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NATIONAL REGISTER

OCT 14 1994

OHP

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

historic name: Pacific Biological Laboratories/"Doc's Lab"

2. LOCATION

street & number: 800 Cannery Row

Not for publication N/A  
Vicinity N/A

city/town: Monterey

state: California code: CA county: Monterey code: 053 Zip code: 93940

3 CLASSIFICATION

ownership of property: public /local

category of property: building

number of resources within property:

| Contributing      | Noncontributing              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>1</u>          | <u>          </u> buildings  |
| <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> sites      |
| <u>3</u>          | <u>          </u> structures |
| <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> objects    |
| <u>4</u>          | <u>0</u> Total               |

Total of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that the nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

11/10/94  
Date

California Office of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property, \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria, \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register.

\_\_\_ other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]

Signature of Keeper

12/29/94

Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Functions: Education/Research Facility: Laboratory

Current Functions: Social/Clubhouse

7. DESCRIPTION

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Architectural Classification:

no style

Materials:

foundation: concrete

walls: wood

roof: asphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.  See continuation sheet.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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Certifying official has considered the significance of the property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register criteria  A  B  C  D

Areas of Significance: Literature/Science

Period of Significance: 1937-1945

Significant Dates: 1937, 1945

Significant Person(s):  Ricketts, Edward Flanders   
 Steinbeck, John

Cultural affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Onweiler (contractor)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and periods of significance noted above.  See continuation sheet.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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 See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation of file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Building Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State historic preservation office

Other state agency

Federal agency

University

Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA  
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Acreage of Property: less than one acre.

UTM References:

Verbal Boundry Description:  See continuation sheet.

Boundry Justification:  See continuation sheet.

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11. FORM PREPARED BY  
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Name/Title: Kent L. Seavey/Preservation Consultant

Organization: City of Monterey

Date: August 1, 1994

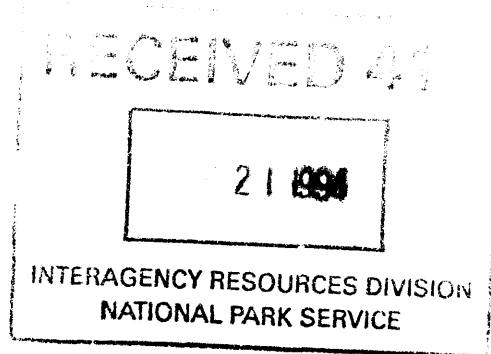
Street & Number: City Hall

Telephone: (408) 646-3759

City of Town: Monterey

State: California

Zip: 93940



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number: 7 Page 1 Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA

The Pacific Biological Laboratories is a small, unpainted, two story wood-frame building toward the northwest end of Cannery Row in Monterey. From the date of its construction in 1937, to the death of the biological specimen supply company's owner, Edward F. Ricketts in 1948, "Doc's Lab" was a gathering place for bohemians, artists, writers and thinkers who would make major contributions to American science and letters as an outgrowth of their association through the lab. It was reconstructed on the site of a previous laboratory, destroyed by fire in 1936. Most changes to the exterior of the building appear on the rear (NE) elevation where the original open staircase leading to the second floor was replaced, to include a full width open porch, and a door added. The original interiors have been modified over time to meet the needs of a men's social club and health and safety regulations. The Pacific Biological Laboratories retains to a high degree its original appearance, conveying a strong sense of time and place and continuing its historical associations with American literature.

The lab is rectangular in plan, resting on a concrete foundation. The exterior wall cladding is board-and-batten, except for the facade (SW) along Cannery Row. This front elevation is characterized by horizontal shiplap-siding with a ribbon band of five 6/6 double-hung wood-sash windows along the upper floor. Only a wooden overhead garage door, and the side approach staircase, with landing, leading to the second floor entry, occur at the ground level. The original one light paneled door was replaced with a slab type, for security, about 1955. A similar stair at the rear (NE) of the building was replaced with a full width open porch, reached by a straight reversed open staircase in 1955. The flat roof of the lab is covered in tar and gravel, and the open porch with corrugated plastic.

When the building was purchased by a men's social club in 1955 there was a bathroom door opening directly into the second floor kitchen. Health and safety codes required its closure, and an outside entry for the facility. This precipitated the full width open porch and staircase change to the rear (NE).

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   7   Page   2   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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The interior second floor rooms, which included an office/living area at the front (SW) with storage space and a kitchen to the rear (NE) were also modified to meet the needs of the social club. The ground floor interior remains basically as it was during Ricketts tenure, without his laboratory apparatus.

The garage entry is on the NW side with a sloping concrete driveway. Two open spaces to the SE, separated by single wall wood partitions and open wood shelving, constituted the specimen preparation area.

To the rear of the lab, on a cement deck, are two concrete specimen holding tanks and a metal reduction vat. The concrete specimen holding tanks were in place when Ricketts first purchased the property from Vicente Rodriguez in 1928. They had been used as part of a fish salting operation before Ricketts employed them to store dogfish and other marine specimens. The metal reduction vat, at the rear of the back stairway, was constructed by Max N. Schaefer about 1939 for the production of Basking Shark liver oil, a cortin simulating substance thought to be beneficial for arthritis. A wooden deck at the rear (NE) of the property covers a larger concrete holding tank.

