Gamelords, Ltd., Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1984.
- 6.2 *A Pilot's Guide to the Drexilthar Subsector* by J. Andrew Keith, Gamelords, Ltd., Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1984.
- 6.3 *The Undersea Environment* by J. Andrew Keith, Gamelords, Ltd., Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1983.
- 6.4 *Sorag* by Churck Kallenbach II, Paranoia Press, Inc., 1981.
- 6.5 *Disappearance on Aramat*, Grenadler Models, Inc., 1984.

Folder 7: Traveller Game Books - II

- 7.1 Supplement 2: Animal Encounters, Game Designers' Workshop, Normal, Illinois, 1979.
- 7.2 Adventure 2: Research Station Gamma, Game Designers' Workshop, Normal, Illinois, 1980.
- 7.3 STRIKER: Rule Book 1: Basic Rules, Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1981.
- 7.4 STRIKER: Rule Book 2: Advanced Rules, Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1981, with 3 inserts.
- 7.5 STRIKER: Rule Book 3: Equipment, Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1981.
- 7.6 STRIKER Design Sequence Tables, 10pp.
- 7.7

Folder 8: FASA Publications

- 8.1 Adventure Class Ships, Vol. 1, Book 1, Freedomian Aeronautics and Space Administration, 1982.

8.2 Adventure Class Ships, Vol. 1, Book 2, Freedomian Aeronautics and Space Administration, 1982.

Folder 9: Journal

- 9.1 *The Best of the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, Vol. 3, Selected Articles from Journals 9-12., Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1981, 1982.
- 9.2 *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, Vol. 8, Broadsword Class Mercenary Cruisers, Game Designers' Workshop, Normal, Illinois, 1981.
- 9.3 *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, No. 10, A Referee's Guide to Planet-Building, Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1981.
- 9.4 *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, No. 15, Asun: A High-Population World in the Solomani Rim, Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1983.
- 9.5 *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, No. 23, Zhodani Philosophies, Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, Illinois, 1985.