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Lighthouse Avenue in Pacific Grove, looking south, at 17th Street. c. 1936. Courtesy of the Pat Hathaway Collection ([www.caviews.com](http://www.caviews.com)).

This is a self-guided driving tour of John Steinbeck's Pacific Grove. It features local sites relating to the lives and work of John Steinbeck and Edward F. Ricketts.

## Introduction

In the early years of this century, John Steinbeck and his family spent many weekends and holidays in Pacific Grove. John and his younger sister, Mary, spent their time exploring the rocks and tidepools near Asilomar and Point Pinos and were fascinated and drawn to the ruins of the Chinese settlement at China Point (now called Cabrillo Point).

Even in his youth, Steinbeck was developing a knowledge and love of the natural world and the diverse cultures that figure so prominently in his works. In the summer of 1923, while students at Stanford, John and Mary enrolled in a five-unit course in general zoology at Hopkins Marine Station and were exposed to W.E. Ritter's concept of the super-organism (a holistic perception of nature in which the whole and its parts are ultimately dependent on each other).

This concept became an important part of Steinbeck's world view. Coincidentally, late in 1923 Edward F. Ricketts moved to Pacific Grove. He and his partner had come from Chicago to open Pacific Biological Laboratories, which later moved to Monterey (1928) and became the inspiration for Doc's Western Biological of *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*.

After Steinbeck married Carol Henning in 1930, they moved into the 11th Street cottage. Later that same year, Steinbeck met Ricketts and a close friendship developed. Steinbeck and Ricketts shared their experiences and ideas in what might best be described as a commensal relationship.

The early 1930s were a time of struggle for Steinbeck, both in his attempts to improve and promote his writing and in his day-to-day existence, but prosperity finally came in the mid 1930s. Although Steinbeck moved from the area, he returned many times during his life. Despite the way he lampooned the town, Steinbeck found a spiritual home in Pacific Grove, and returned here when he needed to rediscover himself.

## John Steinbeck Biography

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, and lived the early part of his life in Monterey County, California. It was here that Steinbeck developed a knowledge and love of the natural world and the diverse cultures that figure so prominently in his works.



Bust by Jesse Corsaut.

In 1930, Steinbeck met marine naturalist Edward F. Ricketts, and a close friendship developed. During the early to mid 1930s, Steinbeck lived with his wife Carol in the family cottage on 11th Street in Pacific Grove. He produced works including *The Red Pony*, *Pastures of Heaven*, *Tortilla Flat*, *In Dubious Battle*, and *Of Mice and Men*. They moved to Los Gatos in the later half of the decade. *The Grapes of Wrath* earned Steinbeck a Pulitzer Prize.

In the 1940s, Steinbeck spent most of his time living in New York and traveling abroad. By then he was an internationally acclaimed author.

While he hobnobbed with the N.Y. elite, he wrote

nostalgically of life on the Monterey waterfront. Steinbeck's old friend Ed Ricketts became the inspiration for "Doc" of *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*. Although Steinbeck wrote *Cannery Row* in N.Y., he returned briefly to Monterey in 1944 with his second wife, Gwen, and son Thom—living in the Lara-Soto adobe on Pierce Street.

In 1948, after his second marriage ended and the death of his friend Ed Ricketts, he returned to the family cottage on 11th Street in Pacific Grove for several months.

In the 1960s, Steinbeck briefly passed through the area several times, once while working on *Travels with Charley*. In 1962, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

On December 20, 1968, Steinbeck died in Sag Harbor, N.Y. His ashes were returned to California by his widow, Elaine and his younger son, John. The ashes rested for two nights in the P.G. cottage garden before being buried in the family plot in Salinas.

## Ed Ricketts Biography



Bust by Jesse Corsaut.

Edward Flanders Robb Ricketts was born on May 14, 1897 on the northwest side of Chicago. He attended Illinois State Normal University for one year, but left to see something of the world. He served a tour of duty in the Army Medical Corps during WWI, and entered the University of Chicago on his return (in October 1942, Ricketts was called back into the Army, serving in the VD clinic at the Presidio). He attended classes sporadically between 1919 and 1922, taking classes in zoology, philosophy, Spanish and German, but left without taking a degree.

He was, however, profoundly influenced by one of his teachers, W.C. Allee, an ecological theorist whose 1931 treatise *Animal Aggregations* dealt with the universality of social behavior among animals (including man) and the theory of social transition, that animals act differently in groups than as individuals.

## Ricketts Comes to California

In 1923, Ricketts came to California with his Chicago roommate, A.E. Galigher, and opened Pacific Biological Laboratories.

Located at the corner of Fountain Avenue and High Street (now called Ricketts Row) in a one-story board and batten building, the lab supplied biological specimens and slides to schools and research institutions. Eventually, Galigher moved to Berkeley, and Ricketts became the sole owner of the business.



In 1925, Ricketts published an article, "Vagabonding Through Dixie," (*Travel*, June 1925), which described his walk from Chicago through the South. PBL moved to 740 Ocean View Avenue in Monterey in 1928 (the street was later renumbered, and the lab's address changed to 800; it was renamed Cannery Row in 1958).