The cement deck to the rear (NE) of the lab is flanked on the NW by the three story concrete wall of an adjoining commercial building. On the SE side of the deck, a one story wire covered wooden framework separates the lab from a new hotel building, currently under construction.

While the setting for the Pacific Biological Laboratories has changed over time with the growth and development of Cannery Row, it still retains its industrial character, sandwiched between two large buildings and backed up to Monterey Bay, much as it was during its period of significance when "Doc's Lab" was the catalyst for pioneering marine studies along the Pacific Coast, and the focal point for two of Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winning author John Steinbeck's novels.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   8   Page   2   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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Toward the end of the nineteenth century whaling declined, then ceased altogether because of the development of gas and electric lighting. The Chinese, through increasing restrictive legislation and regulation, were forced to limit their catches and the species they fished. Spanish salmon trollers and Italians from Genoa, then Sicily slowly assumed control of the Monterey Bay market.

In 1906 the Chinese fishing village that had existed since the mid 1850s at the present site of Hopkins Marine Station (at the northwest end of Cannery Row), was destroyed by fire and its population dispersed.

Hopkins Marine Station originally opened in 1892 on Lovers Point in Pacific Grove as the Hopkins Seaside Laboratory, the first marine biological station on the Pacific Coast. Modeled after the Stazione Zoologica in Naples, Italy, it was the product of Stanford University's first president, David Starr Jordan, an ichthyologist by training, and Timothy Hopkins, adopted son of railroad magnate Mark Hopkins. It was designed as a year-round research institute for scholars country-wide, and offered summer courses in zoology and physiology for graduate students. In 1917 it was moved to the old Chinese village site at Cabrillo Point. and expanded, with year-round courses, under the direction of Dr. Walter K. Fisher.

As early as 1896 Frank E. Booth, president of the Sacramento River Packer's Association, tried the first experiments with salmon packing at Monterey. However, it would take Booth seven more years to successfully establish his Monterey Packing Company on the bay. This was one year after Harry Malpas, with Japanese financial backing, opened the Monterey Fishing and Canning Company, the first such facility on Ocean View Avenue-destined to become Cannery Row.

Between 1902 and 1916 seven more canneries and two fish reduction facilities were established along the rocky bay-shore between Monterey and Pacific Grove.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   8   Page   3   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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The rapid expansion of the Monterey sardine fishery can be credited to three individuals; Knut Hovden, a graduate of the Norwegian Fisheries College in Oslo whose inventive genius afforded the industry its potential for unlimited production; Pietro Ferrante, a Sicilian fisherman from Booth's Sacramento River operation whose application of appropriate technology in the form of advanced netting techniques assured a catch equal to processing improvements; and the third, Max N. Schaefer, an innovative entrepreneur who introduced the lucrative reduction and sardine by-product business to the industry.

Because of the closure of the North Sea fishery during World War I, Monterey's sardine pack became a vital wartime industry supplying canned rations to the Allied Forces. Cannery Row's sardine production grew from 75,000 cases in 1915 to 1,400,000 by the wars end in 1918. The recession in the industry that followed the "Great War" into the 1920s saw a move away from food processing towards increased reliance on reduction to increase profits, at the uncertain expense of the fishery.

Although they would not meet until 1930, it was in the context of this period of change in the Monterey fishing industry, in 1923, that Ed Ricketts and John Steinbeck would first come into contact with Monterey Bay. Steinbeck, as a student at Stanford University, through a summer course in marine biology, offered at Hopkins Marine Station, and Ricketts, as a partner in a newly established biological supply house in Pacific Grove, the Pacific Biological Laboratories.

Steinbeck and Ricketts shared certain things in common. Both attended university but never earned academic degrees. They had a wide range of knowledge and were fully committed to their chosen professions. Probably the most important thing they shared was a belief in the tradition of scientific naturalism. It was their differing views on the holistic concept of nature that brought to their friendship the powerful and synergistic intellectual interplay that marked their almost twenty year association, much of it spent in the company of other creative individuals at "Doc's Lab", the Pacific Biological Laboratories.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   6   Page   4   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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**EDWARD FLANDERS ROBB RICKETTS (1897-1948)**

Ed Ricketts was born in Chicago in 1897. He had a public school education, with brief attendance at the Illinois State Normal School, before entering the army in World War I. His first contact with ocean sciences came in 1919, after his discharge from military service. This was at the University of Chicago, where Ricketts came under the influence and critical guidance of the early ecologist, Warder Clyde Allee.

A brilliant scholar, Allee developed a theory about the universality of social behavior among animals. In his concept of social transition, any given animal (including man) behaves differently in a group than as an individual. Allee's ideas were significant in the development of Ricketts' own views regarding the subtle interdependence of organisms and physical phenomena, which Ed would later develop in his pioneering study of the habits and habitats of animals living in the Pacific Coast's intertidal zone, *Between Pacific Tides*.

