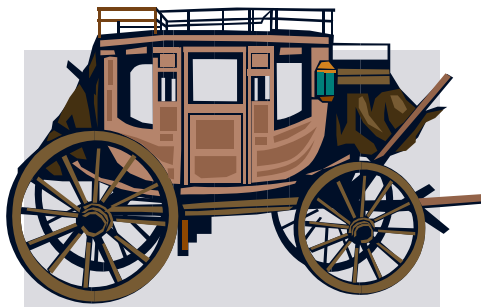


RECOLLECTIONS



JACK D. RITTENHOUSE

Boy Scout
Magician
Hobo
Oil Industry Publicist
Publisher (Stage Coach Press)
UNM Press Editor
Rare Book Dealer
Historian of New Mexico

By
**JACK DEVERE
RITTENHOUSE**
(1912 –1991)
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Edited and Redacted from his published article
“The West Is Wider Than You Think”
(AB Bookman’s Weekly, October 10, 1983)
Original Copyright ©1983

Composited, Illustrated, and Edited By Harry Briley

Revised 12/23/2016

Copyright © 2014-2016, Harry Briley Living Trust
PO Box 2913, Livermore, California 94551-2913
brileyh@comcast.net

Contents

CHAPTER 16: The West is Wide	5
Define “West”	5
Icarian Treasures	6
Tilting at Don Quixote	11
The Millionth Book	12
A Bookman’s Life	14

Figures

Figure 1 - Voyage en Icarie, Fifth Edition, 1848 and Cabet (en.wikipedia.org)	8
Figure 2 - PPM and Spanish Southwest	13
Figure 3 - Hakluyt Voyages, 1582 and 1598 (www.hakluyt.com)	13
Figure 4 - AB Advertisement - 1983	14

CHAPTER 16: The West is Wide

[It seems appropriate to insert a short sample of Jack's published articles and especially so since his writings for magazines were so ephemeral. To preserve some of his professional thoughts late in life, I redacted most of his published article called "**The West Is Wider than You Think**" (AB Bookman's Weekly, October 10, 1983) – Ed.]

Define "West"

Back east where they think first of Henry and William (and not Frank and Jesse) when they speak of the James boys, they regard the American West as a limited field. Students at one Ivy League university speak of their Western American history course as [merely] "cowboys and Indians," although that school has one of the greatest libraries of Western books. The West is wider than many realize.

On a June [1982] book-hunting safari at the great antiquarian book fair in London's Europa Hotel, I often met polite rebuffs when I sought books about the American West.

"Sorry, we have none," was the usual reply.

*"Do you have anything on Mormons," I asked, "raising sheep, or Yorkshire miners? They interest our people in the West and often have a section on America. Perhaps you have a copy of **La Perouse**, who visited our northwest coast, or Hakluyt's **Voyages**, which includes some of the first accounts in English about our Southwest, or Ramusio's **Delle Navigazioni** in the 1556 edition?"*

"Why, yes, I have one or two things in that line, but I never thought of them as Western Americana."

One of the greatest pleasures in being a Western Americana specialist is tracing a Western topic back to its antecedents, and then passing along the findings to a serious collector or [astute] librarian.

I recall three experiences of the chase. Jake Zeitlin, who can multiply my three incidents by hundreds of his own, graciously called one of my tales a demonstration of "creative bookselling." At my age, I gain nothing by boasting, so these incidents may help others recognize how new opportunities arise.

In 1976, I promised my wife Charlotte a trip to any European city. She chose Paris. I demurred, saying there was little Western Americana found in France, but she held me to my promise. Therefore, I searched about for Western books available only in French. I went through bibliographies by Wright Howes, Henry Wagner, Frank Monaghan, and others, and [wrote an individual search card per desired title].

Icarian Treasures

With my dormant college French, I knew enough to ask questions but seldom understood answers. I wrote up a form letter in French, studied world antiquarian book-dealers directories, and requested catalogues. As my card file grew, the name of Etienne Cabet appeared frequently. He was a French utopian socialist, active in the 1830s and 1840s. He wrote a utopian novel in 1840 called **Voyage en Icarie** that created a wide following.

