

Collections for the ages

Keeneland Library is one of the world's largest repositories of information related to Thoroughbred racing



Marc Manning/Keeneland



Straus

The importance of maintaining a library dates from Keeneland's early years. In 1939, Keeneland trustee and director W. Arnold Hanger provided the nucleus of the library with the donation of 2,300 rare books. In the spring of 1988, Princess Anne (left) visited the library, then located in the clubhouse, with officials Bill Greely (far left) and Ted Bassett. The new library, located adjacent to the Keene Barn and Entertainment Center, opened in 2002 and received the 2002 Special Eclipse Award.

belonged to the notorious but highly successful Colonel E.R. Bradley. Numerous persons involved in horse racing in the early 1940s had signed the silks and their signatures had been embroidered into the fabric.

From 1939, when Keeneland Association director W. Arnold Hanger donated 2,300 rare books to form the nucleus of a library that opened in 1940, the collection at the racecourse has grown to some 10,000 books, thousands of periodicals related to racing, some 250,000 photos and

negatives and 1,500 video cassettes. The collections also include some 11 million pages of the *Daily Racing Form*.

The three oldest books date to 1678. Among other volumes are stud books, veterinary books, novels, poetry, past performance information and bound periodicals. The library has a complete run of *The Spirit of the Times; Turf, Field and Farm; American Turf Register; The Thoroughbred Record* and *The Blood-Horse*. And of course the archives include much more, with memorabilia including a stopwatch used to time Man o' War.

By Maryjean Wall

Memories and antiques naturally go together. No surprise, then, that the Blue Grass Trust Antiques and Garden Show in March seemed the perfect occasion for the Keeneland Library to dust off a few of its fabulous archives. The display created for this show illustrated how much more diversified this library is than a place to house old racing books.

At the antiques show, Keeneland's 75-year anniversary unfolded in a timeline of materials that only Keeneland could have produced: racing trophies dating to Keeneland's predecessor track in Lexington (the Kentucky Association track), along with an antique jockey scale and a blanket belonging to Nashua, the most publicized racehorse of the early 1950s. The highlight among some 50 items undoubtedly was the historic set of racing silks that once



W. Arnold Hanger

Keeneland Library

The public may view any of these items during the library's regular operating hours, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. During the spring and fall race meetings, the library also is open during the same hours on Saturdays.

Old and new

The library occupies its own building, opened in July 2002, situated near the Keene Barn and Entertainment Center, seven-eighths of a mile removed from the grandstand and sales pavilion. The exterior of this building approximates the limestone exterior of the entertainment center, the grandstand and the clubhouse. The idea was to blend the building into the natural landscape as well as into Keeneland's traditional limestone appearance.

While the exterior is pleasing to the eye, the interior of the building brings first-time visitors to gaze in awe at the soaring cathedral ceilings, the arched windows, and the polished walnut cabinets and tables. Valuable old paintings from masters like Edward Troye line the walls; bronze works depicting Thoroughbred horses rest on tops of cabinets.

The atmosphere suggests the ambiance of old-style club rooms. However, modern technology blends unobtrusively with traditional library décor. Computer stations, micro-fiche readers, wireless Internet routers and a video station for viewing cassettes are tucked away among the overstuffed furniture, polished tables and library reading lamps. The library also embraces social networking through Twitter.

In keeping pace with technological trends, the Keeneland Library in cooperation with the University of Kentucky has digitized 150,000 pages of the *Daily Racing Form* ar-



The library frequently receives requests for copies of photographs from its photographic collections. This photo by Bert Morgan captures Seabiscuit winning the 1940 Santa Anita Handicap.

chives, posting these online at Keeneland.com/dfarchives/default.aspx.

"We probably will finish another 20,000 to 30,000 pages before we run out of funding," said Becky Ryder, director of the Keeneland Library. That number is far from the 11 million pages in the *Racing Form* archive, but digitizing the entire amount remains a goal high on the library's list.

Popular photography

Professional associations recognize the significance of the Keeneland Library. In January, Keeneland announced that the library had received a \$6,000 grant for preservation processing of materials. Part of the grant is going towards the archiving of the collection of some 4,000 caricatures of persons and horses by Pierre "Peb" Bellocq. Another portion has been allocated for rehousing a portion of the Bert Morgan photographic collection that largely represented New York racing scenes.

continued on page 18



The library's interior has soaring cathedral ceilings, arched windows, and polished walnut cabinets and tables. Valuable old paintings line the walls, and bronze works rest on tops of cabinets.