Ricketts married in 1922, and in 1923, with his new wife and their first child, moved from Chicago to the Monterey Peninsula, where he and former schoolmate Albert E. Galiger established a biological specimen supply company, the Pacific Biological Laboratories, at 165 Fountain St. in Pacific Grove. Galiger soon moved on, but Ricketts stayed, incorporating Pacific Biological Laboratories with six shareholders in 1924, employing family and friends to assist with the work. As part of the business he maintained an extensive correspondence with the scientific community on a broad scale. Over time he became known throughout academic circles. Because of his breadth of knowledge of marine animals, many correspondents assumed Ricketts held advanced degrees and addressed their responses to "Dr. Ricketts," which earned him the nickname "Doc."

In 1928 the lab was forced to move when the original building was scheduled for demolition to make room for new construction. Ricketts found a suitable location, backing on the waterfront in New Monterey, at 740 Ocean View Avenue (Cannery Row).

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   8   Page   5   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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The new lab was on a fifty foot frontage and had, "a stoutly built 3 room plastered house, in fair condition, and a cement floored shed in fair shape," with cement tanks for storing specimens. The purchase price was \$8,000. In 1929 the lab published its first catalogue with the University Apparatus Company of Berkeley, California.

The lab was directly across Ocean View Avenue from Flora Wood's Lone Star Restaurant, which doubled as a house of ill repute, as did the La Ida Cafe, just a few doors NW of the Lone Star. The Wing Chong Market, owned by Chinese entrepreneur Won Yee, separated these enterprises. Above the Lone Star, across the S.P. Railroad tracks to the SW was a large one story men's rooming house used by cannery workers, known as the "palace". Because of its social amenities this area became the cultural core of Cannery Row.

"Doc" Ricketts had a multi-faceted personality with broad interests and wide ranging knowledge in areas outside his chosen profession of marine biology, particularly music, philosophy and poetry, which he also approached holistically. The lab, as well as being a place of business, became a gathering place for Monterey area bohemians, artists, writers and thinkers bound together, in part, by their communal poverty.

Ricketts writer friend Jack Calvin coauthored *Between Pacific Tides*, and local artist Ritchie Lovejoy illustrated the book. Marine biologist and colleague Joel Hedgpeth would publish Ed's unfinished manuscript, *The Outer Shore*, the third in a trilogy examining the marine life of the Pacific Coast, after Ricketts untimely death in 1948. The second part of that trilogy was *The Sea of Cortez* on which Ricketts and John Steinbeck collaborated.

## **RICKETTS AND STEINBECK**

Ed Ricketts met John Steinbeck at a party in Jack Calvin's house in Carmel in 1930. They took an immediate liking to each other. As author Brian St. Pierre noted in his *John Steinbeck the California Years*, "Each was the friend the other needed".

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   8   Page   6   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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Ricketts became Steinbeck's closest personal and intellectual companion for nearly two decades. The novelist was at the beginning of his professional career, *Cup of Gold* had been published in 1929 and *Pastures of Heaven* would come in 1931. Ed Ricketts would become a critical sounding board and task master for Steinbeck's writing. In *John Steinbeck and Edward F. Ricketts the Shaping of a Novelist*, Richard Astro writes that Ricketts'

passion for holistic and ecological thinking, his associational beliefs about the behavior of men and animals in groups, his doctrine of breaking through, and his disdain for the self-oriented acquisition of material wealth provided Steinbeck with many of his central thematic tenets.

Four of Steinbeck's books are dedicated to Ricketts, and he serves in varying degrees as the source of Steinbeck's personae in six novels and novelettes. Their closest association, however, took place in the late 1930s, after a devastating fire destroyed the lab in 1936.

On November 25, 1936 fire broke out in the Del Mar Cannery, abutting the lab to the SE. Ed Ricketts escaped the fire with his car, his typewriter and his underwear. Everything else was lost, except the manuscript for *Between Pacific Tides* which was at Stanford University being reviewed for publication. In the fire's aftermath, which was not covered by insurance, the Pacific Biological Laboratories, Inc. found it necessary to sell the NW half of their property to Won Yee, owner of the Wing Chong Market, in order to rebuild the lab and continue business.

With design input from his friends, Ricketts and Roy Lehman, a part time lab employee, worked with Mr. Onweiler, a contractor, to complete the new building by January of 1937. Another setback was the delay in publication of *Between Pacific Tides*, caused by Dr. Walter K. Fisher, director of the Hopkins Marine Station, who thought the work too radical. Ironically, the actual publication, in 1939, came a week away from that of Steinbeck's great novel, *Grapes of Wrath*.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 7 Pacific Biological Lab, Monterey Co., CA

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In July of 1939 John Steinbeck became a stockholder in the Pacific Biological Laboratories, and its vice president, with a six thousand dollar loan to keep the business going. Between March and April of 1940 Steinbeck and Ricketts traveled to Mexico's Sea of Cortez in preparation for their collaboration on a book of the same name, which was published in December of that year. A further collaboration on a handbook of invertebrates of San Francisco Bay never came to pass. Between 1945 and his death in 1948 Ricketts made two trips to Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands, studying fauna for a further collaboration with Steinbeck. *The Outer Shore*.