While planning our [1977] Paris trip, I met an old friend at a library conference, Pearce Grove, who recently became head librarian at Western Illinois University at Macomb. Pearce asked for suggested unusual collections that might add distinction to his library.

I asked him how far Macomb was from Nauvoo, and he guessed at 50 miles. I told him how Cabet's followers urged him to start a colony to make the Icarian story a reality. They tried in 1848 to settle in Texas and in 1849 moved north to take over [abandoned] Mormon buildings at Nauvoo. Dissension and the death of Cabet caused splinter colonies to start up at Cheltenham, Missouri; at Corning, Iowa; and at Icaria Speranza near Cloverdale, California.

There were no major collection in America about Cabet and his Icarian colonies, although Lee Ash's excellent guide, **Subject Collections**, showed some holdings at the Lilly Library and at Southern Methodist University. There was a fine collection at Southern Illinois University. There were many books and booklets published in France about the Icarian venture but these had not yet become fashionable among American collectors and might yet be found at moderate prices [for serious collectors].

Grove went back to Macomb and broached the idea. He found among his faculty some descendants of the Nauvoo Icarians. There was enthusiasm among the history, French, and sociology professors. Therefore, he commissioned me to buy, within moderation, anything I could find in Paris dealing with Cabet and his Icarians.

However, I did not [intimately] know the literature nor did I know Paris bookshops. I read what I could and found two major books with long bibliographies, which I copied. Using one doctoral dissertation on the subject, I located its author through academic directories whom I telephoned in Michigan. Since I assumed he had studied at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, could he recommend any Paris bookshops? He named two, including Jean-Jacques Magis on the Rue Guenegaud.

Having only a week in Paris, I hit the ground running, knew where to go, and carried a list of books sought. One bookseller told where to get microfilms of Cabet's newspaper and other booksellers likewise helped. I came back with a small case of Icarian treasures.

Meanwhile, Pearce Grove busily established the Center for Icarian Studies at Western Illinois University Library, organized a group of Icarian descendants, and assigned a competent curator. He gathered papers, pictures, microfilms, and financial support. The three years' work on Icaria sparked simply because Charlotte wanted to visit Paris. Moreover, it showed that the West was [significantly] more than cowboys and Indians.

Two Wikipedia articles (edited and comingled here) gives some background:

The Man and his Books

Étienne Cabet (1788-1856) was a French philosopher and utopian socialist. He founded the Icarian movement to replace capitalist production with workers' cooperatives. He appealed to many artisans undercut by factories.

Influenced by Robert Owen, he wrote Voyage et aventures de lord William Carisdall en Icarie ("Travel and Adventures of Lord William Carisdall in Icaria") (1840), which depicted a utopia where a democratically elected body controlled all economic activity and closely supervised all social life. The nuclear family remained the only semi-independent unit. Icaria was the name of his society.

Although regarded today as a "plodding melodrama" in which the reader was inundated with "tedious details of incidental aspects of Icarian life," Cabet's book was well received, with the outlined principles viewed by many workers as a blueprint for advancement to a glorious future.

Multiple editions of the book quickly followed. In March 1841, Cabet launched a monthly magazine, Le Populaire, and an annual Icarian Almanac to propagandize and organize the new political movement's supporters.

Cabet's notions influenced other socialists, notably Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. These writers ignored Cabet's book Le vrai christianisme suivant Jésus Christ (The real Christianity according to Jesus Christ) in five volumes. This book described Christ's mission as social equality and contrasted primitive Christianity to disparaged ecclesiasticism. The Icarian colonies practiced no religion, but on Sundays, people voluntarily met informally to discuss Vraie Christianisme and other books, which formed their dominant religious thought.

