



"...because people read t-shirts."

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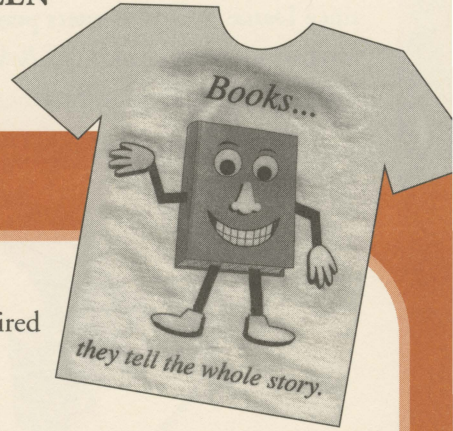
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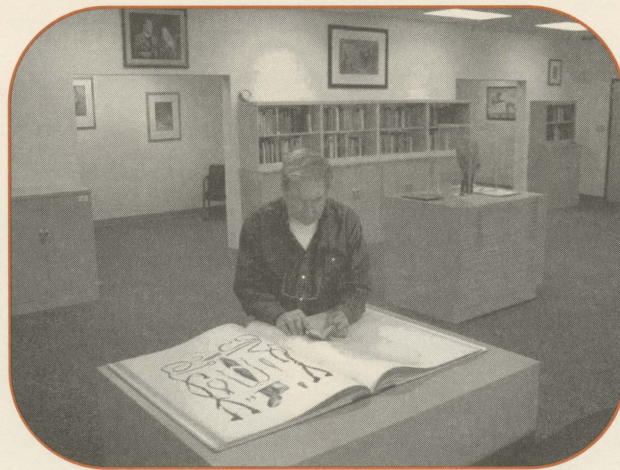
BEAKS & TALONS: A SPECIAL LIBRARY & ARCHIVE IN IDAHO

by Kent Carnie

While Idaho's Peregrine Fund has achieved international acclaim for its endangered species restoration activities, few Idahoans realize that tucked away within that organization's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise is a unique literary treasure. An integral part of The Peregrine Fund's Archives of American Falconry (AAF) is the world's most complete library of English language works on the ancient sport of falconry. This library of some 1,700 titles includes original works dating back to 1575¹ as well as several spectacular facsimile copies of illuminated manuscripts dating from the 13th century.

But why a field sport historical library in a conservation organization? Falconers' birds, money, techniques and experience provided the wherewithal and insight that made the difference in The Peregrine Fund's successful – and principal – role in peregrine restoration, one of the most successful endangered species recoveries of the 20th century. In the 1980s the same conservation biologists who had vowed to reverse the decline of the endangered peregrine falcon also became concerned about the growing loss of physical evidence of the American history of the sport of falconry – the sport through which they all originally had become interested in the peregrine falcon.

Although falconry on this continent literally can be traced back to the Spanish conquistadores and Pilgrim Fathers, its real beginnings as a field sport here did not occur until the 1930s. By the 1980s, however, the pioneers of a half-century earlier had begun to pass away and, with their departure, unique, historically valuable correspondence, diaries, photos, books, and ephemera documenting their experiences and understandings were also disappearing. Determining to stem this loss of history, The Peregrine Fund established in 1986 the Archives of American Falconry as an integral part of its varied, world-wide conservation efforts. Today, the AAF collections are housed in a sparkling new facility occupying almost half of The Peregrine Fund's million-dollar Herrick



Curator Kent Carnie with one of the Archives' two copies of the *Traite de Fauconnerie* (Schlegel & Wulverhorst, 1844-53). The hand-colored plates in these volumes are each works of art in their own right.