### **CANNERY ROW AND "DOC'S LAB"**

John Steinbeck was in New York in 1944 when he wrote *Cannery Row*, a thinly veiled account of the characters and incidents he had encountered along Monterey's Ocean View Avenue, and at the Pacific Biological Laboratories, which he later described "as strange an operation as ever outraged the corporate laws of California."

Because of Steinbeck's writing skills, honed through his long and close association with Ed Ricketts, "Doc" and the Pacific Biological Laboratories gained worldwide fame. Ed Ricketts "Doc's Lab" became the epicenter of Cannery Row. According to their mutual friend Joel Hedgpeth, *Cannery Row* changed Ricketts' life. "The collector of considerable experience had become himself a literary specimen to be sought out and collected socially."

While Edward F. "Doc" Ricketts is gone, the Pacific Biological Laboratories, "Doc's Lab", remains through the efforts of some of his friends who had the foresight in the mid 1950s to buy the lab and preserve it with very little change, as a social club. It may be the most well known literary icon in American fiction of the twentieth century.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   8   Page   8   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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Few literary icons of the importance of "Doc's Lab" remain in America. There are more from the nineteenth century than the twentieth. The Capt. John Turner House in Salem, Mass., was the model for Nathaniel Hawthorne's *House of Seven Gables*. The Evangeline Memorial State Park, north of St. Martinville in Louisiana honors Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem, *Evangeline*, about the French Acadians after the French expelled them from Nova Scotia, in 1755. Henry David Thoreau's Walden pond is still extant, though threatened.

The only twentieth century novelists represented by physical reminders of their literary achievement appear to be Thomas Wolfe, whose boyhood home near Asheville, North Carolina is the "Dixieland" described in his monumental work, *Look Homeward Angel*, and William Faulkner's Oxford, Mississippi. Oxford was the source for Faulkner's mythical Yoknapatawpha County in his Nobel Prize winning multi-volume chronicle of the deep south. Robinson Jeffers "Hawk Tower" in Carmel, California may qualify, although Jeffers' medium was poetry.

It is ironic that a man described as "the most colorful and complicated character in the development of marine biology in California," whose pioneering studies of intertidal life along the Pacific Coast are still basic texts in their field, should attain heroic status as the principal character of a popular novel. But such is the case with Edward F. "Doc" Ricketts. His Pacific Biological Laboratories was the physical locus where much of the literary vision of he and his closest friend, novelist John Steinbeck matured. "Doc's Lab" remains the core, of Steinbeck's Cannery Row, both real and imagined. The lab retains its historic appearance to a remarkable degree, evoking a particularly strong sense of time and place. It should be listed in the National Register at the national level of significance.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number   9   Page   1   Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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Astro, Richard., John Steinbeck and Edward F. Ricketts The Shaping of a  
Novelist. Univ. of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1973.

Cannery Row. Map of property ownership, 1972.

Hemp, Michael K., Cannery Row The History of Old Ocean View Avenue.  
The History Co.: Pacific Grove, CA, 1986.

Mangelsdorf, Tom, A History of Steinbeck's Cannery Row. Western Tanager  
Press: Santa Cruz, CA, 1986.

McCosker, John E., "The View From The Great Tide Pool". Pacific Discovery,  
Oct-Dec 1986.

Pacific Biological Laboratories, Inc., board minutes and correspondence  
from 1923 to 1937, in the collection of Edward F.  
Ricketts, Jr., Mill Valley, CA.

Personal interviews with Edward F. Ricketts, Jr., son of Edward F. Ricketts.  
6/15/94; 7/10/94; 7/28/94.

Ricketts, Anna, unpublished manuscript of recollections by the first wife of  
Edward F. Ricketts. Private collection, 1985.

St. Pierre, Brian, John Steinbeck The California Years, Chronicle Books:  
San Francisco, 1983.

Valjean, Nelson, John Steinbeck Errant Knight. Chronicle Books:  
San Francisco, 1975.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number: 10 Page 1 Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co., CA  
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Acreage of Property: less than one acre.

