

**DONATION TO:**

**THE ARCHIVES OF FALCONRY**

HARD BACK BOOK: ***OBSERVATIONS ON MODERN FALCONRY***  
By **RONALD STEVENS**

FEATURING: 9 ORIGINAL PENCIL DRAWINGS  
By **JOHN O. LANGFORD**

DONATED BY: STEVE PLATT  
**Lander, WY**

In the summer of 1975, while working as a summer intern for the New Mexico Game & Fish Dept. out of Santa Fe, NM, I visited John Langford in Albuquerque. John was a little down on his luck and I offered some money which he declined. One of us suggested he do some pencil drawings & we settled on drawing them in a falconry book I had with me, *Observations On Modern Falconry*. I also left one of my falconry journals with photographic prints glued to some pages. What I later retrieved was a wonderful collection of 9 drawings (i.e., 3 gyrfalcon, 2 peregrine falcon, & 4 prairie falcon). My intent was to help a friend out, not to get John to do drawings. The situation, however, sparked the existence of the 9 works which should be preserved.

Later that summer, Frank Bond viewed the book with drawings and, at some time, Frank mentioned the book to Kent Carnie. Once Kent was the Founding Curator of *The Archives of American Falconry* (today *The Archives of Falconry [TAF]*), he has consistently, & yet politely, asked me to donate the book to the *TAF*, every time I have seen him. I am donating the book through the AOF in honor of John, Frank, Kent, & the art and practice of hawking.

**POSTSCRIPT:** I met John in my native state of Oklahoma in the early 1970's when he worked in Norman, OK, for the Office Of Geologic Survey (today the USGS) where he drew topographic maps. We shared an interest in both raptor biology & falconry. Later, I was working on a MS degree in Zoology & my thesis project was to locate & map Prairie Falcon & other raptor nest locations in the Upper Cimarron River drainage at the intersection of the states of OK, NM, & CO. John had previously spent time in the Black Mesa area of Cimarron Co., OK, & had located numerous raptor nest locations, including those of Prairie Falcons. John had been considering all the things he wanted to do that his job would not permit. So in the spring of 1974 we struck out to the west & enjoyed a wonderful adventurous summer during which we located & documented 21 nesting pairs of Prairie Falcon & many other creatures.