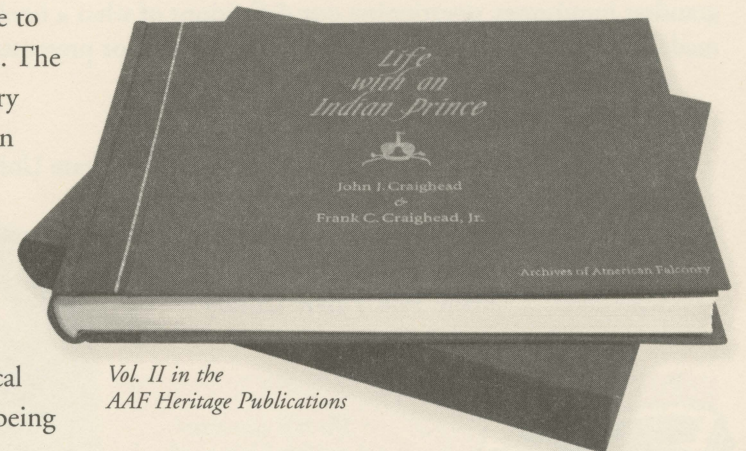
Collections Building. The American falconry community generously funded construction of the AAF portion of this new facility, just as it had generously donated historical materials and monies to endow the Archives.

As the Archives collections have grown, so too has their scope. Originally intended to document "American" falconry, the collections now represent an international heritage, with correspondence, diaries, memorabilia, and the like from around the world. This is logical and appropriate: the sport on this continent is built upon a centuries-old heritage from all corners of the globe. As a consequence, books in its library may be found in Latin, Farsi, Japanese, Arabic, and most of the modern European languages as well as an unprecedented collection of English language works. The library contains rare assets not only valuable for researching falconry history. The political historian will learn, for example, that despite the anti-sport convictions of his Puritan supporters, Cromwell was an avid falconer, known at the height of his political career to be susceptible to "influence" when accompanied by a prize falcon. The social scientist will uncover evidence that falconry was among the preeminent activities of European gentry for the first 500 years of the last millennium, royal falconers and their staffs occupying positions of considerable import and influence. Likewise, literary scholars will find annotations for falconry terms and references found in Shakespeare, many of them allegorical and undefined, the gentry of the Bard's day being conversant with the language of the sport.

Visitors and researchers from all over the globe – literally from Abu Dhabi to Zimbabwe – have used the facilities. A representative of the British Falconers' Club came to research, of all things, British falconry clubs. One Cambridge (England) doctoral candidate spent five months at the Archives recently, explaining that in a single room were all

the materials she required for research for her dissertation.

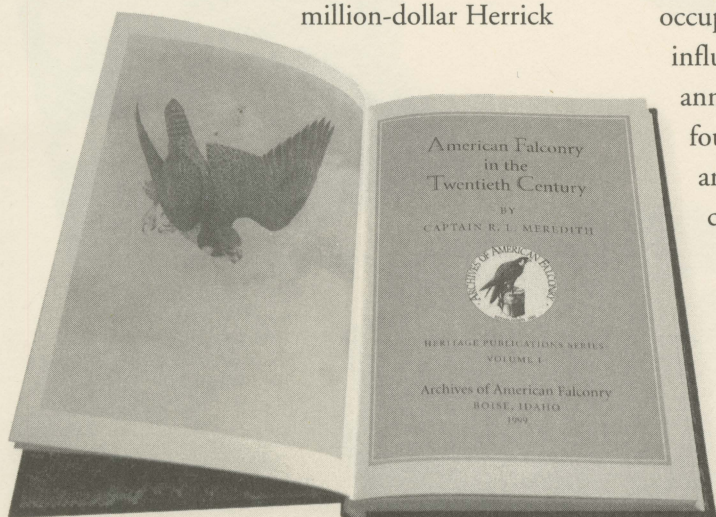
Of particular interest to readers of this newsletter is another aspect of the AAF's activities. To further an understanding of American falconry and to assist those researching the subject, the AAF includes in its own programs an Archives Heritage Publications Series. Under this program the Archives publishes significant, previously unprinted or rare works on the sport. All works in this series are presented in "Standard" and "Patron's" editions. While both have identical text, the latter is far more sumptuously bound. First in the series was what would have been America's first falconry book, had it ever found a publisher. This work, *American Falconry in the Twentieth Century*, had been written in the mid-1930s by then Captain R. L. Meredith, the "Father of American Falconry." Since the 1930s it had existed in a single manuscript copy buried in a Canadian library until the AAF published a 500-copy edition in 1999. That reprinting, beautifully custom printed by the Steinhour Press in Vermont, was out of print within eighteen months. It was followed in 2001 by *Life with an Indian Prince*, a private daily diary of John and Frank Craighead (later of grizzly bear fame) depicting a five-month visit as guests of an Indian prince just at the beginning of World War II. Going far beyond their falconry adventures, the work illustrates and describes one of the few outside accounts of the last few years of the British "Raj" in India, describing both social practices (the Craigheads were the sole western guests at a Maharaja's wedding, for example) and the social and political problems these two observant young Americans witnessed. This work is a