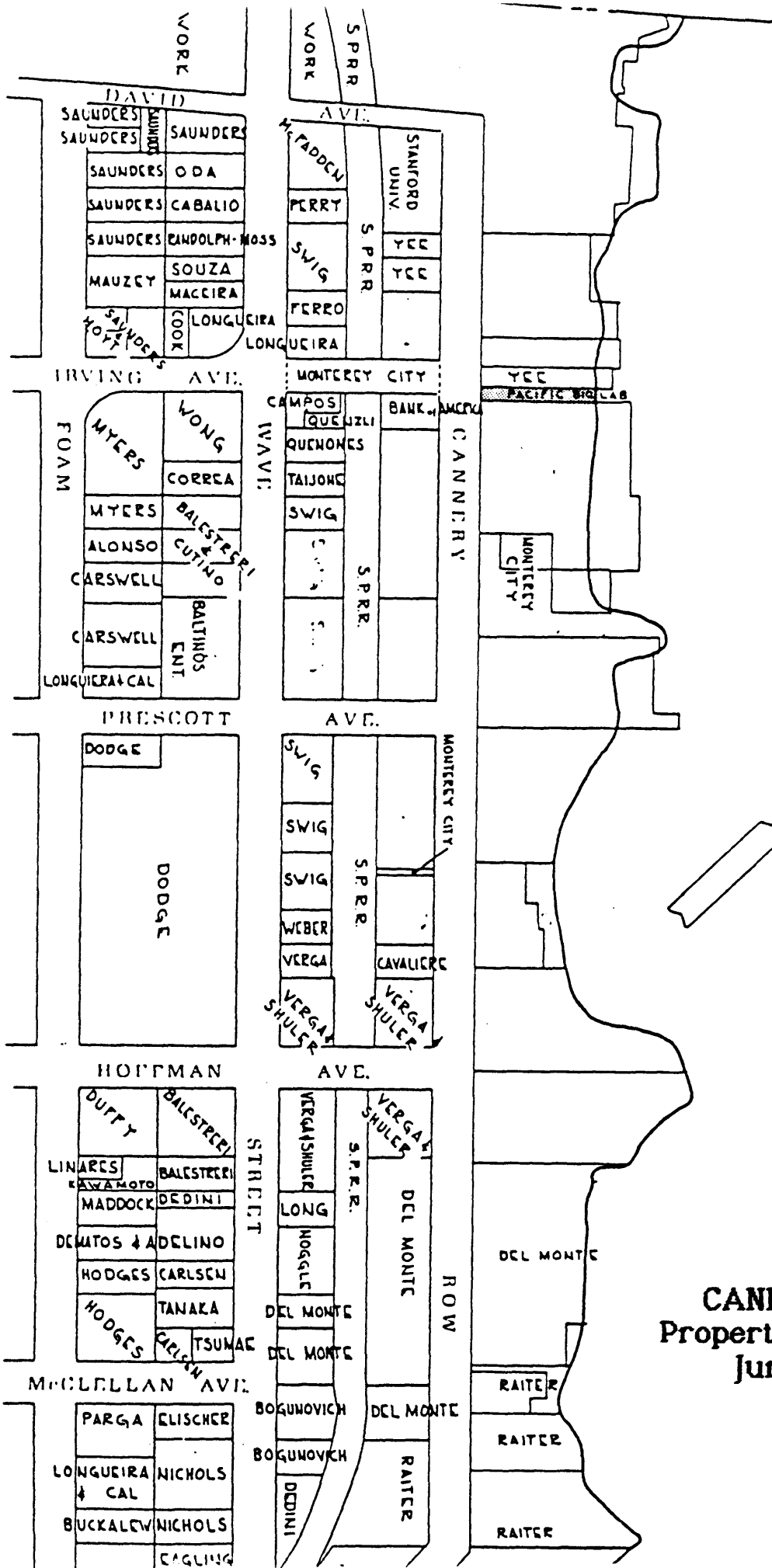
UTM References: 10/598 390/4052 740

Verbal Boundry Description:

Beginning at a point 357.79 feet SE of the NW corner of the intersection of David Avenue and Cannery Row in Monterey, thense running 95 feet NE, bounded on the NW by commercial property, Thense running 25 feet SE, bounded on the NE by Monterey Bay, thense running 89 feet SW, bounded on the SE by commercial property, thense running 25 feet NW to the point of beginning, bounded on the SW by Cannery Row, the property is identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 001-011-05.

Boundry Justification:

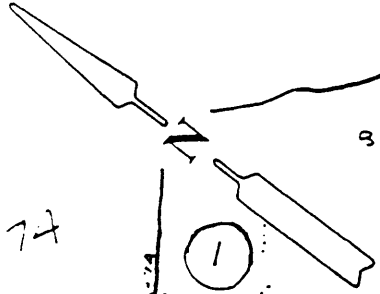
The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the laboratory.