In 1848, after conversations with Robert Owen and Owen's attempts to found a commune in Texas, Cabet gathered a group of followers from across France and traveled to organize an Icarian community in Texas [failed] and Illinois [success].

Cabet began as the sect's unquestioned leader, a status freely granted to him by those inspired by the man's writings. This stood in marked contradiction to the democratic ideals of the community. Cabet thus in 1850 proposed a constitution with an elected President and an elected Board of Directors.

Recurring feuds in the courts with both current and former followers undercut his work. Nauvoo expelled Cabet for trying to re-assert his authority and he led 170 followers [40% of colony] in October 1856 to St. Louis to establish a new colony.

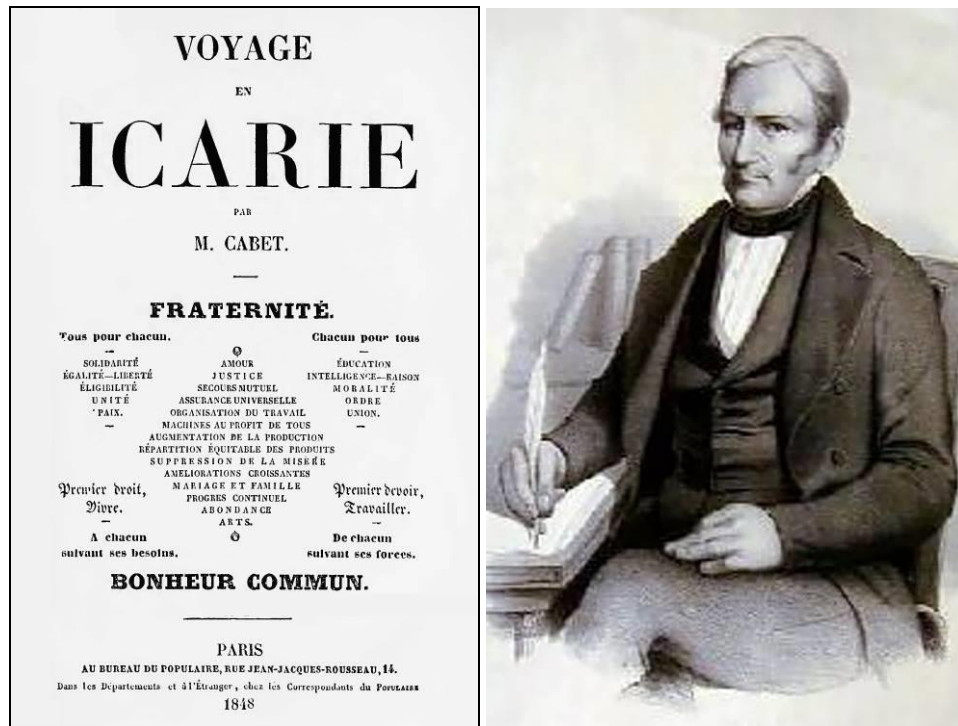


Figure 1 - Voyage en Icarie, Fifth Edition, 1848 and Cabet (en.wikipedia.org)

The Movement and the Colonies

The Icarians attempted to put Cabet's economic and social theories into practice in the United States. The movement split several times due to disagreements.

Nauvoo, Illinois, was founded in 1839 for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. By 1845, Nauvoo hosted 15,000 people, dwarfing Chicago's 8,000 inhabitants. Under threat, most members left in 1846 for Salt Lake City. They later sold their land to the Icarians. [That tiny remnant from the failed colony in Texas] arrived in March 1849. They purchased several buildings, grounds, houses, cattle and the like. The burned-out Mormon Temple enclosed four acres which the Icarians intended to repurpose as a school.

Nauvoo hosted the first working Icarian Community. They immediately adopted the charter and structure described in Voyage en Icarie. They admitted new members by a majority vote by adult males, after living in the commune for four months, forfeiting all personal property, and pledging \$80. Every family used the same amount of space (two rooms in an apartment building), and were allowed the same amount of furniture [and thus similar to the Hutterites in Indiana.]

