



“NEW HORIZONS FOR PACIFIC NORTHWEST HISTORY”

≈ With an HISTORIC TACOMA WATERFRONT PATH OF HISTORY Project ≈

By Michael Kenneth Hemp, Historian
1983 Founder and President Emeritus of the Cannery Row Foundation
Monterey • California

President • The History Company
11001 134th Street NW
Gig Harbor, Washington 98329
www.thehistorycompany.com
mkhemp@thehistorycompany.com
(831) 236-2990

© 2018 MK Hemp/The History Company

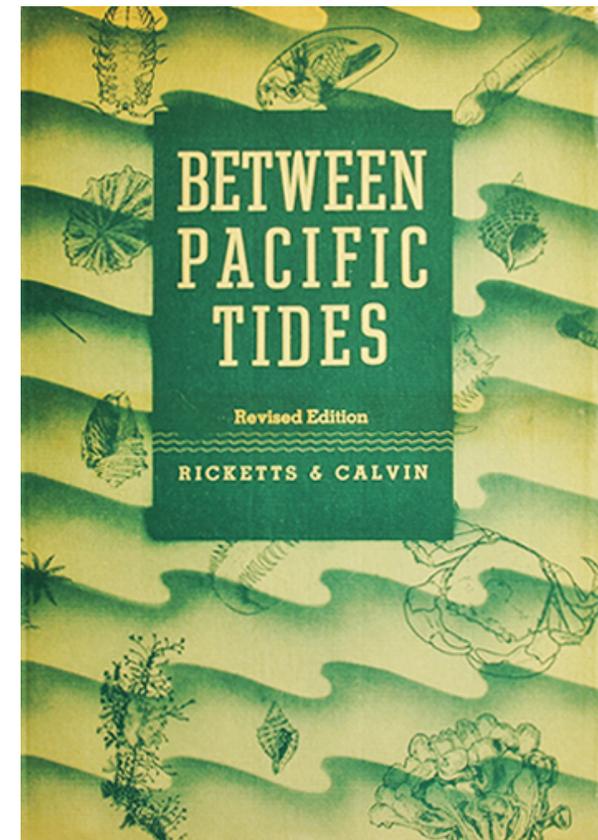
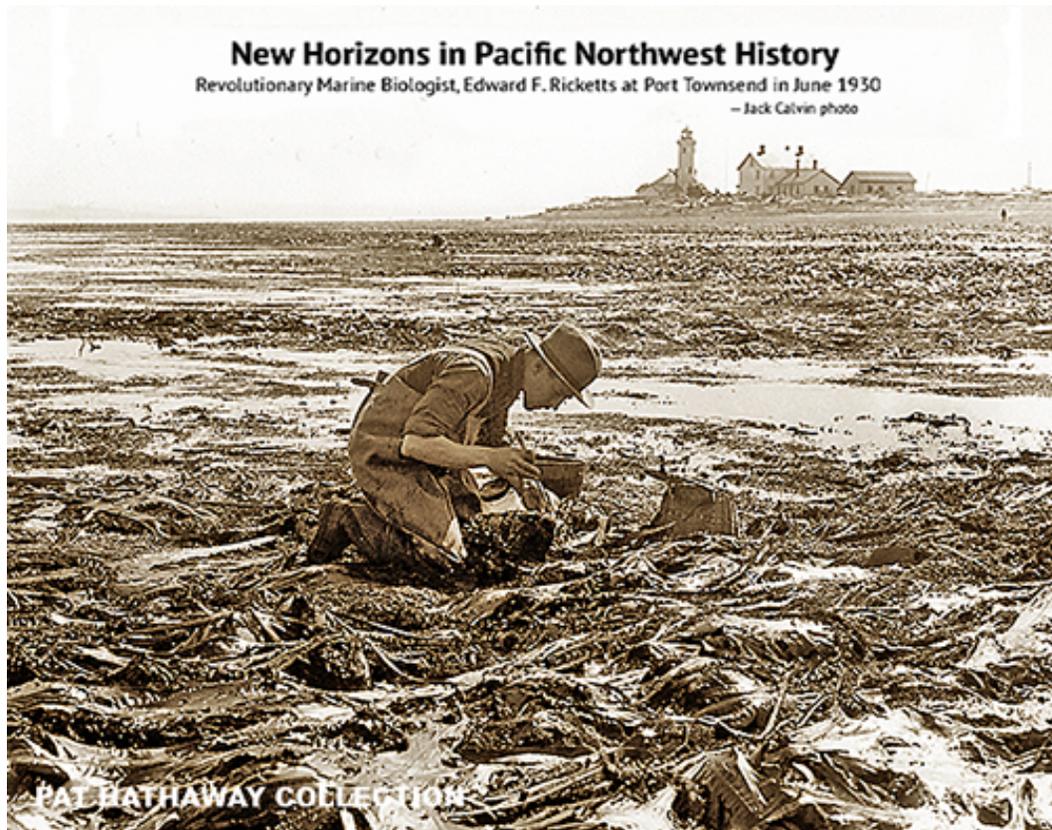
NEW HORIZONS FOR PACIFIC NORTHWEST HISTORY
“Finding Ed Ricketts” by Michael Kenneth Hemp