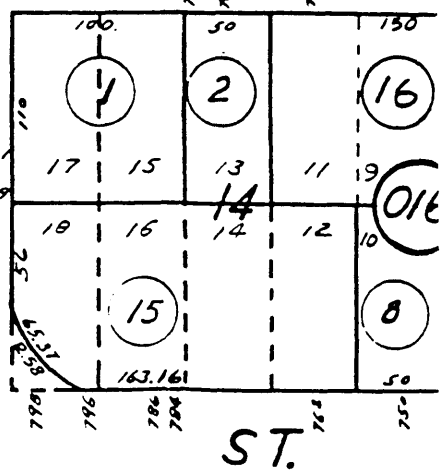
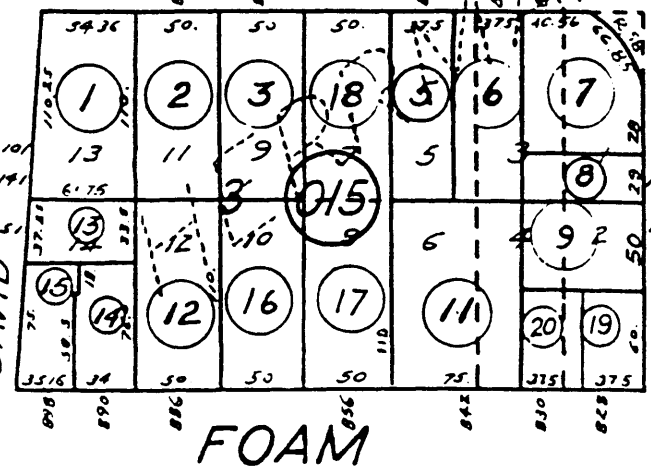
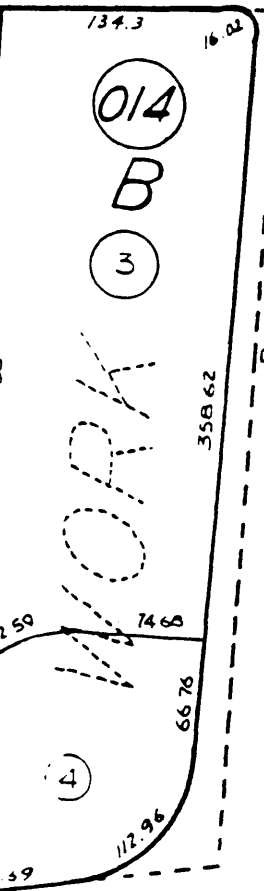
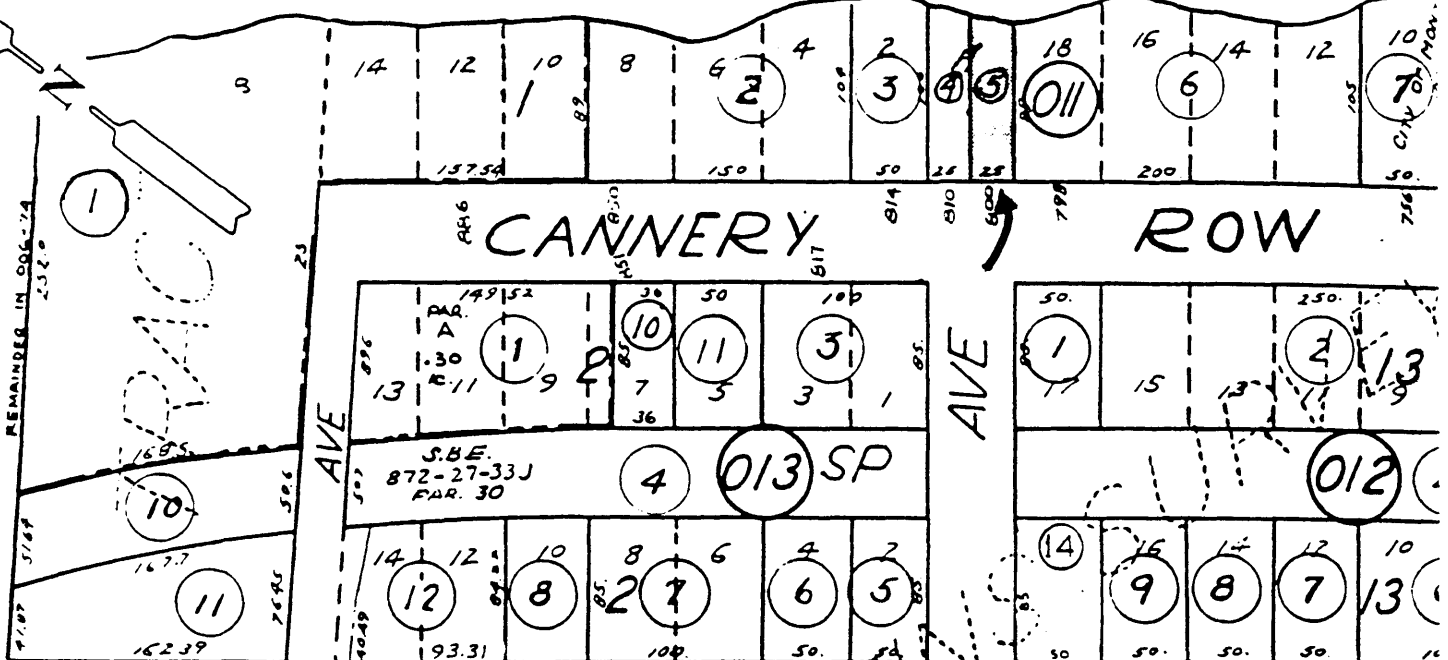
**CANNERY ROW**  
 Property Ownership  
 June, 1972



