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University Libraries (review)

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# A CATALOG OF JOHN STEINBECK MATERIAL IN THE BALL STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES.

JOHN B. STRAW

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY, 2005. 144 PP. PAPERBACK

STEINBECK REVIEW

REVIEWED BY ERIC SKIPPER

WHEN DR. TETSUMARO HAYASHI donated to his former institution materials from an illustrious career focused mainly on Steinbeck scholarship, the mammoth task of cataloging the addition fell to the hands of John B. Straw, archivist of the Alexander M. Bracken Library of Ball State University. Straw was not long in realizing difficulties in separating the Hayashi donation from the existing Steinbeck Collection, since Dr. Hayashi had also played a vital role in developing the latter during his time on faculty. What emerged from a potential overlapping of two oceans was an exhaustive, well-organized “photograph in time” of the entire Steinbeck Collection, with the Hayashi Collection as the centerpiece.

The *Catalog*, which sorts the Hayashi and Ball State Steinbeck Collections separately, begins with five essays, mostly tributary in nature. In his “Introduction to the Catalog” John B. Straw explains the *Catalog*’s inception, offers an overview of the completed project, and expresses gratitude to Dr. Hayashi and the numerous scholars, librarians, and administrators who helped bring it to fruition. Next, in announcement of his gift, Tetsumaro Hayashi expresses gratitude for the contributions, support, and research over the years that made the current Steinbeck holdings a reality, with a special nod to Dr. and Mrs. John J. Pruis and Dr. and Mrs. Richard W. Burkhardt, former Presidents and First Ladies of Ball State University, whom his donation honors. The third essay is actually a dinner speech delivered by Dean of University Libraries Dr. Arthur W. Hafner, a “Tribute” to Dr. and Mrs. Tetsumaro Hayashi. Barbara A. Heavilin describes Dr. Hayashi’s “Grace and Graciousness” and his lasting impact on Steinbeck studies,

while Stephen K. George, in posing the question “Why John Steinbeck?” cites Dr. Hayashi’s role in igniting scholarly interest in a writer whose popularity continues to grow.

The essays are followed by short biographies on Dr. Hayashi, who abandoned a family legacy of priesthood to become a professor, and his wife Akiko, a life-long educator who has served as an advisor and consultant for several Japanese-related projects in the U.S.

The catalog portion of the book is divided into two main sections, the Hayashi Steinbeck Collection and Archives and The John Steinbeck Collection of the Ball State University Libraries, followed by four sub-sections. The Hayashi Collection contains personal correspondence with acquaintances, scholars, friends, and family of Steinbeck, including Elaine Steinbeck, Elizabeth Otis, and Lyndon B. Johnson. Also included are Hayashi’s professional and administrative papers, papers from professional organizations and services, personal publications, research files, poetry and short stories, teaching material, as well as books and monographs collected by the scholar. Mentioned as highlights are folders containing Hayashi’s correspondence with Steinbeck scholars Preston Beyer and Warren French, and correspondence from Hayashi’s editorial participation in the Japanese musical production of *East of Eden*, and the television drama of the same work. Ball State’s Steinbeck Collection consists of books and manuscript materials in the Archives and Special Collections Research Center, including primary and secondary sources.

The four sub-sections, according to bold-type identification in the table of contents and the actual text of the catalog, are “Steinbeck: A Life in Letters Collection,” the “*Steinbeck Quarterly* Manuscript Collection,” the “Steinbeck Society Archives,” and the “Warren French Papers.” According to Straw’s introduction, however, the Steinbeck Collection Articles replaces the first of these four sub-sections. Perhaps it was intended, at some point, that the Steinbeck Collection Articles (labeled Steinbeck Collection Articles, Uncataloged) should stand apart, especially as it is not categorized under the Ball State Collection’s Secondary Sources but is listed directly below with equal indentation.

Another seeming glitch is the free-standing placement of the Hayashi and Akiko Hayashi biographies and the description of the Collection’s scope and content. The Table of Contents indicates that they should be the first items of Part I: The Hayashi Steinbeck Collection and Archives. Instead, the Part I heading

follows them. A possible explanation is that the heading, as its name implies, is reserved for identifying Collection materials. Its (mis?)placement is misleading, nevertheless.

Despite the trifling discrepancies that are bound to surface in such a vast undertaking, the catalog is on the whole an exhaustive and meticulous work, a summary snapshot honoring a momentous contribution. Just as importantly, it is an extremely accessible and well-organized roadmap to a superior collection, successful by Straw's own standards in that it "provides a starting point and also serves as an inspiration for Steinbeck scholarship" (4).