At age four, children lived at a boarding school, and visited parents only on Sundays. This fostered a love for community "without developing special affection for parents", theoretically instrumental for a socialist society. [Many agricultural communes in Israel engaged in this same non-parental child rearing.]

With the basic shelter immediately settled and the improved location, the Nauvoo

colony developed into a successful agricultural community using rented farmland. They established a sawmill, a flourmill, workshops, schools and a theater.

*By 1855, Icarian community had 500 members and cultural life thrived. They held regular band concerts and theatre productions. Their library had 4,000 books, the biggest in Illinois at the time. The community distributed a biweekly newspaper titled *Colonie Icarienne* publishing in French, English, and German.*

Cabet sailed to France to fight fraud charges for 18 months. He attempted to save the struggling community when he returned in 1852. He pushed through rules for silence in the workshops and made unpopular restrictions against "tobacco, hard liquor, complaints about the food, and hunting and fishing 'for pleasure'."

He moved to reestablish his decision-making authority, proposing in December 1855 to revise the constitution for a [more] powerful President. This new scheme would let him control all aspects of the community's government. This position was anathema to those deeply inspired by the Great French Revolution and its democratic ideals. Cabet felt his proposal essential to the preservation of the community's moral fiber. They expelled him and 170 members left with him.

With the loss of 40% of its members and unable to raise financial support in France, the Nauvoo colony ran into financial difficulties and disbanded in 1860. Many remaining members of the colony joined the parallel colony in Iowa.

Back in 1852, Icarians purchased land in Adams County, Iowa to form a second settlement. The settlers arrived with nothing but their skills along with a \$20,000 debt. Their 4,000 acres gave shelter first in mud hovels and then in crude log cabins. This colony near Corning operated under charter by the state of Iowa in 1860. The community prospered during the Civil War by selling food at good prices and they paid their collective debt by 1870.

In 1874, Charles Nordhoff visited that colony to research such communities for a book. He found a two-story building, 60 feet by 24, which served as a collective dining hall, washhouse, and school. A dozen cheaply built frame houses sheltered 65 members in 11 families. The colony sold 2,500 pounds of wool annually, as well as cattle and hogs and the product of its manufacturing facilities.

Nordhoff wrote: "The children look remarkably healthy, and on Sunday were dressed with great taste. The living is the plainest. In the dining-hall, they assemble at tables without cloth and drink out of tin cups."

The group used an elaborate constitution written by Cabet, "which lays down with great care the equality and brotherhood of mankind, and the duty of holding all things in common; abolishes servitude or service (or servants); commands marriage under penalties; provides for education; and requires majority rule." Governance was based upon weekly meetings of all adults each Saturday, with a

President elected annually as formal head but officers for the conduct of meetings elected each week. There were four elected directors, in charge of agriculture, clothing, industry, and construction, respectively.

Nordhoff saw no formal religious observances. Instead, "Sunday was a day of rest from labor, when the young men go out with guns, and the society sometimes had theatrical representations, or music, or some kind of amusement. The principle was to let each one do as he pleases." The colony held an informal gathering known as the "Cours Icariens" ("Icarian Course") on Sunday afternoons. These gatherings included quiet games and conversation.

In the 1870s, the Corning colony split over allowing women to vote. The losing but women-favoring faction moved eight frame houses about one mile southeast from the original colony. The former community became bankrupt in 1878. The southeast community established a new constitution in 1879 and disbanded voluntarily in 1898. The members chose to integrate into the surrounding towns.

This Iowa colony was the longest-lived non-religious communal experiment in America. An exhibit about the Icarians is in the Adams County Hall lobby in Corning, and a living history site is being rebuilt where they lived until 1898.

en.wikipedia.org

Western Illinois University defined their significant Icarian archive in 2016 as:

The Center for Icarian Studies was established in 1977 to bring together material dealing with or written by this utopian community. It has several collections, containing letters, manuscripts, personal writings, photographs and information on or by selected members and aspects of life within the community.