**A TRIBUTE TO THE ART OF:**

**JOHN O. LANGFORD**

**BY:**

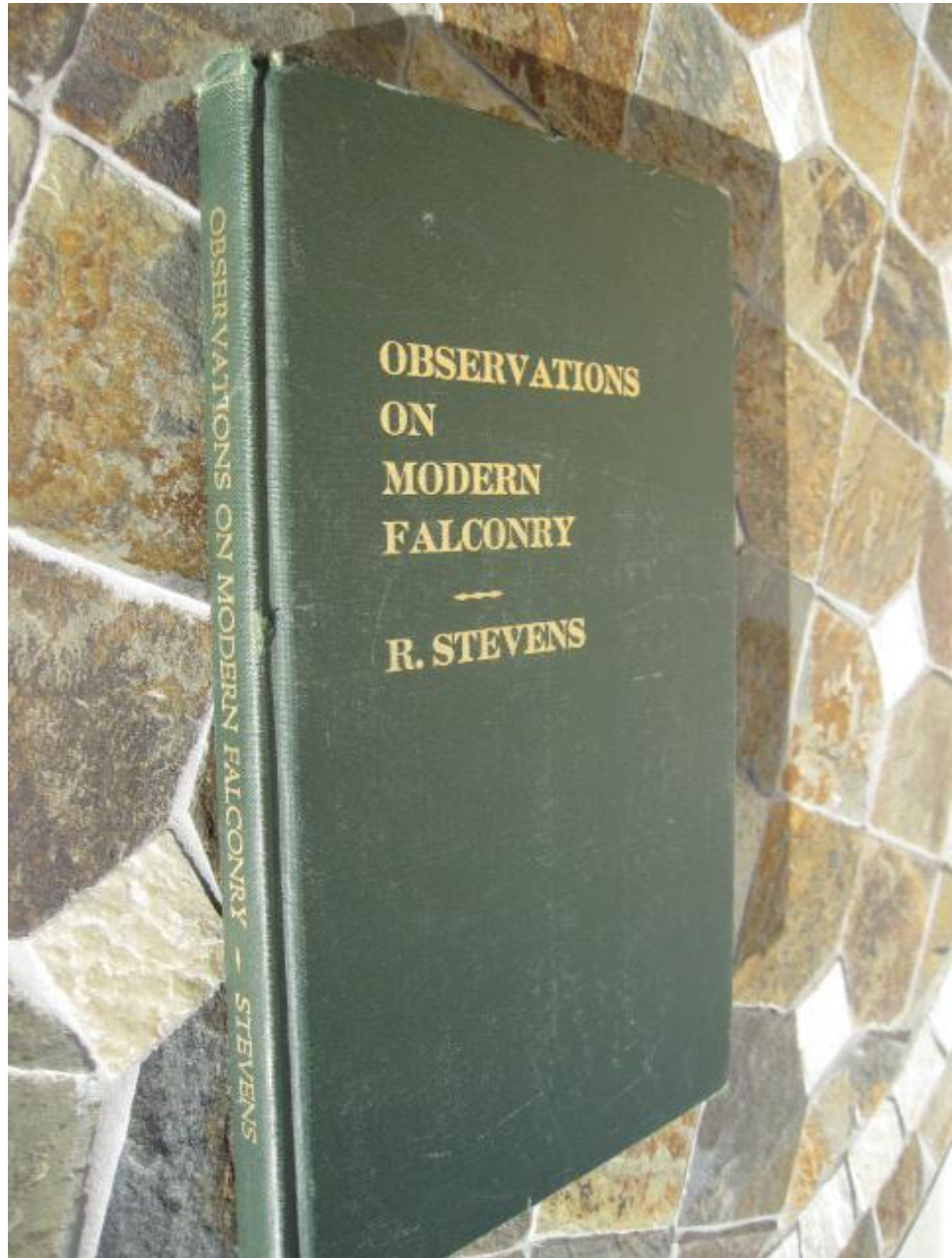
**Frank M. Bond**  
**Santa Fe, NM**

John Langford produced an extraordinary set of pencil drawings of falcons in Steve Platt's copy of Ronald Stevens' extraordinary *Observations on Modern Falconry*. He drew these remarkable figures throughout the book when he was living in New Mexico in 1975. Steve, John and I spent some wonderful periods together during that summer.

I preface my thoughts about John Langford with my sense of the importance of *Observations on Modern Falconry*. Ronald Stevens wrote one of the most important books on the art by virtue of the observations he makes on many of the most sophisticated aspects of falconry. I call it the Ph. D. dissertation of falconry. Recently Ken Riddle achieved the same level of sophisticated observation with his *The Art of Falconry from Arabia Westward*, published some 50 Years Later. Both works are valuable only to a falconer with considerable experience, and particularly one who has the capacity and willingness to really think about what he is doing to prepare. Also, the falconer must be willing to attempt to deal with a gyrfalcon, which at first seems fairly easy, but later challenges every bit of knowledge of the experienced falconer.

John Langford, as an artist and observer of falcons, brings to his medium this same level of sophistication. He does not merely portray the bird; he captures the very essence of the bird, from its mood to its disposition. Like Stevens and Riddle as authors, few artists achieve that level of portrayal. Some of David Reid-Henry's paintings come to mind, as does George Lodge in his "Japanese" period. Just by his very nature, John is a sensitive man, disposed to nothing less than perfection, but going beyond perfection to capture the abstraction of the complexity of the birds we love.