During the 1920s, Ricketts lived with his wife, Anna, and three children at several homes in Pacific Grove and Carmel. Even after Ricketts moved the business to Monterey, he maintained a P.O. box at the Pacific Grove post office. Ironically, he took up full-time residence at the Monterey lab in 1936, and several months later, on November 25th, a fire started in the adjacent Del Mar Cannery, destroying the lab and most of its contents (including Ricketts extensive marine ecology library and family heirlooms). Fortunately, the manuscript of *Between Pacific Tides* had already been sent to Stanford University. The lab was a meeting place for local artists, writers and scholars, including Joseph Campbell and Henry Miller. After the fire, many of Ricketts' friends helped him reconstruct the lab and replace its contents.

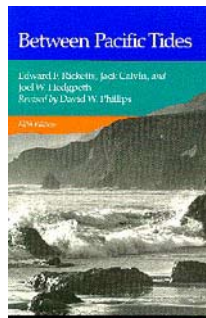
## Ricketts Meets Steinbeck

In October 1930, Ed Ricketts and John Steinbeck met at the cottage of a friend in Carmel, although Steinbeck told the story of their meeting at a dentist's office in "About Ed Ricketts" in *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*. They had an immediate rapport, and the two shared their experiences and ideas in what might best be described as a commensal relationship. Ricketts was a major influence on Steinbeck's writing and philosophy, and, as Jackson Benson notes in his exhaus-

tive biography *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer* (New York: Viking, 1984), the main themes in Steinbeck's writings "were developed and nurtured in the rich soil of their mutual enthusiasm for exploring ideas and their implications." The period of time that Steinbeck and Ricketts were in each other's company, between 1930 and 1941, was one of the most productive periods of Steinbeck's writing. Ricketts was the inspiration for Doc in *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*, Doc Burton in *In Dubious Battle*, Casy in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Doctor Winter in *The Moon is Down*, as well as characters in several other works.

### Ricketts' Work

Ricketts was not just a catalyst for Steinbeck's writing; Stanford University published his ecological handbook of intertidal marine life, *Between Pacific Tides*, in 1939. The 5th edition is still used as a textbook at many universities. From March 14 to April 18, 1940, Ricketts and Steinbeck took their famous sojourn on the *Western Flyer* to the Gulf of California, which resulted in the book *The Sea of Cortez*. Steinbeck kept no journal of the trip, except in his head, and relied heavily on Ricketts' notes when he wrote the narrative half of the book.



In fact, Ricketts' philosophical "Essay on Non-Teleological Thinking" was revised by Steinbeck as the Easter Sunday chapter. *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951) differs from *The Sea of Cortez* (1941) in that the phyletic catalogue that Ricketts compiled is omitted, as is Ricketts' name as co-author. It also includes the poignant quasi-biographical essay, *About Ed Ricketts*. Later editions have reinstated Ricketts' name on the title page. He developed a filing system for the specimens he gathered which, according to his friend Ritchie Lovejoy, "when finished [would be] a complete and comprehensive survey and index of every known marine animal from the Gulf of California to Alaska." Lovejoy also noted that Ricketts produced the "most comprehensive study of sardine habits and migration ever compiled. There is nothing else to compare with it in detail, observation and conclusion."

### The Man vs the Myth

While "Doc" of *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday* is a character based on Steinbeck's close friend Ed

Ricketts, there are distinct and pronounced differences between the fictional hero and the real man. Many of Ricketts' quirks and traits become part of Doc's persona, and the distinctions become quite blurred, perhaps due to Steinbeck's great capacity for capturing telling points of character and description through apparently superficial detail. Or perhaps Steinbeck's portrayal tells more about himself than about his friend. The Ricketts we see through Steinbeck's eyes, the solitary bachelor, "concupiscent as a rabbit," who spent most of his time interacting with the fringe of conventional society, contrasts with the serious, hard-working scientist who spent most of his energies searching for his ultimate goal, the truth. Steinbeck may have created this persona to demonstrate that the traditional values cherished by middle-class society were invalid, using the Ed/Doc character to point out the disparity between sinner and saint. Whatever Steinbeck's motivation, the life and lore of Ed and Doc have melded together, leaving the real Ricketts clouded in mystique. Ultimately, one must realize that Steinbeck was creating art, not writing history, and the disparities between fact and fiction are simply literary license.

### Ricketts' Philosophy

In addition to being a marine biologist, Ricketts was a philosopher. Using a unique combination of scientific method and metaphysics, he attempted to tie together apparently unrelated elements into a unified whole. He referred to this holistic idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts as the "toto picture." He called the means by which he tried to achieve understanding the philosophy of "breaking through," from a line in Robinson Jeffers' "Roan Stallion," and attempted to achieve his ends through a method he called "non-teleological thinking" or is thinking, in which the search for cause and effect are abandoned for a Zen-like acceptance of things as they are.

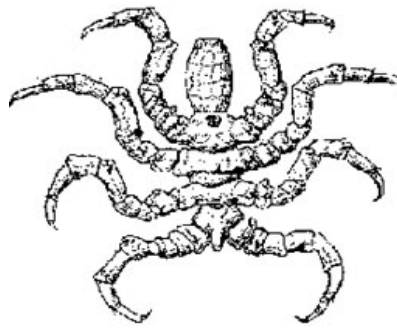
### Ricketts' Later Years

After the breakup of Ricketts' marriage in the mid 1930s, he lived at the lab with Toni Jackson, who was his companion from 1941 to 1947. Although Ricketts' divorce from Anna was never finalized, on January 2, 1948, he married Alice Campbell in Barstow, California. After Steinbeck moved to New York in 1941, he and Ricketts rarely saw each other, although they corresponded up until the time of Ricketts' death. The two had plans to take another collecting trip, this time to the Queen Charlotte Islands, when Ricketts' car was

struck by the *Del Monte Express* on May 8, 1948. He died on May 11th.