Vol. II in the AAF Heritage Publications

larger edition, profusely illustrated, mostly in color, and also produced by Steinhour; copies are still available.

We are at work on Volume III, a reprinting of the third book on falconry ever printed in English: *A Short Discourse of Hawking to the Field with High Flying Long-winged Hawkes...* (1603). Perhaps the rarest of all printed falconry books, it is known only



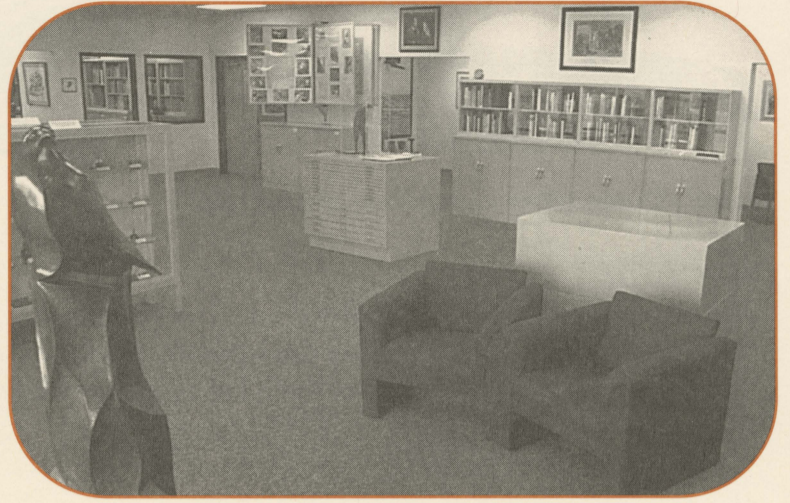
Vol. I in the AAF Heritage Publications Series

from a single copy in Yale's Beinecke Library. This work was long listed as "anonymous" but AAF Research Associate Peter Devers has recently traced the work to the authorship of Sir Thomas Sherley, at one time Treasurer-at-War to Queen Elizabeth I.² Although the Sherley work was printed in London, its inclusion in the AAF publications series evidences the growing international aspects of the Archives of American Falconry.

Planning is underway for Volume IV, a bibliography of all the falconry works in English since Dame Juliana Berners penned the first printed English sporting book (*The Boke of Saint Albans*) in 1486. In 1891, English falconer-bibliographer J. E.

Harting listed 82 works in English on the sport (copies of 80 of these are in the AAF library). A draft of the current bibliographical manuscript, prepared by AAF Rare Books and Manuscripts Curator John Swift, is in its final stages, and now includes some 610 titles, not only adding more modern works but also several pre-1891 titles that Harting, meticulous expert that he was, missed.

The library of the Archives of American Falconry, augmented by the AAF Historic Publication Series, offers a rare opportunity for scholarly research. As an "archives" – as opposed to a library in the popular sense – the AAF is dedicated to *preservation* of a rich historical heritage. Consequently, none of the works in the collection is circulated. All, however, are available for on-site reference and scholarly research.³



The AAR Main (Display) Room and Library.