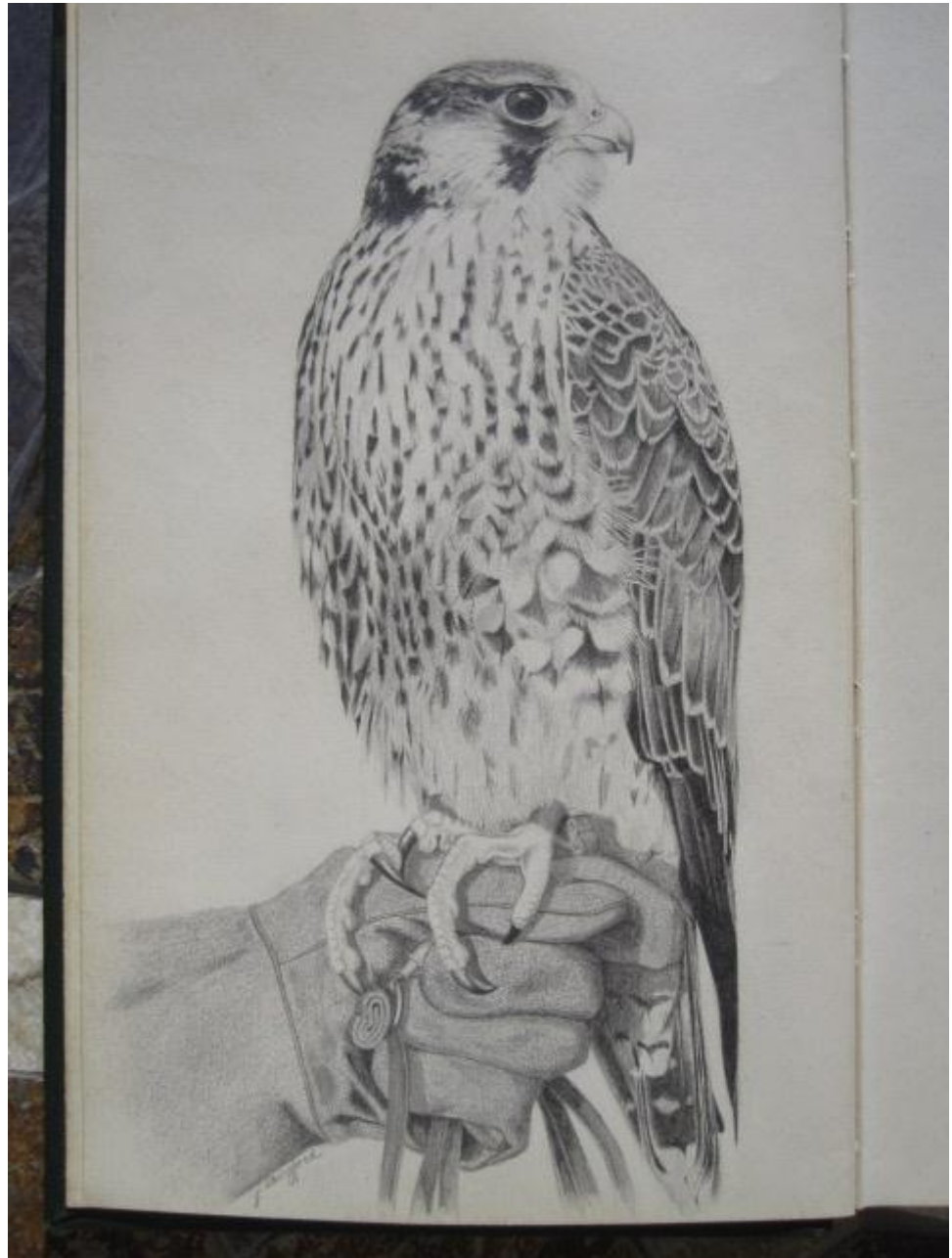
As I think about John's work, I have before me a pencil drawing John did in 1974 of a prairie falcon, a straight on partial body drawing in front of a rocky cliff. It is extraordinary. I hope that I paid John for the pencil drawing, but likely as not he just gave it to me. I look at the head study of Angel, done on page 94 of Steve Platt's copy of Ronald Stevens' book, and I see the hand of a man who really understood what he was seeing and the capacity to present his own observation of the creature that captured his attention. John's drawings add remarkably to our falconry heritage by combining his skills as an artist with Ronald Stevens' lucid comments on the value of falconry to our patrimony.