## Ricketts' Legacy

Ed Ricketts has left his legacy on the Monterey Peninsula and beyond. His work has inspired several generations of biologists, particularly, as John E. McCosker has noted, his benchmark theses on the effect of wave shock and tides upon animals and plants. Despite the fact that his manuscripts were destroyed in the 1936 fire and never rewritten, students at Hopkins Marine Station were familiar with them and built upon Ricketts' ideas. The *Outer Shores*, a two-volume collection of Ricketts' sci-



*Pycnogonum rickettsi*

entific and philosophical essays (edited by his friend and fellow marine biologist Joel W. Hedgpeth) was published in 1978, and is essential reading for a better understanding of the man and his ideas. A sea spider, *Pycnogonum rickettsi*, originally collected from local anemones by Ricketts, was named for him. Recently, two species of sea slugs were named after Ricketts and Steinbeck, *Catriona rickettsi* and *Eubranchus steinbecki*. To learn more about these nudibranchs, visit **The Slug Site** (<http://slugsite.us/bow/nudwk400.htm>). In 1979, over 30 years after Ricketts' death, Moss Landing Marine Laboratory christened their research vessel, a 35-foot lobster boat, the *RV Ed Ricketts*. On July 14, 1994,

## Start the tour at site #1: The Esther Steinbeck Rodgers House

*Start your tour at the Asilomar Conference Grounds, located on Asilomar Blvd. off of Sunset Drive. From Asilomar Blvd., enter the grounds of the Wm. Penn Mott Jr. Training Center through the Eastwoods section and follow the road towards the left, in the direction of the Fireside section. The small building called Guest Inn is. . .*

## 1. The Esther Steinbeck Rodgers House

800 Asilomar Blvd. (On the grounds of the Asilomar Conference Center)



The name Asilomar was coined by Helen Salisbury, a Stanford University student, and can be loosely translated as "refuge by the sea." Started in 1913, when the Pacific Improvement Company (Del Monte Properties' predecessor) deeded 30 seaside acres to the YWCA,

Asilomar is a unique meeting place with a long history as a serene setting where people gather to exchange ideas and find inspiration.

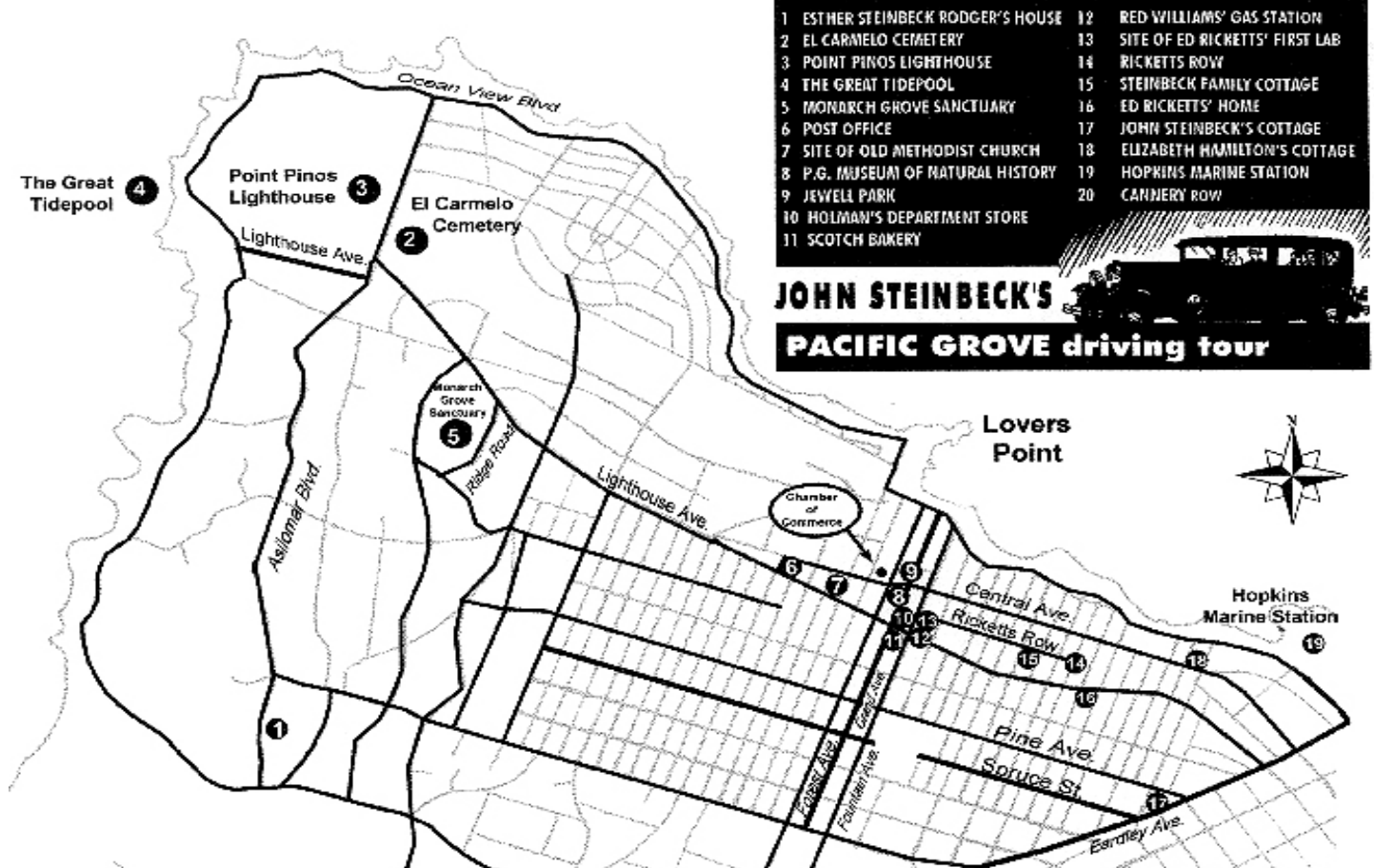
In 1956, the conference grounds were transferred to State ownership and are now a unit of the California State Park System. The grounds have grown to over 100 acres and are dedicated to a natural ecological environment that is sheltered by ancient Monterey pines and extends over rolling sand dunes. Several buildings at Asilomar were designed by architect Julia Morgan.