Archives and Special Collections Department, University Library,
Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL
www.wiu.edu/libraries/archives/icarian_center/

Tilting at Don Quixote

Some books tied to the American West even though they may not be about the West. In 1977, Alan Clark of the Albuquerque Public Library wanted to mount a display for children showing worldwide interest in **Don Quixote** by Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra.

That spark was enough. Elementary school teachers told Hispanic children that Shakespeare was the world's greatest writer. This was like telling Indian children that Columbus discovered America. Hispanic boys and girls needed to be aware of their heritage since Cervantes' was published in almost as many languages as Shakespeare. When **Don Quixote** was [first] published, few of the great Bard's plays were yet in print. Oddly, Shakespeare and Cervantes both died on April 23, 1616.

Clark did not seek rare books or academic tomes. The budget was low and he wanted books that children could handle, preferably paperback reprints, in as many languages as possible. I was no Cervantes scholar. My Spanish was little better than my French.

I posted a want ad in **AB Bookman's Weekly**. I used antiquarian bookseller and new book specialist directories to address letters seeking other language editions. The response was underwhelming. I had to develop new lines of research.

I began with a three-volume bibliography done in Spain in 1906 to commemorate the tri-centennial of **Don Quixote**. It reproduced title pages in several languages giving me a list of foreign language editions. Charlotte wrote to cultural attaches of embassies asking about editions in their language and for addresses of bookshops in their countries. Most foreign dealers did not respond because cheap editions were hardly worth their time.

We wrote to ethnic organizations. From the Sons of Norway, we reached a Norwegian dealer who furnished a copy. Similarly, a Dublin bookshop had a copy printed in Gaelic. We got editions in Russian and Hungarian. At a University press conference, I talked with editors from Hong Kong and Tokyo, soon receiving editions in Chinese and Japanese. At that conference, a woman from the Library of Congress gave much help.

A friend in Algeria planned a trip to Greece and I wrote asking for a copy in Greek. On a visit to Washington, D.C., I toured bookshops for international residents and found works in French, German, and other languages. Spanish editions were easy to find. I even found a good first edition facsimile, the most expensive item in this collection.

One difficult find was a copy in Arabic. Letters to possible sources brought no reply. **Publishers Weekly** announced a new book fair in Cairo and that Ambassador Hermann Frederick Eilts attended as a book collector. I wrote to Ambassador Eilts as one collector to another and within a few days, possibly by fast diplomatic pouch, came a two-volume paperback set in Arabic located by one of his aides.

I found 26 satisfactory examples not representing all languages but well under budget. Western Americana? Yes, in a way, because it traced the early Southwest to its roots.

The Millionth Book

The third incident involved a search for the millionth book for the University of New Mexico (UNM) Library tentatively set for 1981. They asked many leading booksellers for nominations and thus they invited me to suggest a work worthy of the honor.

The book had to deal in some way with the Southwest and have a stature great enough to be a millionth book. My only local advantage was that I could search their card files to see if they [already] had any particular title.

My [rare book] stock was improving, but I had no truly great book equal to the honor. Therefore, I decided to pick a title and go find it gambling that my offering would win.

I started with Henry Wagner's 1937 bibliography, **The Spanish Southwest**, and worked with **Printing and the Mind of Man** (PMM). Wagner gave me an early Southwestern title and **PMM** indicated its greatness. The first place where the two lines crossed was at Hakluyt's **Voyages**, the three-volume edition that appeared in 1598-1600. In the third volume were some of the earliest accounts in English of the travels of Marcos de Niza, Coronado, and others. The UNM Library had no copy of the first printing of this edition.

To play it safe, I wrote to the major libraries in Utah, Texas, Colorado, and Arizona. Finding only one copy, [I thus had potential backup buyers] if UNM chose a different book. I did not want to be stuck holding a costly item.