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE



MONTEREY BAY

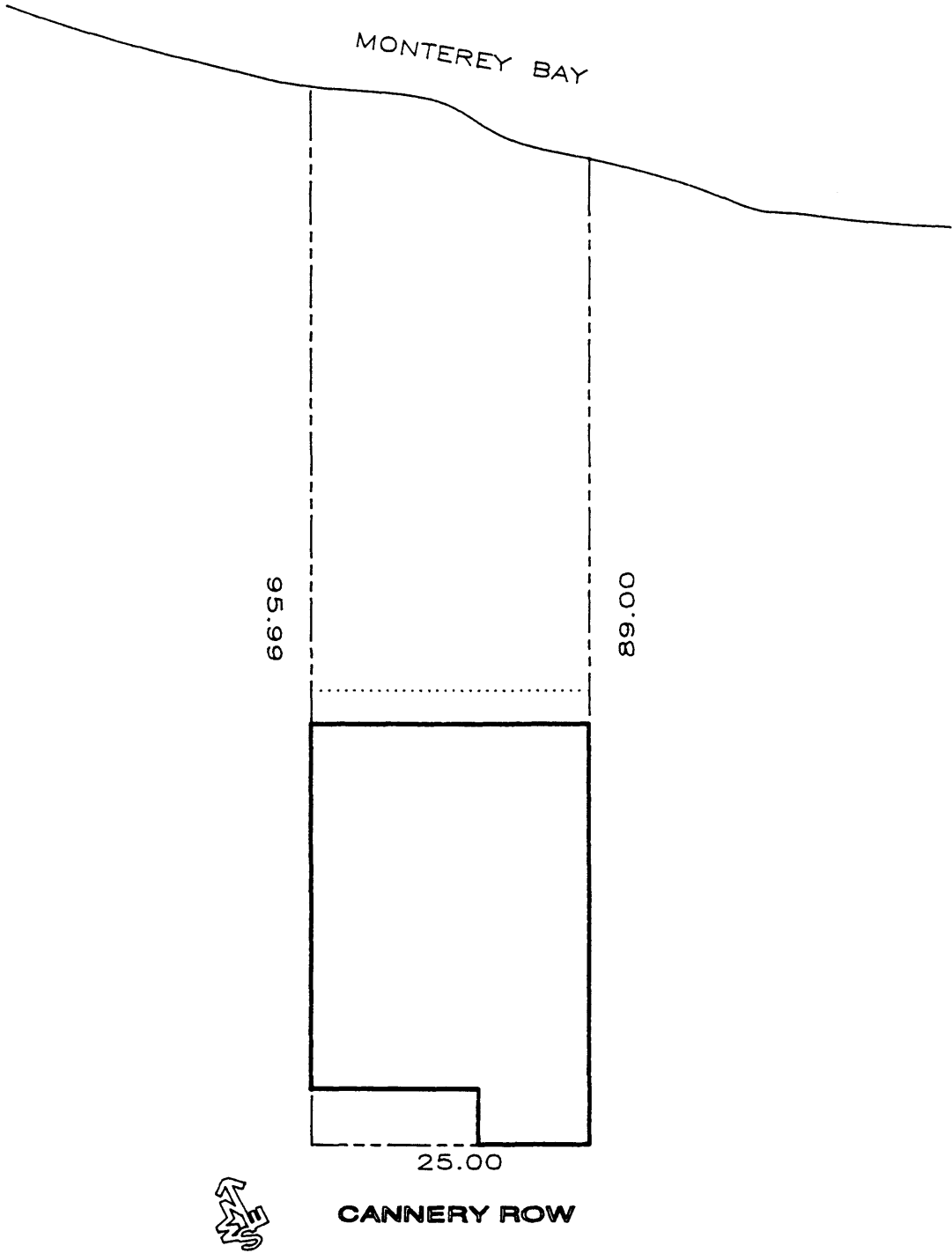


WORK TRACT

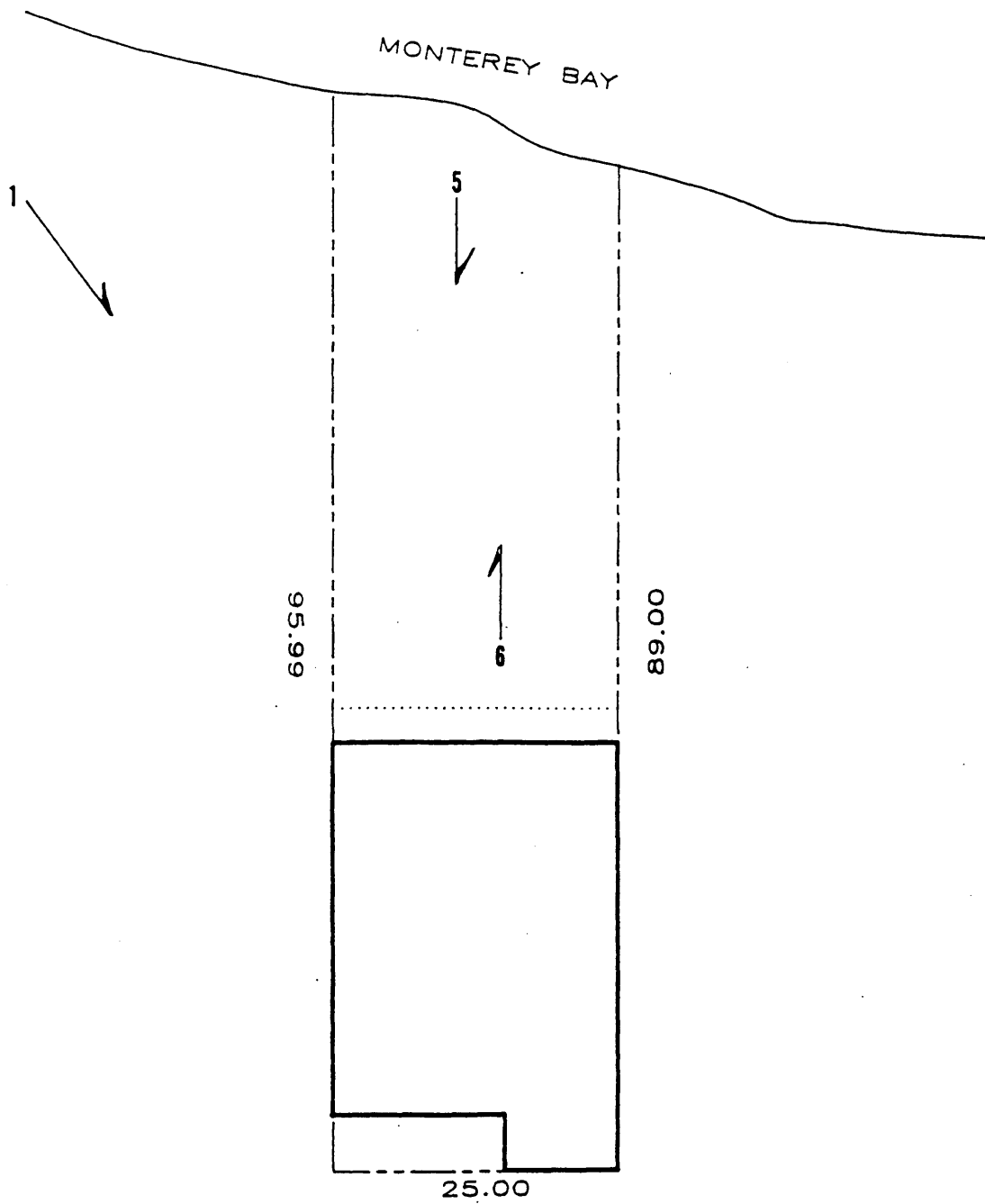
LOTS - B - G

HERRMANN ST

BLOCKS - 1 - 2 - 3 - 12 - 13



**PACIFIC BIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES  
800 CANNERY ROW, MONTEREY, CA**



PACIFIC BIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES  
800 CANNERY ROW, MONTEREY, CA

**PHOTOGRAPHIC KEY**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photographs Page\_1\_ Pacific Biological Lab., Monterey Co.,CA

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(Except where noted the information for items 1 through 5 are the same for  
all the photographs listed.)

- #1
1. Pacific Biological Laboratories
  2. 800 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA 93940
  3. Ted McKay
  4. 1938
  5. Pat Hathaway, Historical California Views, Pacific Grove, CA.
  6. Aerial view looking in a southerly direction over Cannery Row with the Pacific Biological Laboratories flat roof and rear elevation in the upper center of the picture. The Lone Star Cafe is to the right of the cannery building in the upper left. Note original window configuration along rear of lab.
  7. Photograph #1 of 7.
- #2
3. George Robinson
  4. 1953
  6. Looking NE from Cannery Row at the SW (front) elevation of the Pacific Biological Laboratories. Note the original 1937 two panel entry door which was changed about 1955 to a flush door. The Del Vista Packing Co. is on the left and the Del Mar Canning Co. on the right of the lab.