An Overview of “New Horizons for Pacific Northwest History” (by segment):

1. “Finding Ed Ricketts”
Who he was and his connection to the Pacific Northwest
2. Ed Ricketts and John Steinbeck
The highest symbiosis of science and literature in history.
3. Voyage to the Sea of Cortez, 1940.
“Grapes of Wrath” – “Between Pacific Tides” – and the
“Log From the Sea of Cortez” legacies.
4. Pacific Northwest boat-building’s relationship to Monterey, California.
PNW Croatian boatbuilders and Monterey’s Sicilian fishermen.
5. Preservation of Tacoma’s historic waterfront.
An historic waterfront “Path of History” from-to Foss Waterway Seaport.
6. Foss Waterway Seaport: “Home of the Western Flyer Navigational Artifacts”?
Acquisition of the Fry Collection to augment Tacoma’s destination value.

1. “FINDING ED RICKETTS”

In June 1930, at Port Townsend, Washington, a photograph was taken by Jack Calvin the co-author of an early marine science shoreline handbook that would eventually be published in 1939 – by Stanford University Press: “Between Pacific Tides” by Edward Ricketts and Jack Calvin. This book ushered in the revolutionary theory of Ed Ricketts’ ecological vision. It is still essential for students of marine biology today, and one of the most successful books ever published by Stanford University Press, now in its 5th edition.



Ed Ricketts was born in Chicago in 1897, attended University of Chicago for two years and in 1923 – with urging of students and teachers there with early knowledge and experience at Stanford’s Hopkins Marine Station – he departed for Pacific Grove, California. There he became a junior partner in Pacific Biological Laboratories, a biological supply business with University of Chicago friend and room-mate, Albert Galigher, to provide schools and laboratories all over the country with both marine and terrestrial specimens for research and education. About a year later, Albert Galigher moved his microscope slide specialty part of the business to Berkeley, with Ricketts remaining at PBL in Pacific Grove. In 1929 a new laboratory was constructed from an existing house on Ocean View Avenue, known to all as “Cannery Row” in Monterey. Ed Ricketts’ PBL home and laboratory have become a world-famous historic, literary, and ecological site and destination today on the Row.



Original Pacific Biological Laboratories logotype (Pacific Grove site).



The original stucco Lab burned in 1936, replaced by this historic wooden Depression structure.

Only in recent years have we Ricketts researchers become aware that every spring-summer of the 1930s, Ed Ricketts was absent from his PBL on Cannery Row. He was on tidal invertebrate research and documentation expeditions all over the Pacific Northwest, especially around Puget Sound. His headquarters was a simple summer cabin on the Hood Canal shoreline (an Ice Age-carved fjord) near Hoodspport, Washington. In the decade of the 1930s Ricketts traveled from this same location over vast reaches of the Pacific Northwest, to such distant and remote research field sites such as north Vancouver Island, British Columbia and beyond. His Pacific Northwest research contributed significantly to his eventual revolution in marine biology known today as ECOLOGY.