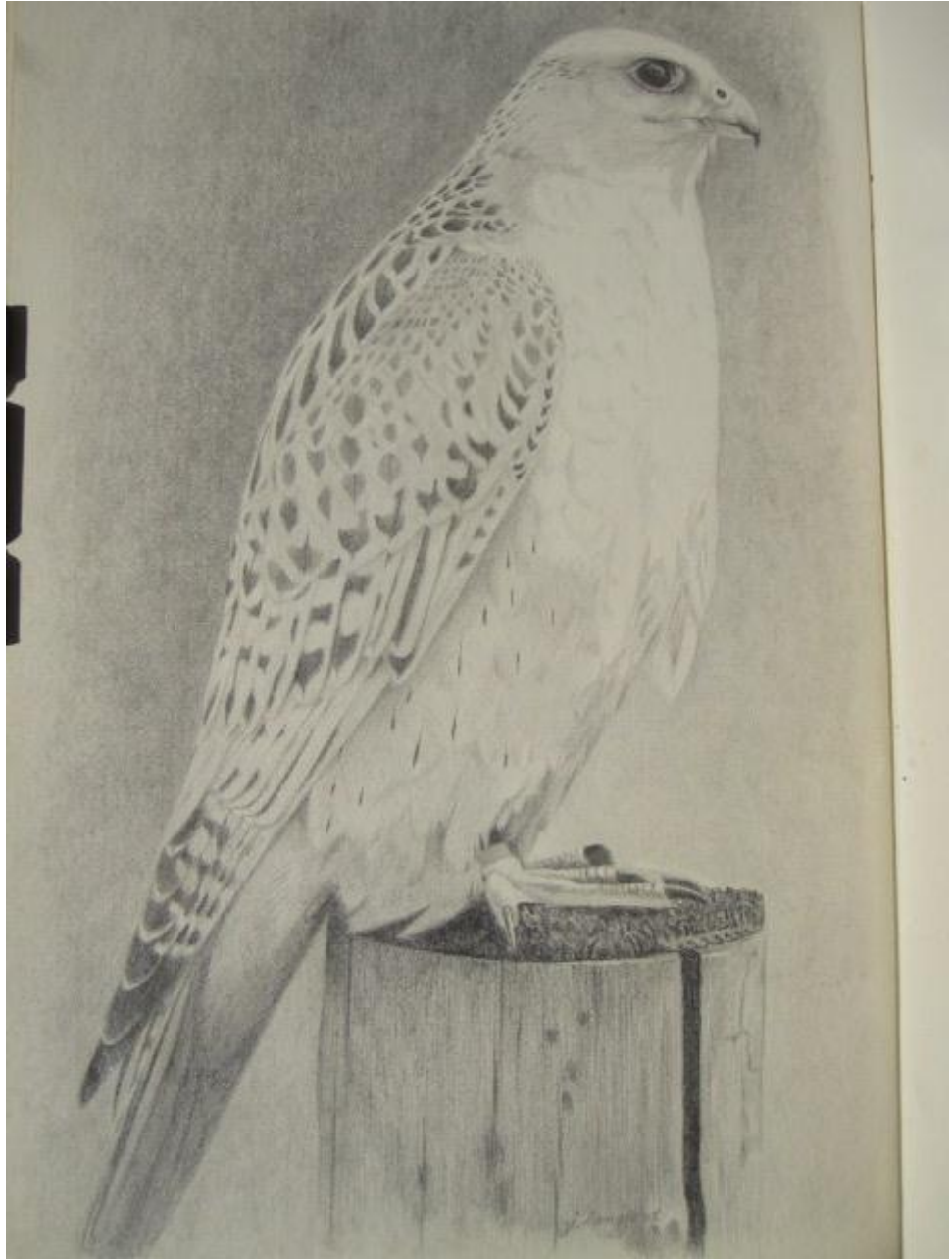
**Figure 1. BOOK: *Observations On Modern Falconry* by Ronald Stevens. First Hard Back Printing (olive cover; original printing was a paperback in 1956).**



