Bob Limbert publicity photo, about 1930; following pages (from the BSU Limbert Collection): Limbert postcard of hunter with grizzly, about 1915; canyon of the Snake; Melba-area homesteaders in lava rock cabin, about 1930; rifleman at Craters of the Moon; "Valley of the Moon" panorama, about 1921; porcupine; beaver; owl; Canyon of Brown in Owyhee County, 1922; Limbert's taxidermy shop with crated elk head, a gift to President Warren G. Harding, 1921; stuffing a rattlesnake; Limbert on motorcycle at Map Rock near Marsing, about 1922; Limbert's display of Idaho products at the San Francisco World's Fair, 1915; wrestling over the Snake.

"TWO GUN" BOB: IDAHO'S SHOWMAN

Publicists called him the rightful heir to Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp, a quick-draw gunman who from a distance of 25 feet could split a bullet on the edge of an ax, or toss a bottle into the air and shoot through its cork and bottom without breaking the sides. To Al Capone he was the cowboy from Boise who captured Chicago headlines by calling the gangsters "starched-up little pets" and challenging them all to a gunfight. To Sunset Magazine, reporting on Idaho in 1924, he was the adventurer who filmed and photographed a Snake River wonderland of lava flows, ice caves, natural bridges and Indian petroglyph fields. To Calvin Coolidge and the U.S. Geological Survey the same showman-naturalist was a serious man of science and the driving force behind the presidential proclamation that created a national monument at Craters of the Moon.

Robert W. Limbert saw Idaho as a fantasyland and packaged it for the nation. A visionary, he used photography and popular science to picture the state as a tourist mecca in an era of rising nostalgia for America's lost frontier.

Born in 1885 and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, Limbert moved to Boise at age 26 to enter the taxidermy business. In 1915 his bizarre collection of stuffed animals and other Idaho curios —
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like the majestic river, our study has evolved slowly with time. What began in 1987 as a scholarly anthology has grown into a more ambitious attempt to penetrate and illustrate the human encounter with nature. Over its long gestation we were sustained by a shared fascination for the mystery of the Snake River country and also by the conviction that a wide-ranging book of this kind was consistent with Boise State’s long-standing commitment to Western studies.

Too many people have contributed to this work to thank them all individually here, but some deserve special mention. Editors Todd Shallat, Larry Burke, Chris Latter and Josie Fretwell brainstormed the graphics, wrote capsule and captions, edited and reworked the copy, compiled the sources and index, and designed and produced the book. Dave Clark first conceived of the project and then served as our science consultant and liaison to the Craters of the Moon Natural History Association. Robert Sims, former dean of the BSU College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs, worked with Shallat and Clark to organize the project and broaden its scope through applied social science. Former BSU President John Keiser, former research director Jim Baker, and former interim President Larry Selland were quick to recognize that the largest university on the Snake River Plain had a special obligation to study and interpret the region. We also appreciate generous support from President Charles Ruch.

No amount of encouragement would have seen this project through to completion without an enormous investment of time from the hard-working staff at BSU News Services. Glenn Oakley co-authored a chapter, helped with the geology and geography captions, and photographed much of the book. Chuck Scheer drew more than a dozen maps and photographed the artifacts on loan from museums. Amy Stahl, Bob Evancho and Brenda Haight worked on the copy. Arianne Poindexter entered corrections and changes on PageMaker. Special thanks also go to our gifted artist-illustrator Gwenetta Bates, photographer Steve Bly and copy editors Bob Fullilove and Sandy Marostica.

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including an 11-foot model of a Russet Burbank potato — won acclaim and a sack full of medals at San Francisco’s international expo.

Collector, fiction writer, filmmaker and dude-ranch entrepreneur, Limbert was known most of all for astonishing work with a Graflex camera. Capturing a region still largely untouched by tourism and urbanization, his photos of wildlife, Indians, rock art, mountains and vertical canyons — more than 8,000 pictures in all — are a rich archive of information that help modern scholars assess environmental changes on the plain. Today that photographic record, together with many of Limbert’s pamphlets and papers, is open to researchers at the Boise State University Library Special Collections Department.