Steinbeck's sister, Esther Steinbeck Rodgers, and her husband, Carrol, owned this house from the 1930s to the 1950s. Steinbeck called it "Esther's house in the woods in P.G." He brought Gwen Conger here, and also used the house as a private refuge where he could write. Part of the narrative portion of *Sea of Cortez* was written in a cabin that Steinbeck described as hidden in a pine woods amidst sand dunes, and this house fits that description.

*Continue on Asilomar Blvd., crossing Lighthouse Avenue. On your right is the cemetery. Enter the gates and park.*

*You are now at. . .  
EL CARMELO CEMETERY/LITTLE CHAPEL BY-  
THE-SEA CREMATORY*

# Map of John Steinbeck's Pacific Grove



## 2. El Carmelo Cemetery Little Chapel by-the-Sea Crematory

65 Asilomar

Founded in 1891, run by the City of Pacific Grove since 1948, this is the “pretty little cemetery where you can hear the waves drumming always” mentioned in *Cannery Row* (Chapter III).

*Continue around the cemetery; near the exit on your right is the crematory.*



Ricketts' body was cremated here and his funeral was

held at 2 p.m. on May 12, 1948. He is buried at the Columbarium at the Monterey City Cemetery.

*From the cemetery gate, drive directly across Asilomar Blvd. and park.*

*You are now behind . . .  
POINT PINOS LIGHTHOUSE*

## 3. Point Pinos Lighthouse

Two blocks north of Lighthouse Avenue, on Asilomar Blvd.

Built in the 1850s and shining its beacon since February 1, 1855, this is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the West Coast. It marks the entrance to Monterey Bay and sits on the northernmost tip of the Peninsula. Although now powered by electricity, the building, lenses and prisms are all original. During the late 1800s, two of its lightkeepers were women. Elizabeth Wayne remembers its foghorn (*To a God*

Unknown, Chapter 21), William--the tragic watchman of the Bear Flag--laments here (*Cannery Row*, Chapter III), Suzy walks here (*Sweet Thursday*, Chapter 21) and Doc leaves his work in a mood of discontent and walks here, watching the light strike the ocean (*Sweet Thursday*, Chapter 3).



*After you back out of your parking space, continue right on Asilomar Avenue to Ocean View Blvd. Turn left; Ocean View turns into Sunset Drive. Drive just south of Point Pinos, at the foot of the lighthouse and park your car on the ocean side of the street.*

You are now at . . .  
**THE GREAT TIDEPOOL**

## 4. The Great Tidepool

Ocean View Blvd. at the foot of the lighthouse (Just north of the only house on the ocean side of the street)



This is where Ricketts collected many specimens for Pacific Biological Laboratories, and where Doc collected his for Western Biological :

“It is a fabulous place: when the tide is in, a wave-churned basin, creamy with foam, whipped by the combers that roll in from the whistling buoy on the reef. But when the tide goes out the little water world becomes quiet and lovely. The sea is very clear and the bottom becomes fantastic with hurrying, fighting, feeding, breeding animals.”  
(*Cannery Row*, Chapter VI).

## TIDEPOOL ETIQUETTE

**NEVER TURN YOUR BACK TO THE OCEAN: IT IS UNPREDICTABLE.**

**BE CAREFUL: THE ROCKS ARE SLIPPERY!**

- Be gentle with the creatures you touch, and put them back where you found them.
- Do not take away any live animals, shells, plants or rocks.
- Remember, Monterey Bay is a Federal Marine Sanctuary.

*Go south on Sunset Drive (towards Asilomar Beach) and turn left on the first street, Lighthouse Avenue. Go 1 block and turn left at the stop sign; jog right onto Lighthouse and continue into town. Go straight until you reach Ridge Road and turn right (a sign marking the Butterfly Grove Inn is your landmark). Go about 1/2 block and you will see the signs for the Monarch Grove Sanctuary, which is open from sunrise to sunset.*

*Park your car and walk down the easement to . . .*  
**MONARCH GROVE SANCTUARY**

## 5. Monarch Grove Sanctuary

Ridge Road (by the Butterfly Grove Inn)

Each October, amidst local celebrations which include a “Butterfly Parade,” swarms of Monarch butterflies arrive in Pacific Grove--the end of a long trek from the Canadian Rockies and southern Alaska. Migrating here to escape the rigors of the northern winters, succeeding generations often return to the same eucalyptus trees year after year.