I wrote to the greatest booksellers in the U.S. and England. Most stocked the book once but had no copy available. I continued to write and placed my first trans-Atlantic telephone calls, learning how easily one may dial direct to a London bookshop.

No copies existed. I was about to [pick another book title from] Wagner and **PMM** when a call came from a London bookseller. He was dispersing a private collection from a castle. The price had risen in recent years, but since the dealer [knew my reputation], he would be happy to ship by air, on approval, with an invoice.

I took the chance, ordered the book, found it acceptable, and sent in my nomination form proposing the Hakluyt as the millionth book for the Library.

A University committee considered all nominations and chose the Hakluyt. Funds for the purchase were [pleasantly] oversubscribed. As no State funds were used, they purchased not only the Hakluyt but also some original drawings by Frank Cushing from Bart Durham's De Le Pena Bookshop in Santa Fe, and an original overland diary on the Southwest from Ray Walton in Austin. The "millionth book" became a triple windfall that satisfied all [committee] factions who demanded a book, an art piece or a manuscript.

There were enough funds left over to publish a handsome book, **A Million Stars**, about these three acquisitions. Dr. Donald Farren of UNM guided the project. [The four UNM Libraries jointly added their Three Millionth Book in 2013.]

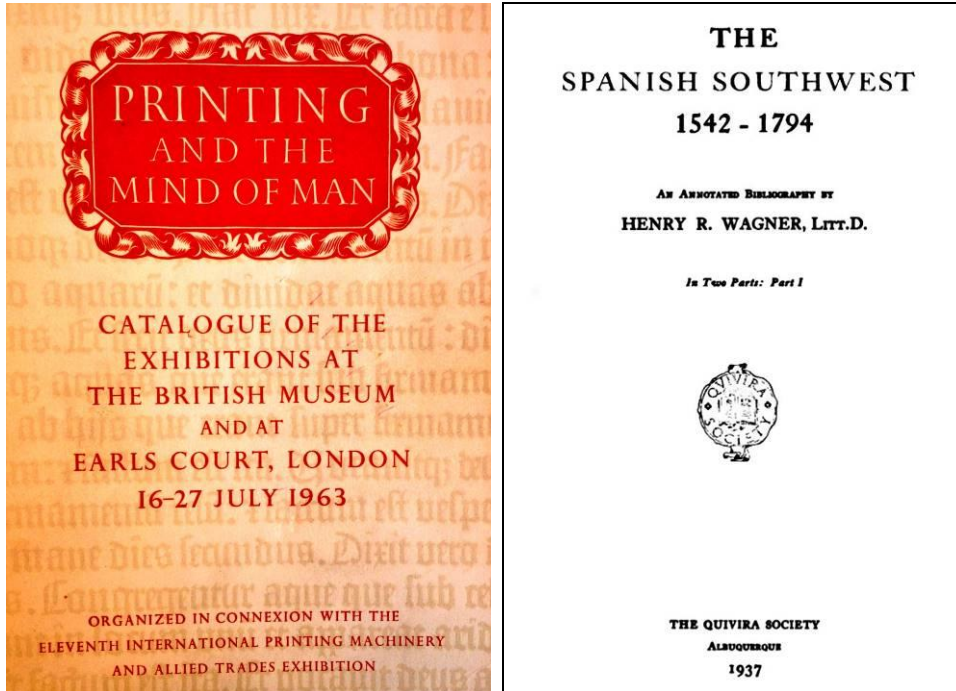


Figure 2 - PPM and Spanish Southwest

Printing and the Mind of Man, 1963 (www.historyofinformation.com)
 The Spanish Southwest, 1937 (Univ. Michigan/Digitized by Google)