**Figure 2. Steve Platt with passage Gyrfalcon (Angel) on fist (03/1974). CONTENTS front ice page.**

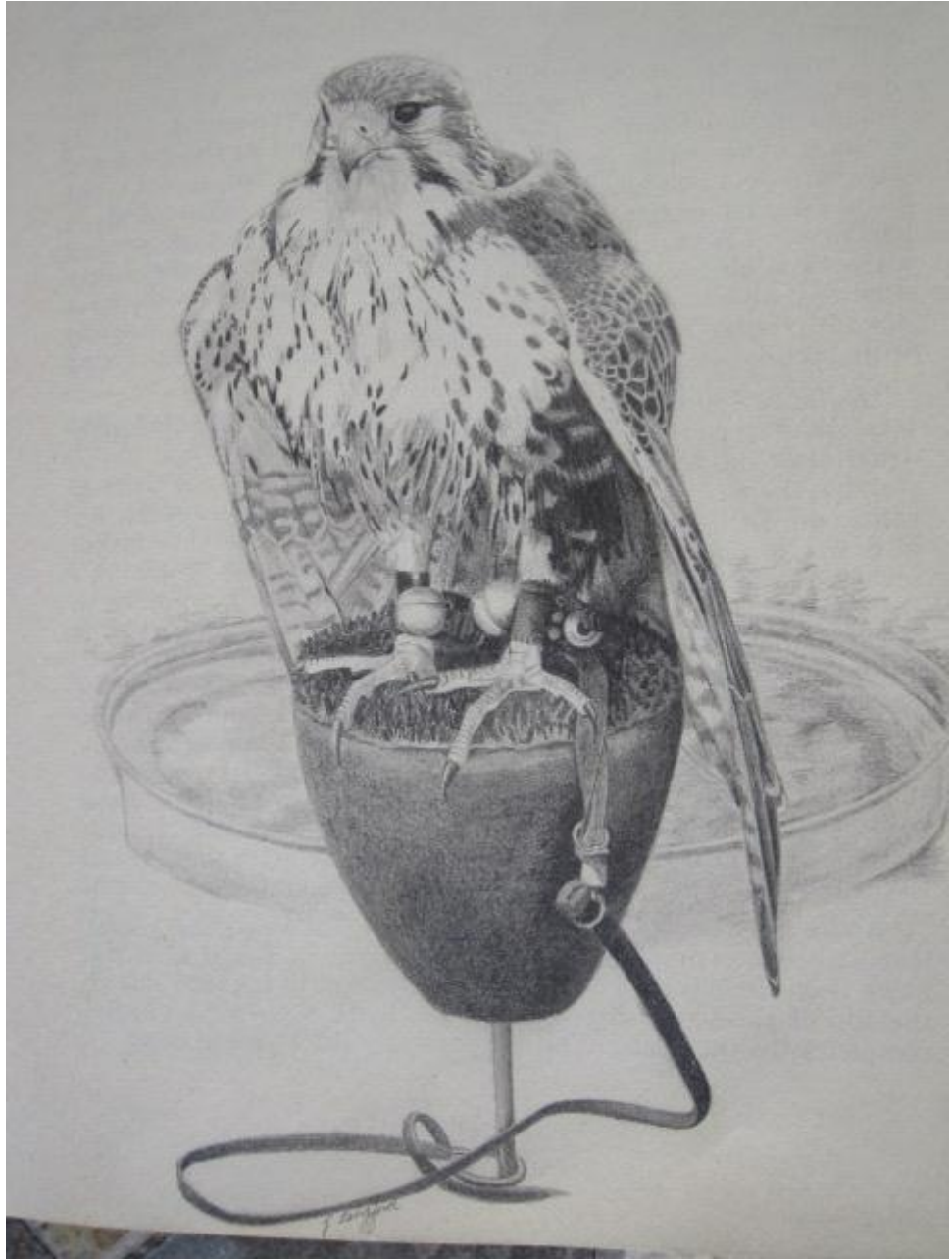


**Figure 3. Immature Peregrine Falcon on fist (subject date unknown).  
FORWARD front ice page.**



**Figure 4. Intermewed Gyrfalcon (Angel) on block (03/1974).  
THE MEWS front ice page.**





**Figure 5. Intermewed eyass Prairie Falcon (Dreamer) on block after a bath (03/1974). WEATHERING ENCLOSURE—BATH—BLOCKS, page 15.**



**Figure 6. Passage Prairie Falcon from life in Albuquerque,  
NM (Summer 1975).  
HACK HUT—HACK GROUND, page 23.**







**Figure 7. Eyass Prairie Falcons on an eyrie ledge.  
(subject date unknown).  
EYASSES COMPARED WITH PASSAGERS AND HAGGARDS, page 43.**

of it. So, with her, you will have to be extra careful for ever after-  
wards.