  7. Photograph #2 of 7.
- 3.
3. Kent Seavey
  4. 1994
  5. City of Monterey, City Hall, Monterey, CA 93940
  6. Same view as photo # 2 showing the Pacific Biological Laboratories with the ca 1955 flush entry door. Del Vista building still to left of lab, open space with hotel under construction to right.
  7. Photograph #3 of 7.
- 4.
6. Looking NW at the SE side elevation of the Pacific Biological Laboratories in lower left of picture. Vertical board-and-batten construction w/no fenestration.
  7. Photograph #4 of 7.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photographs Page\_2\_Pacific Biological Lab, Monterey Co., CA  
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5.   6.   Looking SW at the NE (rear) elevation of the Pacific Biological Laboratories. Note full width open porch and flush doors added to the second floor of this elevation about 1955. The original rear staircase was similar in design to that found on the front of the building. Also note metal rendering vat at the end of the existing staircase and cement specimen holding tanks in foreground.
  7.   Photograph #5 of 7.
  
6.   6.   Looking NE from the deck of the open second floor porch on the rear of the Pacific Biological Laboratories. Note cement deck and specimen holding tanks.
  7.   Photograph #6 of 7.
  
7.   3.   Edward F. Ricketts, Jr.
  4.   1947
  - 5   Edward F. Ricketts, Jr., Mill Valley, CA
  6.   Portrait of Edward Flanders Robb Ricketts in a tide pool at Pacific Grove, California.
  7.   Photograph #7 of 7.