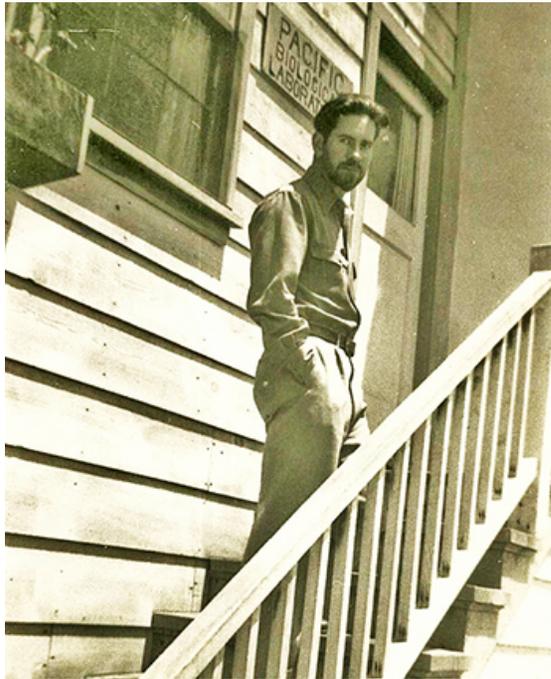
Early Ed Ricketts collection and research sites from Hoodspport.



Hoodspport in 1934 (Mason County Museum photo)

2. ED RICKETTS AND JOHN STEINBECK

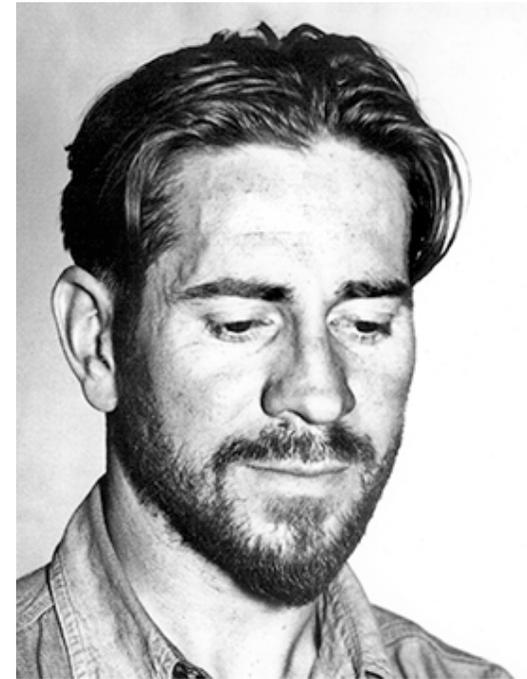
Acclaimed “The highest symbiosis of science and literature in the American Experience,” Ed Ricketts and John Steinbeck were introduced in the fall of 1930 at a party at Jack and Sasha Calvin’s art studio in Carmel Woods. The friendship and equal admiration were immediate and began the closest friendship of Steinbeck’s life. In fact, John used Ed Ricketts’ persona as major characters in six Steinbeck novels: in “In Dubious Battle,” in “The Moon Is Down,” in “The Grapes of Wrath,” in “East of Eden,” and Doc in “Cannery Row” and “Sweet Thursday.”



Ed Ricketts on the steps of PBL in the 1930s.



John Steinbeck at 40 (Pat Hathaway Collection)



Ed Ricketts (Bryant Fitch/Pat Hathaway Collection)

3. THE WESTERN FLYER, SEA OF CORTEZ, AND PACIFIC NORTHWEST BOAT BUILDING

The Western Flyer was built by the Western Boatbuilding Company on Tacoma’s waterfront in 1937—and this Croatian Tacoma-built purse-seiner, like many others, was designed specifically for use in the Sicilian sardine fleet that made Monterey the “Sardine Capital of the World.” As Cannery Row historian, my Monterey research is now linking that crucial historic relationship with Tacoma’s historic boat building tradition, largely unrecognized and unappreciated outside the Pacific Northwest.



Western Flyer after launch in 1937 from Western Boatbuilding Company, Tacoma.



Western Flyer in Monterey harbor’s Sicilian dominated sardine fishing fleet, 1948.

The Western Flyer was one of a number of boats built by Tacoma’s A.M. Petrich-owned Western Boat Building Company in 1937 on the Tacoma waterfront. Petrich partnered with fellow Croatians Frank Berry and his son Tony to build the boat which Tony would then skipper in the rapidly expanding fishing business, particularly as part of Monterey’s rise to become “Sardine Capital of the World.”