**Figure 8. Passage Peregrine Falcon (Queeny) in hood (unknown date). Hood made of deer skin covered with black suede made by F.M. Erhard). HOODING AND MANNING, page 61.**





**Figure 9. Dreamer with loaned neck-mounted transmitter gorging on an American Widgeon (10/1973). The receiver, a portable shortwave radio along that day, is currently on display at the AOF & was donated by F.M. Erhard. HAWKING, page 88.**

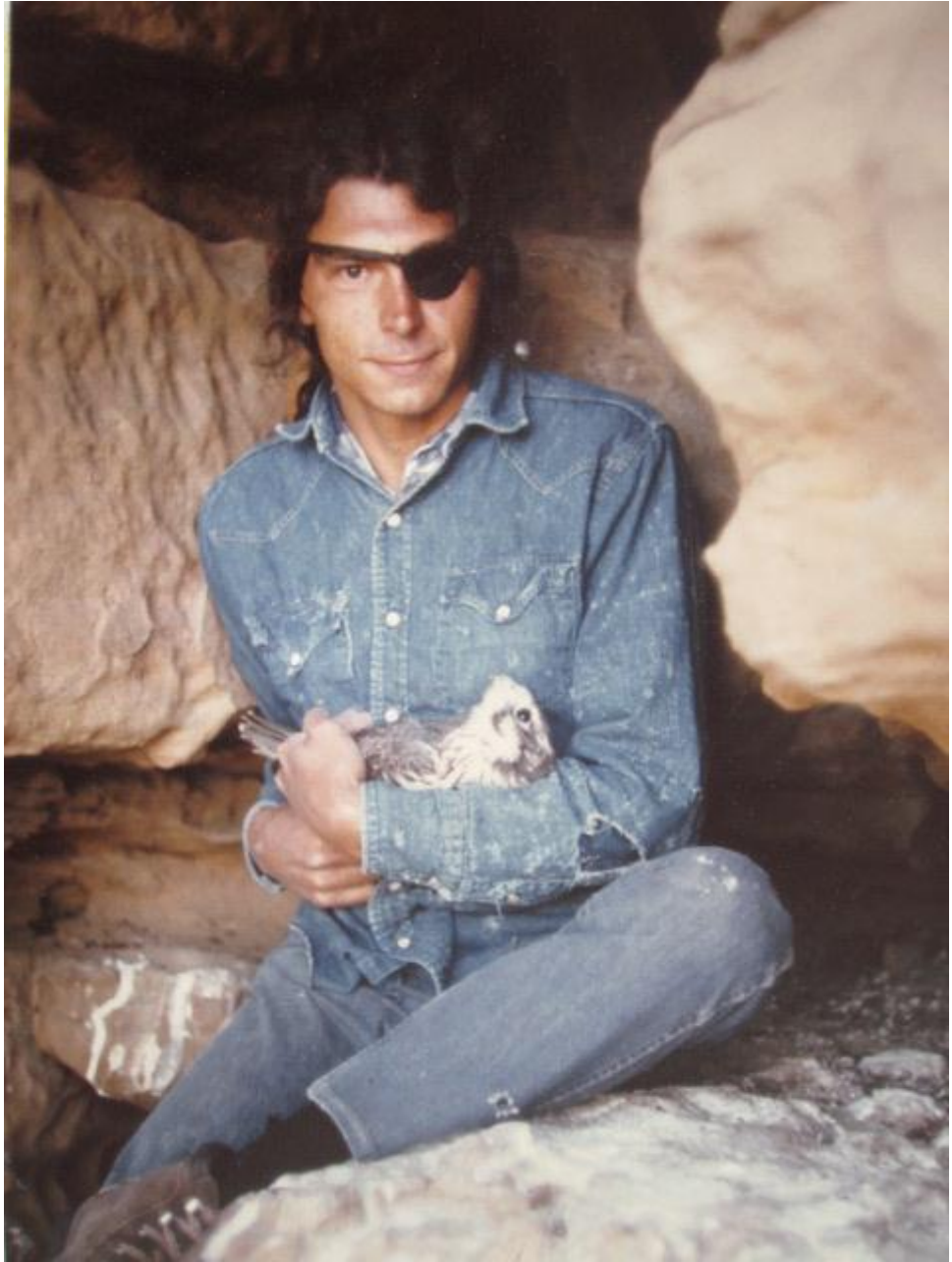