The butterflies attach themselves to the leaves in huge clusters, but are difficult to see during a chill or in damp weather, when they fold part of their wings and appear like clumps of dead leaves. Optimal viewing for activity is between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on a sunny day. In March,



the butterflies once more take wing. They return north, where the females lay their eggs, and die.

There is a local ordinance which prohibits the molestation of these creatures, and anyone caught in the act is liable to a \$1,000 fine and/or jail time.

Steinbeck heralds the strange phenomenon of the returning monarch butterflies and parodies the festivities honoring them :

“Pacific Grove benefits by one of those happy accidents of nature that gladden the heart, excite the imagination, and instruct the young. On a certain day in the shouting springtime great clouds of orangy Monarch butterflies, like twinkling aery fields of flowers, sail high in the air on a majestic pilgrimage across Monterey Bay and land in the outskirts of Pacific Grove in the pine woods.”  
(*Sweet Thursday*, Chapter 38).

*Turn around on Ridge Road and go back to Lighthouse Avenue. Turn right and go straight back into town. On your left, you will see . . .*  
**THE PACIFIC GROVE POST OFFICE**

## 6. The Pacific Grove Post Office

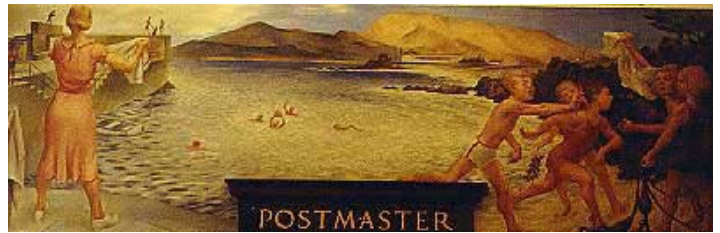
680 Lighthouse Avenue

Built in 1938 and enlarged in 1967, the building is surrounded by eucalyptus trees that were

once part of the garden of a house that stood at this site and were planted by Methodist Bishop William Taylor about 1880.

Inside, there is a WPA-era mural of Lovers Point Beach, painted by Russian-born artist Victor N. Arnutoff.

Ed Ricketts maintained a post office box (#448) here, even after he moved his business to Monterey, and kept it up until the time of his death in May 1948.



*Continue on Lighthouse, and on your left, between 18th and 17th Streets is the . . .*  
**SITE OF THE OLD METHODIST CHURCH**

## 7. Site of the Old Methodist Church

620 Lighthouse Avenue  
(Now the Pacific Grove Plaza)

The grand Gothic church that once stood at this site was built in 1888 and was the vital center of the community. Later, a giant lighted revolving cross was added to the top of the building, and it could be seen for miles out to sea.



In describing the miraculous portents that occur before Doc starts his octopus research, Steinbeck tells of the mushrooms that grew out of the floor of the basement of the Methodist Church:

“There were prodigies and portents that winter and spring, but you never notice such things until afterward. . . .A cloud drifting in formed the letters O-N in the sky over Monterey. Mushrooms grew out of the concrete floor of the basement of the Methodist Church. Perhaps all this meant nothing; you never notice such things until afterward.” (*Sweet Thursday*, Chapter 3).

*Continue on Lighthouse to Forest Avenue and turn left.*

*Turn right at Central, and on your right is . . .*  
**THE PACIFIC GROVE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

## 8. The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History

Forest and Central avenues



This building was dedicated on December 21, 1932, and in 1935 was named “Best of its size in the U.S.” by the American Association of Museums. It is operated by the City of Pacific Grove, and houses a collection of over 400 local birds as well as displays of Peninsula flora and fauna.

The museum’s webpage is at [www.pgmuseum.org](http://www.pgmuseum.org).

A large squid preserved by Ed Ricketts and donated by him is in the Museum collection. Look for it in the mollusk exhibit on the mezzanine.

*Directly across Central Avenue is . . .*  
**JEWELL PARK**

## 9. Jewell Park

Central Avenue  
(Between Forest and Grand avenues)

This park is named for Dr. E.F. Jewell, the first minister of the local Methodist Church, whose cottage once stood at Forest and Park Place. Jewell Park was the site of the town’s earliest outdoor Methodist camp meetings, beginning in 1875.

When Steinbeck tells the history of P.G.’s “Great Roque War” (*Sweet Thursday*, Chapter 8), he drew on actual events surrounding the roque courts that used to be located here. (Roque is a croquet-like game played on concrete with short mallets.)

At the time, the construction of the new museum focused civic attention on the park. One faction believed that the courts and run-down shack were an eyesore and should be removed, while the other side contended that this was the traditional location for the courts. In

1933, the P.G. City Council could not reach a consensus regarding the courts, and put the question on the local ballot. By an overwhelming majority, the citizens of P.G. voted to retain the courts. They survived until a few decades ago.



*Photo courtesy of the Pat Hathaway Collection ([www.caviews.com](http://www.caviews.com))*

*At the corner of Central and Grand, turn right.  
On your left is . . .*  
**HOLMAN’S DEPARTMENT STORE**

## 10. Holman’s Department Store

542 Lighthouse Avenue

Established in 1891, Holman’s was the largest department store on the Peninsula. The concrete building which now stands was built in 1924, and the fourth floor was added in the 1930s.