¹ Albertsons Library at Boise State University holds a copy of *Historia Scholastica* by Petrus Comester, reportedly printed in an edition in 1470, thus it is the oldest book in Idaho.
² Of special interest to Idahoans: Mike Shirley, President and General Manager of Boise's Bogus Basin Mountain Resort, is a direct descendant of Sherley.
³ For further information or an appointment to utilize Archives resources, call AAF Curator Kent Carnie at (208) 362-3716 – also at [aaf@peregrinefund.org](mailto:AAF@peregrinefund.org).



Falconers attending the formal dedication of the new AAF facilities in March, 2003.



The Gerald D. and Kathryn S. Herrick Collections Building at The Peregrine Fund's World Center For Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho. Since 2002 The Archives has occupied the majority of the eastern half of this building.



Booker's Dozen 2004

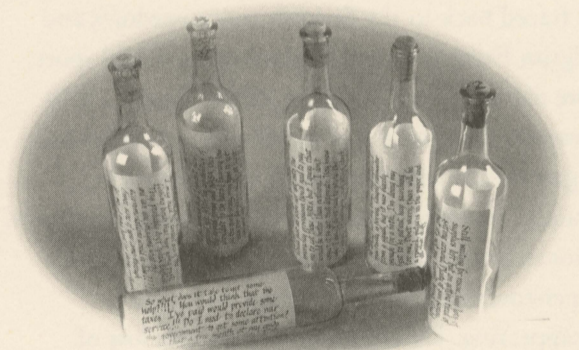
Booker's Dozen is the Idaho Center for the Book's biennial, traveling, juried exhibition of fourteen contemporary artists' and eccentric books designed and produced by Idahoans in unique, limited, or multiple editions.

What are eccentric books? They might be personified as being Auntie, wearing her mothball necklace to your wedding, or your cousin, the one who will be explained to you "when you're older." And artists' books? You need not be an artist to make an artists' book. Nor is a book that is "pretty" or letterpressed or in a unique or limited edition necessarily an "artists' book."

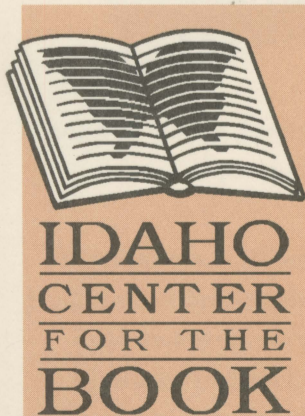
Then what is an artists' book? The book – not the maker – defines the term. Artists' books are the grandest inquisitors, questioning our definitions of what a book is or may be, out of what materials it might be made, how our stories, songs, images might be told or presented in it.

Spring/Summer Itinerary:

- April Coeur d'Alene Public Library
- May Idaho Center for the Book (Boise State University)
- June Boise Public Library
- July Ada Community Library (Boise/Ada County)
- August Marshall Public Library (Pocatello)
- September..... Idaho Falls Public Library



Save Me, Dave Kuwahara

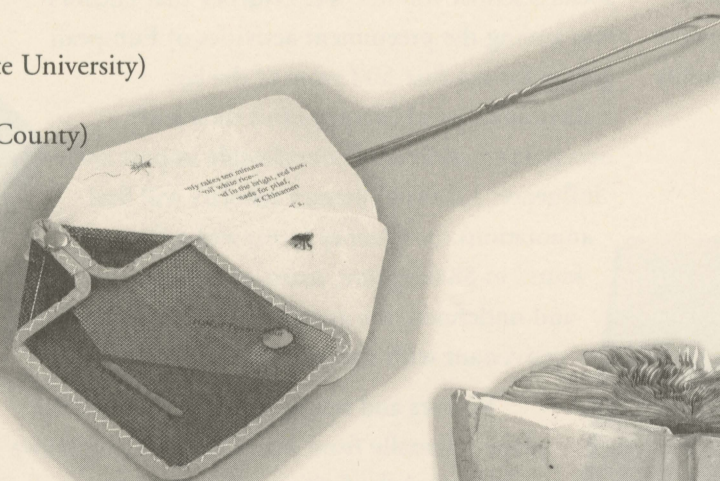


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Half of Twenty-Four, Wendy Venable



Tears, Barbara Michener



The Missing Month Or So, Stephanie Bacon