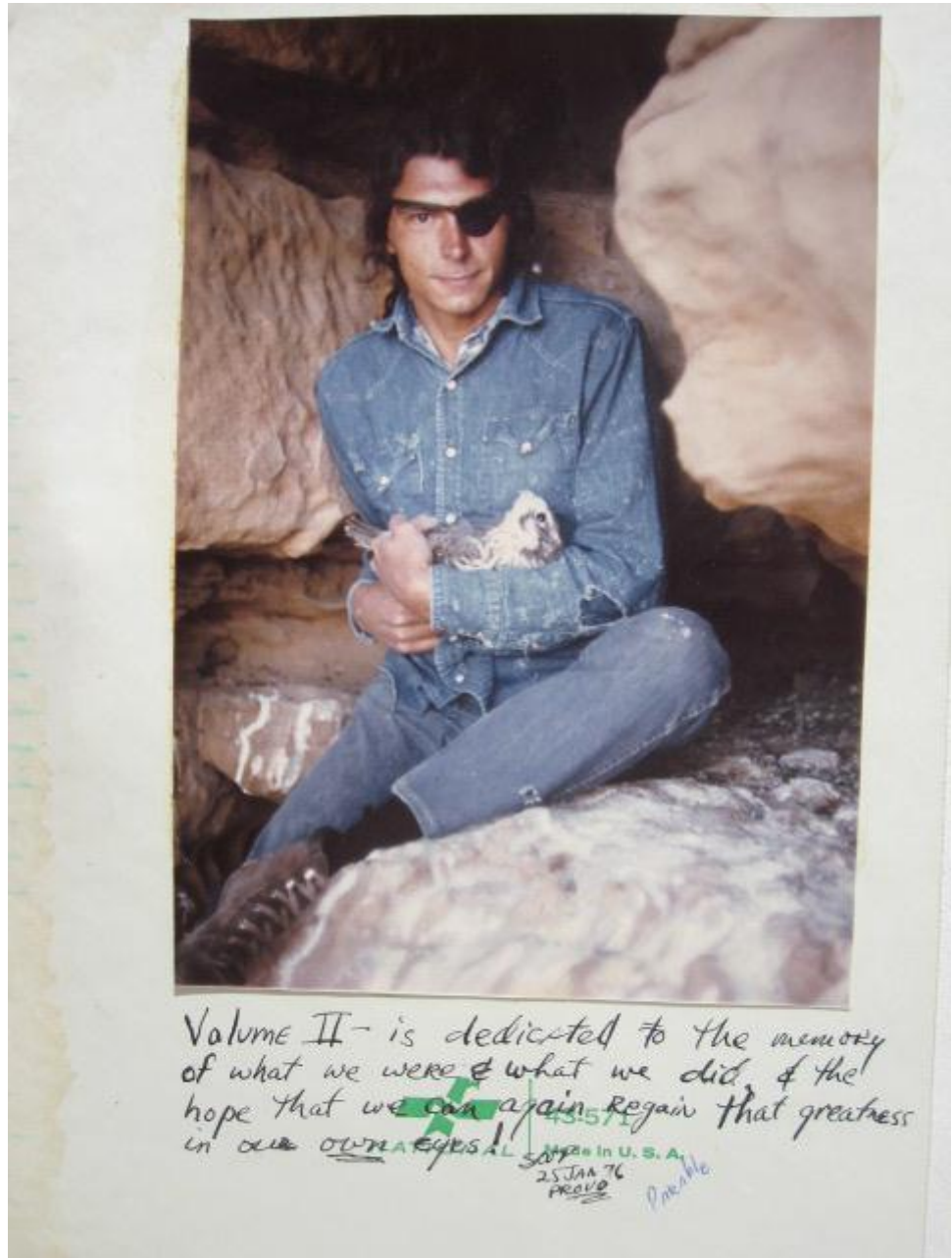


**Figure 10. Intermewed Gyrfalcon (Angel) head study (Fall 1974).  
THE MOULT, page 94.**





**Figure 11. John Langford sitting in a Prairie Falcon eyrie, holding a nearly fledged fledgling eyass. It was grabbed for banding (Upper Cimarron River Drainage, Los Animus Co., CO). (Photo by Steve Platt [06/1974]).**



Volume II - is dedicated to the memory  
of what we were & what we did, & the  
hope that we can again regain that greatness  
in our own eyes!