By the spring of 1940, Steinbeck was considered by some as a Communist after publication of “Grapes of Wrath” in 1939. The Sicilian boat owners in Monterey’s fleet refused to charter a purse-seiner to Mexico’s Sea of Cortez. It was Croatian skipper Tony Berry who accepted the charter, his presence in the Monterey fleet made possible in part due to his marriage into the Sicilian Enea family in 1936.

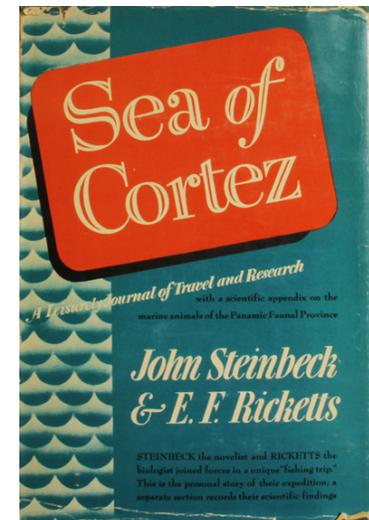
The collaboration of Ricketts’ thinking and Steinbeck’s writing on the voyage to the Gulf of California aboard the Western Flyer resulted in a book that made it the most famous fishing boat of all time and known world-wide for its ecological role in the co-authored “Sea of Cortez” with Ricketts in 1941. The book was sub-titled *A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research*. Half of it was a narrative of the trip and the other half a scientific section of the species collected, many discovered on the voyage. In 1951, after Ed Ricketts death after a collision with the Del Monte Express train on Cannery Row in May 1948, it became “The Log From the Sea of Cortez” – without the scientific section and with only Steinbeck’s name on the title. Importantly, however, it was a collaborative early anthem of Ricketts’ ecological vision a decade before Rachel Carson’s “Silent Spring.”



The Sea of Cortez, the same now as then. (Steve Webster photo)



Tony Berry and Steinbeck on the flying bridge (SJSU photo).



Steinbeck’s only co-authored book.

In 1970 the name of the Western Flyer was changed to “Gemini” and lost any trace of its identity, location, and fate. Clarence Fry acquired the “Gemini” from Whitney-Fidalgo in Homer, Alaska, in 1976 and immediately upgraded its chain steering to hydraulic controls. His son, Dennis, could not part with all the old brass parts and

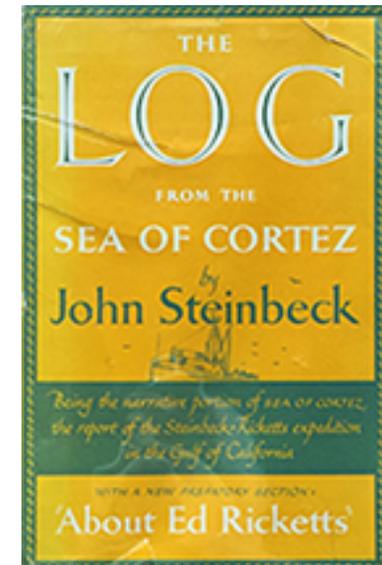
kept them, even when moving from Alaska to Northern California after leaving the fishing business. These are the same brass flying bridge ship’s wheel, helm-stand, boxed flying bridge compass, articulated brass flying bridge shifter, and deckhouse bracket compass binnacle used by skipper Tony Berry, John Steinbeck, Ed Ricketts, deckhands Sparky Enea and Tiny Colletto, and engineer Tex Travis on a Croatian-built Tacoma purse-seiner that became one of the world’s most famous boats for her role in 1941 publication of “The Sea of Cortez” by John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts—and the 1951 publication of the book’s narrative section of the voyage as “Log from the Sea of Cortez” by John Steinbeck.



Sea of Cortez flying bridge wheel.



Some of the Fry Collection Exhibit components.