It now houses an antique mall.

**While the original flagpole had been restored to its place at the center front of the Holman building in the 1990s, it was removed and replaced by a telecommunications**



*Holman’s c. 1995*

**antenna in the early 2000s. At the time (due to a change in the building’s recorded address), the Pacific Grove Community Development department was advised by its support committees that the building was not historical, and hence the flagpole removal was allowed.**

The manuscript of *Pastures of Heaven* was written in a





Holman's and Flying A station c. 1950.

Photo courtesy of the Pat Hathaway Collection ([www.caviews.com](http://www.caviews.com)).

7½" x 12" commercial ledger purchased here for 82¢. The first half of the manuscript of *To a God Unknown* was written in green ink purchased here (on sale) for two for 5¢. The ink held out until page 167, and Steinbeck wrote the remainder of the work in 10¢ blue ink. Steinbeck found a discarded papier maché turkey behind the store, repaired it and used it as a festive disguise for a pile of hamburgers.

The flagpole skater of *Cannery Row* (Chapters XVII and XIX) was a real daredevil named "The Mysterious Mr. X," who set out to break his own record by staying aloft 120 feet above the street for more than 50 hours:

"Probably nothing in the way of promotion Holman's Department Store ever did attracted so much favorable comment as the engagement of the flag-pole skater. Day after day, there he was up on his little round platform skating around and around and at night he could be seen up there too, dark against the sky so that everybody knew he didn't come down." (*Cannery Row*, Chapter XIX).

Both Mrs. Malloy (*Cannery Row*, Chapter VIII) and Suzy (*Sweet Thursday*, Chapter 29) found the curtains at Holman's irresistible. Ritchie Lovejoy, who illustrated Ricketts' *Between Pacific Tides*, worked here as a copy writer. He resigned in 1940 to pursue his own writing career when Steinbeck gave him the \$1,000 Pulitzer Prize check for *The Grapes of Wrath*.

**Continue up Grand Avenue to Lighthouse Avenue, and make a left.**

**While Holman's is on your left, to the right is. . .  
THE SCOTCH BAKERY**

## 11. The Scotch Bakery

545 Lighthouse Avenue  
(Across from Holman's)

**After operating for over 50 years as the Scotch Bakery, in December 2006 the traditional Scotch Bakery sign was removed by the current proprietor, and the business name changed.**

Mrs. Trolat leaves here with a bag of sweet buns and ponders the dilemma of the flagpole skater:

"Now in the whole town there was interest and discussion about this sporting event, but the most interesting question of all and the one that bothered the whole town was never spoken of. No one mentioned it and yet it was there haunting everyone. Mrs. Trolat wondered about it as she came out of the Scotch bakery with a bag of sweet buns." (*Cannery Row*, Chapter XIX).



**Make a left turn at the next corner, Fountain Ave.  
At the corner is . . .  
RED WILLIAMS' GAS STATION**

## 12. Red Williams' Gas Station

520 Lighthouse Avenue  
(now Lighthouse Produce)

In *Cannery Row*, Henri the painter leans his chair against the men's room here while watching the flagpole skater across the street at Holman's (Chapters XVII and XIX):



Flying A station c. 1950. Photo courtesy of the Pat Hathaway Collection ([www.caviews.com](http://www.caviews.com)).

"Henri the painter was occupied, for Holman's Department Store had employed not a flag-pole sitter but a flag-pole skater. . . . Henri had taken up his post across the street at Red Williams' gas station. Henri was fascinated. He

thought of doing a huge abstraction called Substratum Dream of a Flagpole Skater. . . . Henri sat in a chair, leaned back against the lattice which concealed the men's toilet at Red Williams'." (Cannery Row, Chapter XVII).



From a newsreel of the flagpole skater, from the National Archives.

In the early 1930s, a real daredevil named "The Mysterious Mr. X" did indeed flagpole skate for more than 50 hours. The escapades 120 feet above the crowd on Lighthouse Avenue inspired the episode in Steinbeck's work, and were also captured by a newsreel photographer. The 30 seconds of footage showing the stunt and the throngs below are now part of the National Archives' collection. Here are a few images from that newsreel:

*Continue down on Fountain, until you get to the corner of Ricketts Row.*

*You are now at . . .*

**SITE OF EDWARD F. RICKETTS' FIRST LAB**

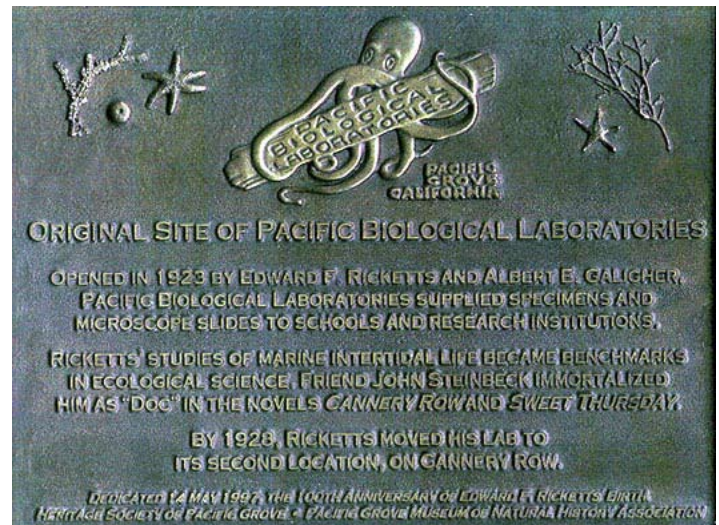
### 13. Site of Ed Ricketts' First Lab

165 Fountain Avenue (Kidwell's Paints, across from Holman's, between Lighthouse Ave. and Ricketts Row)

Pacific Biological Laboratories was opened in late 1923 by the 26-year-old Ricketts and his partner, Albert Galigher. The lab, a small biological supply house, provided preserved animals and prepared slides to schools and research institutions.