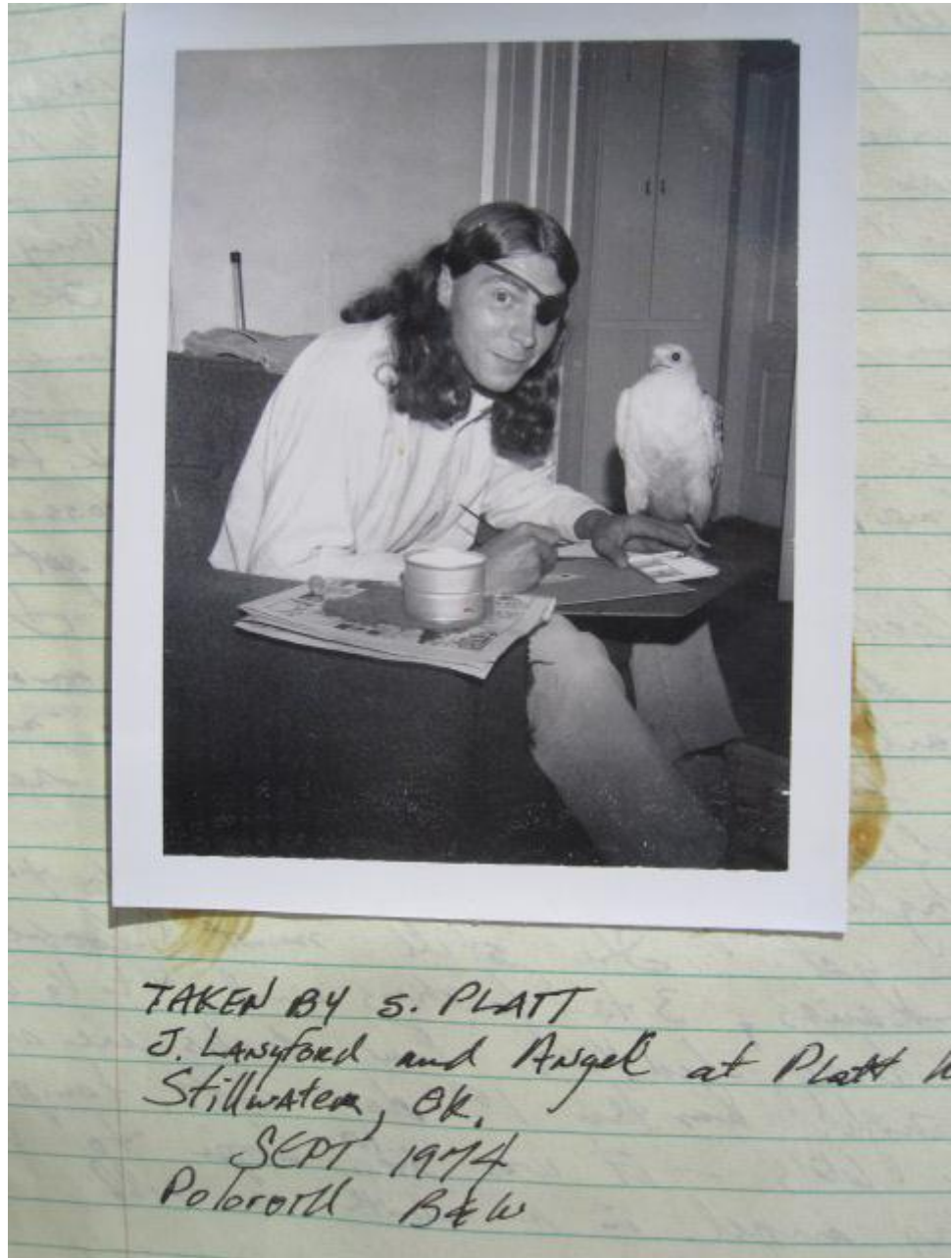
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Figure 12. Picture of John Langford as mounted in one of Steve Platt's falconry journals.



**Figure 13. John Langford sitting with brush, water colors, and medium board with subject (Angel) in Stillwater, OK. (Photo by Steve Platt 09/1974).**





TAKEN BY S. PLATT  
J. Langford and Angel at Platt's  
Stillwater, Ok.  
SEPT 1974  
Poloroid B&W

Figure 14. Second picture of John Langford as mounted in one of Steve Platt's falconry journals.