1951 “Log” by John Steinbeck

4. PRESERVATION OF TACOMA WATERFRONT MARITIME HERITAGE

What is obvious to me is the impending loss of some of the crucial character of the historic Tacoma waterfront. What is Tacoma without it? The Foss Waterway Seaport is a magnificent anchor for the district but stands alone without an easy support infrastructure: an HISTORIC TACOMA WATERFRONT PATH OF HISTORY. Two particular structures shout for restoration and/or incorporation into heritage development design that helps keep the unique character of the Tacoma waterfront that is about to be lost.

Martinac Shipbuilding and the Petrich Western Boatbuilding Company sites are crucial anchor-sites, among many others (completely gone) that deserve identification and interpretation in a consistent style of information signage for locals, regional, and national visitors to such a historical waterfront district. Further, there is only about a year and a half to prepare for the windfall publicity and promotional opportunities arising from the Western Flyer's full Puget Sound "shake down tour" which will certainly feature a return to her birthplace on the Tacoma waterfront. The easiest and least expensive visitor, heritage, and recreational enhancement would be the completion of early phases of a robust Historic Tacoma Waterfront Path of History that circles the Foss Waterway, eventually with tours, shuttles, and water taxis operating across the Waterway in both directions, from the Historic Tacoma Waterfront Path of History's Start/End point at the Foss Waterway Seaport.



Foss Waterway Seaport Maritime Museum, FWS photo



Martinac Shipbuilding Corp. (MK Hemp photo)



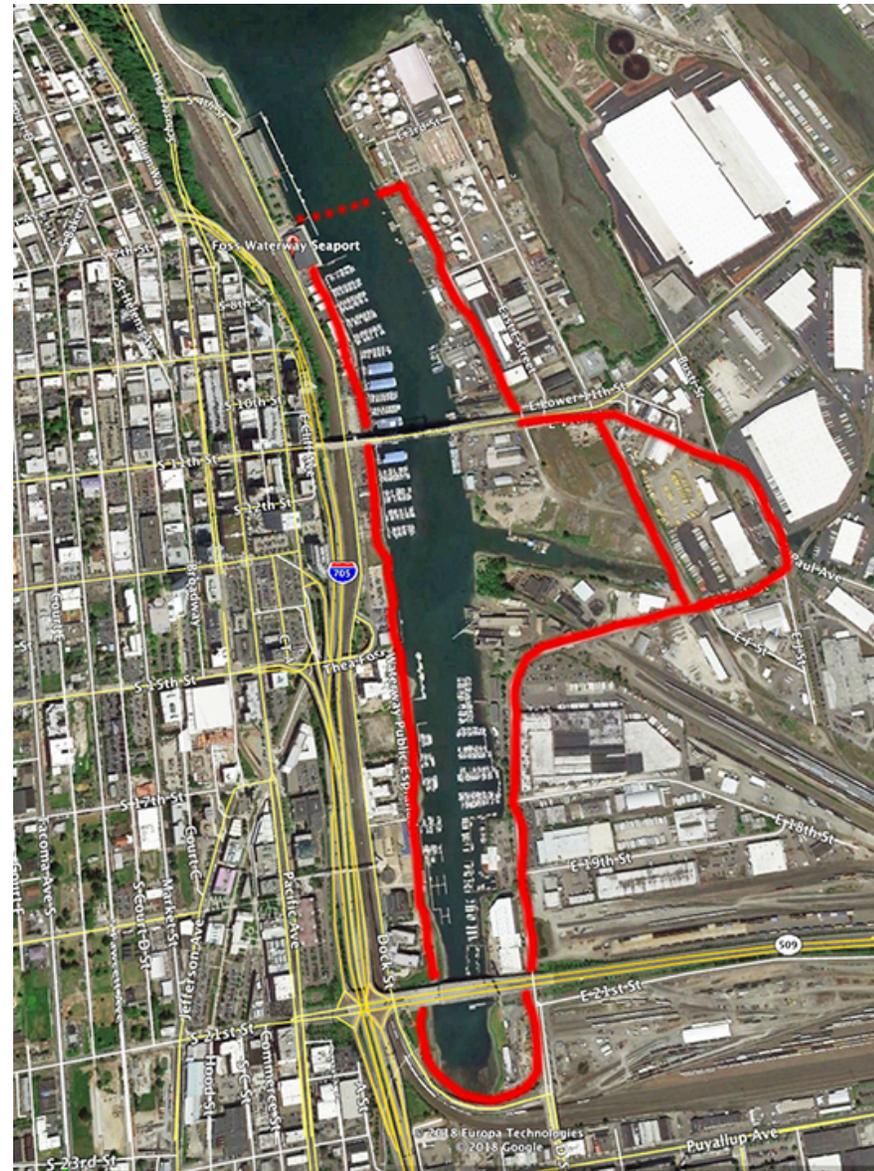
Waterfront Path of History

Conceptual route for an
HISTORIC TACOMA WATERFRONT
PATH OF HISTORY:

An “official” starting point would be at the Foss Waterway Seaport Maritime Museum, although the PATH could be entered and exited at any point by use of a Seaport website cel phone app, strategically placed historic signage, and interactive electronic kiosks.

Docent tours and briefings, interactive video kiosk historical orientation, and PATH concierge information would be located at the Foss Waterway Seaport (where maps, brochures, membership applications, and PATH updates can be distributed) to help establish it as the optimal starting and ending point for the HISTORIC TACOMA WATERFRONT PATH OF HISTORY.

Shuttle tours, with eventual water taxi connections, and participating visitor serving network businesses could serve as information and route infrastructure.
(Hypothetical route shown for visualization)



5. ESTABLISH TACOMA AS “THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE WESTERN FLYER” WITH THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF HER ORIGINAL NAVIGATIONAL ARTIFACTS

Establishment of Tacoma’s historic waterfront as the “The Birthplace of the Western Flyer” is crucial to making maximum advantage of the massive, free, world-wide media windfall which will be generated in the lead-up to and launch of the restored Western Flyer at the Port Townsend scheduled for late 2020. The Western Flyer will call on Tacoma during its “shakedown tour” of Puget Sound before voyaging south to her home port of Monterey, from where she will conduct alternating annual educational science voyages from Sitka to the Sea of Cortez.

Tacoma can and should be prepared for the opportunity to add a completely new level of travel destination identification, enhancement, and pride by its association with the Western Flyer’s distinctive world-famous historic, literary, and ecological recognition and regard: as the “Birthplace of the Western Flyer.” This new status can be magnified further by becoming the permanent repository and exhibition location of the navigational artifacts of the Western Flyer. The Foss Waterway Seaport, is of course, the natural choice and qualified repository and exhibition facility for the “Crown Jewels of the Western Flyer”: The flying bridge brass wheel, its three-part brass helm-stand assembly, its articulated flying bridge brass shifter, the boxed flying bridge compass, and the main bracket compass of the deckhouse – appraised by Roger Ottenbach, Cutty Sark Maritime Antiques. These artifacts seek acquisition, preservation, and permanent exhibition by either Tacoma or Monterey.

The Western Flyer will be significantly absent from Monterey for its educational missions of inspiring youth into the marine sciences. Tacoma, however, has the opportunity to continually exhibit these important Tacoma maritime heritage artifacts while growing the destination value of the waterfront to the benefit of residents and visitors. This would be especially beneficial when the Western Flyer is periodically in port and berthed at the Foss Waterway Seaport. The professional marine appraisal value of this collection is less than \$68,762.00.

Full appraisal on request.

WESTERN FLYER NAVIGATIONAL ARTIFACTS APPRAISAL SUMMARY
ROGER OTTENBACH • CUTTY SARK NAUTICAL ANTIQUE APPRAISAL SERVICE • (253) 381-1311



Flying Bridge Brass Ship's Wheel and Brass Helmstand Assembly \$52,000.00



Deck House Main Compass Bracket Binnacle \$ 8,000.00



Flying Bridge Boxed Compass \$ 5,100.00



Flying Bridge Brass Articulated Shifter \$ 3,652.00

APPRAISAL TOTAL (Auction reserve if required) \$68,762.00
THE FRY COLLECTION OF "WESTERN FLYER" NAVIGATIONAL ARTIFACTS

Much more detailed information is available from Michael K. Hemp and The History Company.

Michael Kenneth Hemp

The History Company

P.O. Box 31, Wauna, WA 98329

(831) 236-2990

mkhemp@thehistorycompany.com

www.thehistorycompany.com