Thom Schneider of the University of Kentucky works on the project to digitize 150,000 pages of the library's *Daily Racing Form* archives. They are posted at Keeneland.com/dfarchives/default.aspx.

Collections for the ages

continued from page 17


Keeneland frequently receives requests for copies of photographs from the Morgan collection and its other photographic collections from researchers, authors, students, scholars, racing fans and periodicals. Ryder said she hopes to digitize finding aids for these collections, then link those finding aids to the contents, possibly in collaboration with the Kentuckiana Digital Library.

Another among the photographic collections is the work of Charles Christian Cook, who was one of the earliest action and aerial photographers. He began his work around 1900 and includes photos from World War I. Cook was the official photographer for Ringling Brothers Circus. During an era when winter racing was rare, Cook traveled the winter months with the circus, taking photos for publicity purposes. As a result, his collection includes many negatives of circus life. This has brought circus historians to the Keeneland Library.

Making use of these archives, nu-

merous authors have published books related to Thoroughbred racing. The number of magazine articles that begin with research in the library's archives are even more numerous. Persons looking for genealogical information also have used the Keeneland Library.

"The library is an excellent resource for people looking for information on all facets of racing and breeding," said Head Librarian Cathy Schenck. "We strive to keep alive the rich history and traditions of our sport for future generations. We are com-

mitted to making our collections available to the public." 

Maryjean Wall, Ph.D., is author of *How Kentucky Became Southern: A Tale of Outlaws, Horse Thieves, Gamblers, and Breeders*. A three-time winner of the Eclipse Award, she also is a member of the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame. She retired from her position as turf writer for the *Lexington Herald-Leader* and now teaches American history to college students.

Keeneland Library

Open to the public

Established: 1939

Location: Near the Keene Barn and Entertainment Center.

Take Gate 1 exit directly across Man o' War Boulevard.

Hours during race meetings:

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

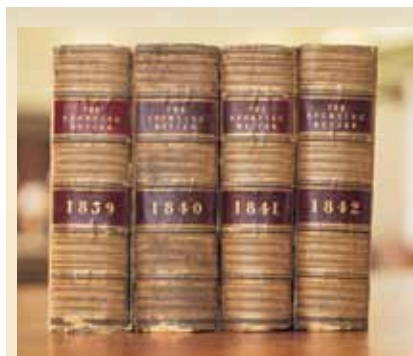
Monday through Saturday.

(859) 254-3412

Keeneland.com



The library is working to preserve the first 4,000 of the approximately 5,000 original pieces of artwork by popular caricaturist Pierre "Peb" Bellocq, who portrayed prominent members of the Thoroughbred industry, its athletes and major events over the years.



Select list of Keeneland Library collections

American Racing Manual,
1904-1996, 2000-2010

American Stud Books,
volume 1 to the present

American Turf Register, 15 volumes,
1829-1845

The Blood-Horse, 1929 to the present

Daily Racing Form (Chicago edition),
1896-present

Daily Racing Form Chart Books,
1896-1980; microfiche of same,

1981-1996; CD-Rom, 1997 to the present

French Stud Book, volume 1-41

General Stud Book, volume 1-42

Goodwin's Turf Guide (charts), 1882-1908

Krik's Guide (charts), 1877-1884

Ruff's Guide to the Turf, 1885-1995

The Morning Telegraph, 1933-1971

The Spirit of the Times, 1836-1903

The Sporting Magazine, 1792-1869

The Thoroughbred Record, 1875-1990

The Thoroughbred Times,

1985 to the present

Timeform Racehorses

of 1943 to the present

Turf and Sport Digest, 1928-1989

Turf, Field and Farm, 1865-1902

Weatherby's Racing Calendar, 1773-1971

Also:

Papers of the late **Joe Hirsch**, noted reporter and columnist for *Daily Racing Form*

Collection of caricatures by **Pierre "Peb"**

Bellocq, 1954 to the present

Charles Christian Cook negative collection, 1900-1952

Bernard Stanley "Bert" Morgan negative collection, 1935-1961

Joel Clyne "Skeets" Meadors negative collection, 1947-1967

John C. Hemment collection, photos 1890-1910