In the late 1920s, Ricketts, now the lab's sole owner, moved the business to 740 Ocean View Avenue in Monterey. Later, the street was renumbered and later

still renamed, becoming 800 Cannery Row--Doc's Western Biological in *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*.



On May 14, 1997, the 100th anniversary of Ricketts' birth, a commemorative plaque was placed on this building by the Pacific Grove Heritage Society and the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History Association.

*The site of Ricketts' first lab also marks the beginning of . . .*  
**RICKETTS ROW**

### 14. Ricketts Row

Between Lighthouse and Central Avenues, running from Fountain Avenue to 9th Street

On July 14, 1994, at a dedication ceremony attended by dignitaries, historians, friends of Ed Ricketts and John Steinbeck, and other well-wishers, the City of Pacific Grove renamed High Street "Ricketts Row."



From left: Bruce Ariss, Esther Trosow, Jeanne Byrne, Bruce McPherson, Kalissa Moore, and Neal Hotelling.

The corner of Ricketts Row and Fountain Avenue marks the site of Ricketts' first lab, and the corner of Ricketts Row and 11th Street is the location of Steinbeck's cottage

Continue down to Central Avenue and make a right turn at the stop sign. Continue on to 11th Street and make a right turn. On your left about half-way up the block (at the corner of Ricketts Row) is a red ivy-covered cottage.

This is the . . .  
**STEINBECK FAMILY COTTAGE**

## 15. Steinbeck Family Cottage

147 11th Street  
(Between Lighthouse and Ricketts Row)  
(PRIVATE RESIDENCE--PLEASE  
RESPECT OCCUPANT'S PRIVACY)

Built by Steinbeck's father as a summer home, this is the cottage where Steinbeck returned repeatedly



Steinbeck family cottage from Ricketts Row. c. 1995.

throughout his life. One of the pine trees in the yard was planted when Steinbeck was a child, and he felt a playful affinity towards it, believing his well-being was linked with its growth. In 1930, Steinbeck moved here with his bride, Carol, and lived on a \$25-per-month allowance provided by John Steinbeck, Sr. Father and son worked together remodeling the cottage, walling in the sleeping porch, moving the entry to the back and building a Mexican-style fireplace. Steinbeck improved the garden and added a fish pond. In 1931, he and Carol purchased two mallard ducks, "Aqua" and "Vita," but had to sell them to purchase writing paper for *To a God Unknown*.

Although they moved to Southern California for a while, they returned to the area in the fall of 1932 when Steinbeck's mother suffered a stroke. They divided their time between this cottage and the family home in Salinas, and John worked on parts of *The Red Pony*. Back in P.G., Steinbeck also worked on *The Pastures of Heaven*, *Tortilla Flat* (which won a Commonwealth Club medal and established Steinbeck as a major regional writer) and *In Dubious Battle* (also a Commonwealth medal winner). Steinbeck began work on *Of Mice and Men* at the cottage, but the unwanted

attention of his increasing celebrity forced the Steinbecks to move to Los Gatos in 1936. While the new house up north was being built John spent time at the cottage, continuing work on *Of Mice and*



The front gate. c. 1995.

*Men*. The manuscript was nearly finished in May, but Steinbeck's dog, perhaps acting critically, chewed up the entire single copy. In 1939, Ritchie Lovejoy lived in the cottage.

Turn left on Ricketts Row, go across two blocks, and turn right on 10th Street (your landmark is Saint Angela's across the street). Go up to Lighthouse Avenue and turn left at the stop sign. Continue on Lighthouse for two blocks.

On your right, at the corner of 8th and Lighthouse, is . . .  
**ED RICKETTS' HOME**

## 16. Ed Ricketts' Home

331 Lighthouse Ave.  
(PRIVATE RESIDENCE--PLEASE  
RESPECT OCCUPANT'S PRIVACY)

(Francis Nagle house, 1910). Ed Ricketts lived here with his family in the mid 1920s.



It was a short walk to his lab on Fountain Avenue.

Later, the family moved to a house at 221 4th Street and became the neighbors of Joseph Campbell, who became a noted interpreter of mythology.

Continue on Lighthouse Avenue until you come to Eardley Avenue. Turn right, and up several blocks on the left is an ivy-covered fence.

This is . . .

## JOHN STEINBECK'S COTTAGE

### 17. John Steinbeck's Cottage

425 Eardley Avenue  
(between Spruce and Pine)  
(PRIVATE RESIDENCE--PLEASE  
RESPECT OCCUPANT'S PRIVACY)

Steinbeck bought this cottage early in 1941 and lived here briefly with Gwen Conger, who later became his second wife. He wrote parts of *The Sea of Cortez* and *The Forgotten Village* here.

They moved to NYC in the summer of 1941.



c. 1995.