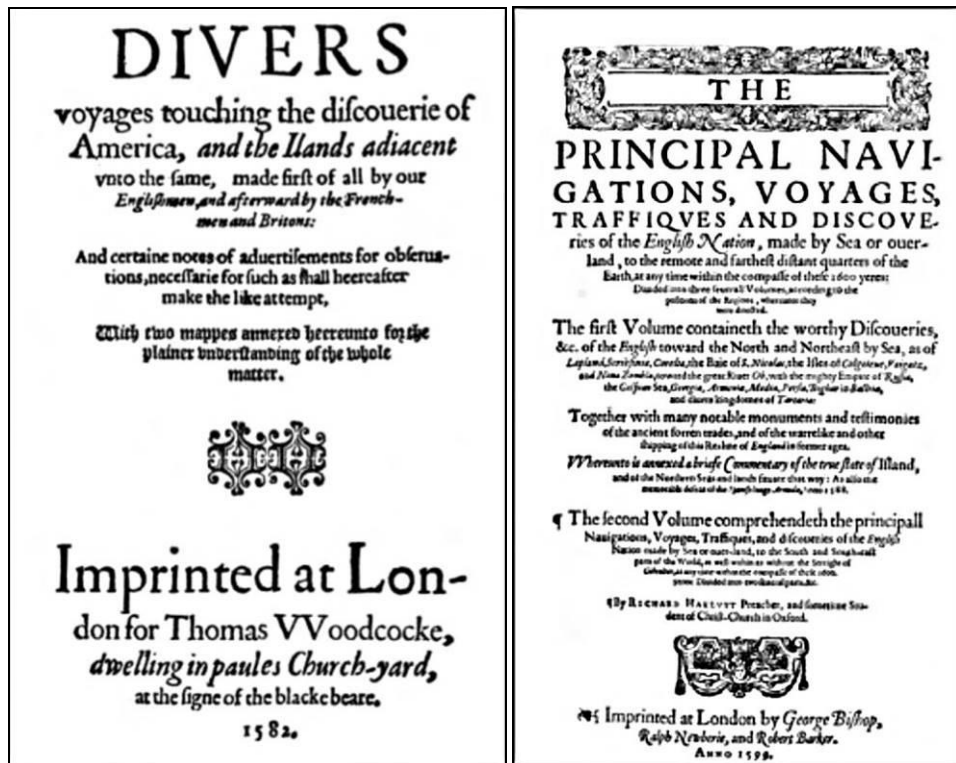


Figure 3 - Hakluyt Voyages, 1582 and 1598 (www.hakluyt.com)

A Bookman's Life

None of these three projects was especially profitable. The time spent in writing letters, traveling, paying shipping costs, and making overseas calls [expensive in 1980] ate up the slim margins involved.

However, what one bookman called the "psychic income" was immense. I did not lose even if I did not gain money. It opened many new doors, established new sources of contact and supply, and increased my book knowledge — all of which continued to increase both my income and pleasure.

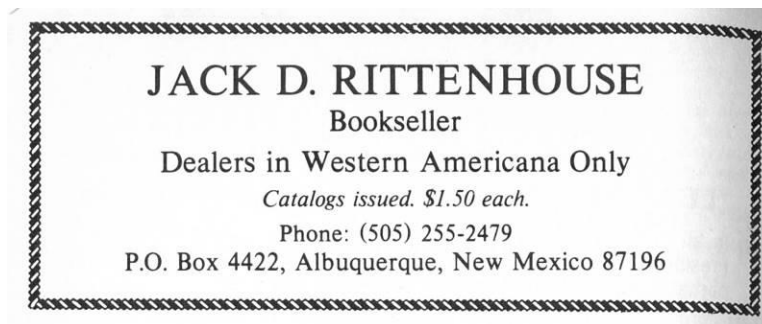


Figure 4 - AB Advertisement - 1983

Best of all, the challenge of venturing into new areas brought a lift to the humdrum of ordinary book traffic by which we [bibliophiles] all live.

[These incidents] proved that there are pockets of undiscovered ore, bypaths off beaten trails, and quiet eddies unnoticed in major streams. Each are worthy of our own sort of frontier exploration, whether we are book-people, librarians, professors, or writers.

Zeitlin called this "creative bookselling." I call it fun. The West is wider than you think.