

# Keeneland Library



Keeneland/Lee Thomas

The Keeneland Library, established in 1939, is a public research/reference library that is one of the world's largest repositories of information related to the Thoroughbred. Located in a 10,000-square-foot building that opened in July 2002, the Library houses nearly 30,000 books, approximately 1 million photographic negatives and thousands of newspaper and magazine articles about all aspects of the equine industry. Primary resources include the Maryjean Wall Papers, Joe Hirsch Papers and James E. "Ted" Bassett III Papers.

Thousands of racing fans, journalists, writers, college professors, historians and others seeking information for articles, books or other projects and for their personal use have performed research at the Library or requested information from its staff. The Library also lends materials to area museums, hosts a lecture series and works to expand the collection and its availability to the public.

Visitors can trace Keeneland's history by examining the Library's scrapbooks, which contain photographs from the track's inception and depict many milestones from major construction projects to visits by royalty, celebrities and former U.S. Presidents. A museum area near the

entrance exhibits valuable racing artifacts and various collectibles. In addition, a portion of Keeneland's equine art collection is on display.

In 1939, Keeneland Trustee and Director William Arnold Hanger provided the nucleus for the Library's collection with the acquisition and donation of the 2,300-volume Turf collection of Robert James Turnbull. Today, the Library's collections include:

- More than 18,000 glass plate negatives of Charles Christian Cook, one of the first photographers in the U.S. to specialize in racing and race track scenes. The negatives, acquired in 1954, focus on the early 1900s through the 1930s.
- More than 200,000 film negatives of racing, finish line and winner's circles shots of the 1930s-1960s from photographer Bert T. Morgan.
- Photographic negative collections from Joel Clyne "Skeets" Meadors Collection. Meadors was office manager of Mereworth Farm in Lexington from 1943-1947. From 1947 until his death in 1987, he was a full-time photographer, specializing in conformation images of stallions, mares and yearlings in the Bluegrass.

- Some 12,000 slides along with print photographs and track programs of prominent Southern California photographer Katey Barrett. Acquired in December 2014, the material represents the Library's first collection of color slides that extensively document racing in California from the 1970s to the present.
- More than 5,000 volumes of *Daily Racing Form* dating back to 1896 that includes three editions of the publication. In 2000, the *Form* donated this priceless archive, which included a complete file of the American Racing Manual and a large run of *The Morning Telegraph*, the predecessor of the Eastern edition of the *Form*. *The Morning Telegraph* touted itself as "America's Oldest Authority on Motion Pictures, Theatre and Turf," and featured headlines from the track juxtaposed with photos of Hollywood starlets.
- Approximately 3,000 pieces of humorous caricatures and equine cartoons by Pierre Bellocq, the internationally celebrated artist better known as "Peb." He donated the material, representing nearly a half-century of work, in 2009.
- Approximately 10,000 volumes and 20 file cabinets of photographs and historical research material that comprised the library of *Thoroughbred Times*, a weekly industry publication. The Keeneland Library acquired the material in 2013.

The Library's recent acquisitions include:

- Scrapbooks and other collectibles about Racing Hall of Famer Spectacular Bid, winner of Keeneland's Blue Grass (G1), Kentucky Derby (G1) and Preakness (G1) in 1979, maintained by Harry and Teresa Meyerhoff of Hawksworth Farm;
- Copies from 1820-1829 of *American Farmer*, an important agriculture publication of the 19th century that provided a researcher with information about the prominent stallion Lexington; and
- 1859-1862 broadsides from the Kentucky Association track located near downtown Lexington from 1826-1931.

## Keeneland Library

### Hours:

Open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. ET.

### Website:

[Keeneland.com/keeneland-library](http://Keeneland.com/keeneland-library)