Continue up Eardley to Spruce Street, and turn left. Go one block to the stop sign, and turn left on David Avenue. Go down to Central Avenue (the second traffic light) and turn left. Continue on to 2nd Street, and at the corner is a cottage with a cupola and weathervane.

This is . . .

## ELIZABETH HAMILTON'S COTTAGE

### 18. Elizabeth Hamilton's Cottage

222 Central Avenue  
(Corner of 2nd and Central)  
(PRIVATE RESIDENCE--PLEASE  
RESPECT OCCUPANT'S PRIVACY)

(Frances Purrington house, 1907). From 1915 to 1918, this was the home of Steinbeck's maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Hamilton, a major character in *East of Eden*. She died here in 1918. In 1936, Steinbeck and his brother-in-law built the small workroom attached to the main house.

A gold statue now stands outside the structure. It is fondly dubbed, *The Colossus of Gold*, and has inspired

a long-running cartoon of the same name.

When Steinbeck was writing *East of Eden*, he "warmed up" each day by writing a letter to his publisher at Viking Press, Pascal Covici. These notes were jotted in the same ledger book where Steinbeck wrote the first draft of the novel. These letters have been published as *Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters*.

From Central Avenue, turn right on 3rd Street, go down to Ocean View Blvd., and turn right. Down a few blocks, on your left, is a group of large tile-roofed buildings.

This is . . .

## HOPKINS MARINE STATION

### 19. Hopkins Marine Station

Ocean View Blvd. (at Cabrillo Point)

Originally established at Lovers Point in 1892, moved in 1917 to China Point (now called Cabrillo Point), it was the first marine laboratory on the Pacific Coast. Associated with Stanford University, it specializes in the study of intertidal life.

Steinbeck and his younger sister, Mary, played here as children and later studied zoology and English here in the summer of 1923. Their teacher, C.V. Taylor, was a disciple of the ideas of Berkeley's William Emerson Ritter, whose concept of the super-organism influenced Steinbeck.

During the early 1930s, while struggling to make ends



c. 1995.



meet, John and his wife, Carol, fished off the rocks here.

Dr. Walter K. Fisher (Director of Hopkins from 1917 to 1943) was an ardent critic of Ricketts' ecological approach in *Between Pacific Tides* and hindered prompt publication of the book. Dr. Rolf Bolin, who identified some of the specimens from *The Sea of Cortez* trip, was an ichthyologist associated with Hopkins. Some of Ricketts' papers were donated to Hopkins after his death in 1948.

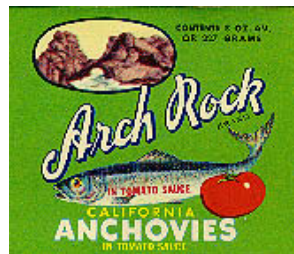


Lee Chong disinters his grandfather at China Point (*Cannery Row*, Chapter II), and two of the girls from the Bear Flag bring soldiers here (*Cannery Row*, Chapter XIV). It is the site of Chin Kee's squid yard (*Tortilla Flat*, Chapters XIV and XVI), and Elizabeth Wayne dreams of the bell buoy off China Point (*To a God Unknown*, Chapter 21). In the narrative part of *Sea of Cortez*, the *Western Flyer* passes by the ringing bell buoy and slips by the town of Pacific Grove on its way out of port. Hopkins' Rolf Bolin, whose name Steinbeck misspelled, is portrayed as the debunker of the Old Man of the Sea legend.

You are now on . . .  
**CANNERY ROW**

## 20. Cannery Row

Cannery Row, the mile-long street that runs along the waterfront of Monterey Bay is best known as the setting for John Steinbeck's 1945 novel of the same name, but few people realize that it extended into the city of Pacific Grove. The street runs eight blocks, bordered on the Monterey end by the Coast Guard Pier (built in 1934) and on the P.G. end by Hopkins Marine Station. The street was originally known as Ocean View Avenue on the Monterey side,



and was renamed "Cannery Row" in 1958, 13 years after *Cannery Row* and four years after *Sweet Thursday* were published. It was and is named Ocean View Blvd. on the P.G. side.

From the 1850s to 1906, China Point was occupied by a Chinese fishing village, one of the largest on the West Coast. The industrious people who lived here fished for, dried and exported squid and other fish. Despite the intolerance they encountered from their neighbors, the Chinese flourished here until the night of May 16, 1906, when a devastating fire destroyed almost all of the village.

The American Can Company, now the home of the American Tin Cannery Factory Outlets, produced many of the cans used by the local packing houses. Part of the Hovden Food Products Corp./Portola Packing Co. building (which operated from July 7, 1916 to February 9, 1973) was located in P.G. That site is now occupied by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which opened to the public in 1984.

1995 marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Cannery Row*, and the street has seen many changes. The overpowering smell of the reduction plants—which caused a great deal of contention between Monterey and P.G. and inspired the saying "Carmel-by-the-Sea, Monterey-by-the-Smell, and Pacific Grove-by-God"—

—is gone now, and tourism has replaced the canning and reduction of sardines as the main industry. Even with all the changes, the popularity of Steinbeck's work endures, and his readers are apt to hear the strains of church music from Doc's phonograph wafting over the Row.



Ed Ricketts' lab at 800 Cannery Row, c. 1995.

"Cannery Row in Monterey in California is a poem, a stink, a grating noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a dream." (*Cannery Row*)

**You have now completed your virtual tour of John Steinbeck's Pacific Grove.**