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Editing Edward F. Ricketts's Essays

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THE SJSU STEINBECK FELLOWS: THREE PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH

KATIE RODGER, GRETA MANVILLE, AND
JON CHRISTENSEN

EDITING EDWARD F. RICKETTS'S ESSAYS

KATIE RODGER

I was fortunate to be one of the first Steinbeck Fellows at San José State University. When I received the \$7500 fellowship, I had completed my MA thesis, a collection of Edward Ricketts's correspondence, which has been published as *Renaissance Man of Cannery Row* (U of Alabama P, 2002). So I spent my 2001–2002 fellowship year starting work on a new Ricketts project: compiling a complete collection of his essays with the help of Ed Ricketts Jr. Tentatively titled *Breaking Through: The Collected Essays of Edward F. Ricketts*, this collection includes twenty-two essays and will be published by the University of California Press. Eleven of those essays were initially collected and published in Joel W. Hedgpeth's two-volume *The Outer Shores* (1978). (Hedgpeth included two sections of notes that he compiled from Ricketts's own letters and notes and named "Morphology of the Sea of Cortez" and "Notes and Letters for an Essay on Nostalgia." These will not be included in the new collection.) The organization of this new volume is chronological, beginning in 1925 when Ricketts published an account of his walk through the South, "Vagabonding Through Dixie," an episode later fictionalized in Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*. Trip logs from excursions to Sitka, Alaska (1932), the Sea of Cortez (1940), and the coastline spanning Vancouver to Southeast Alaska (1945 and '46) reveal both the wide geographical range of Ricketts's scientific

endeavors and his probing curiosity about the whole Pacific coast. This volume will capture his broad interests: for example, he critiqued the 1940 Ellwood Graham portrait of Steinbeck in a short review, “Scientist Writes About Art and Defines ‘Abstraction,’” published in the *Monterey Peninsula Herald*. Other essays, some unpublished, include a book proposal on the Japanese Mandated Islands, a project that occupied a great deal of Ricketts’s time during World War II; the four articles he wrote about the decline of the Monterey sardine in the mid to late 1940s; and his Guggenheim Fellowship essay outlining the project he was planning just before his death in 1948, a proposed collaboration with Steinbeck to what Ricketts always called the “outer shores,” the Pacific coast of Canada and Alaska.

In brief introductions, each essay will be contextualized, drawing on unpublished archival material as well as the work of contemporary experts in marine biology and ecology. Many of Hedgpeth’s original notes on the essays will be retained (and identified as Hedgpeth’s), but additional notes will incorporate excerpts from unpublished letters and journals, recent interviews, and substantial textual research.

Ricketts’s two oldest children, Ed Jr. and Nancy, are contributing to the volume through interviews and encouragement, along with information clarifying references in the letters; their support is invaluable. I traveled to Sitka, Alaska, in 2003 to visit Nancy—a long overdue visit that enabled us to talk in person about her mother, her father, and her own life. Nancy has researched the Ricketts family extensively, and I learned much about various members of their extended family who, until this time, had remained mysteries to me. I also met Nancy’s

daughter Chris, (Ricketts’s granddaughter), who, along with Nancy, spent time showing me Sitka and its outskirts. While giving a slide presentation on Ricketts at Sheldon Jackson College—the local college at which Nancy has served as archivist for years—I met Mary Purvis, granddaughter of Jack Calvin who col-



Ed Ricketts,
Summer 1918.

laborated with Ricketts on *Between Pacific Tides* (1939), the seminal handbook documenting the Pacific littoral (now in its fifth edition with Stanford University Press). It was wonderful to see Sitka, knowing it was a place Ricketts visited and wrote about.

Back in California, I am furthering my research with regular trips to Stanford University's archives and visits with Ed Jr. Coming at a time of growing interest in Ricketts's scientific and philosophical work, this volume will give grounding to his eclectic interests.

BIBLIOGRAPHER FINDS RESEARCH ON STEINBECK FASCINATING

GRETA MANVILLE

From the early years of John Steinbeck's success, scholarly interest has resulted in a number of worthy critical bibliographies, but only a few have been annotated. Those have been on specific works or selections, usually related to a particular focus, and have rarely included more than a hundred citations.

My Steinbeck Fellowship, granted during the 2002–03 academic year, was to update an annotated critical bibliography begun thirty years ago by Martha Heasley Cox. After founding the Steinbeck Research Center at San Jose State University in the early 1970s, Professor Cox began compiling and carefully annotating an impressive amount of scholarship. During the mid-1970s, as a graduate assistant to Professor Cox for two years, I joined the effort to locate and annotate hundreds of essays and articles on Steinbeck. Research took me to Stanford, UC-Berkeley, and even to New York City where Dr. Cox obtained access to Viking Press's extensive files. We spent days at the New York Public Library and at the Lincoln Center Library, locating articles not easily obtained in those years before the Internet. When we returned to California, the work for the bibliography was nearly complete and Professor Matthew Bruccoli had approved the co-authored work for publication by the University of Pittsburgh Press as part of a companion series of secondary bibliographies for American authors.

Publication, regrettably, was postponed before the work was finished. After completing the MA requirements, I returned to a career in corporate management. Dr. Cox's early