

6-2003

John Hersey: A Collection of First Editions

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Recommended Citation

University of South Carolina, "University of South Carolina Libraries - John Hersey: A Collection of First Editions, June 2003". http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/rbcs_pubs/34/

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JOHN HERSEY
**A Collection
of First Editions**

Harry E. Hootman

**Thomas Cooper Society
Student Book Collecting Award
sponsored by
Brucoli Clark Layman
*June 2003***

My collection of John Hersey first editions began after finding *Hiroshima* in a used bookstore in early 1986, and it wasn't completed until late 2002 because, although not rare, a number of them are hard to find. Hersey died in 1993, and the twenty-nine books in this collection represent all of his hardback book output. The only book without a dust jacket is Hersey's first book, and that has been extremely difficult to find in an acceptable condition.

Hersey was born in Tientsin, China, in 1914 to missionary parents and learned to speak Chinese before English. They returned to the United States in 1924. After education at Yale and Cambridge (as a Mellon Fellow), he joined the staff of *Time* in 1937.

During World War II, Hersey was a war correspondent whose assignments ranged over China, Guadalcanal, Sicily, Moscow, and Japan. The success of his "fictional novels" on contemporary history won him a Pulitzer Prize (1945). After the 1950s, Hersey concentrated on novel writing. In the 1960s, his theme was overcoming racial injustice, in the 1970s, it was reversing scandal in the highest government offices. In the 1980s, it was addressing educational inadequacies, and in the 1990s, it was the challenge of AIDS.

Hersey is an example of a high-minded, dedicated, and contrarian American writer that one is challenged to find an equal of today. When future readers select important books that reflect American society in the later part of the

twentieth century, it would not be surprising to find several of Hersey's books included.

Harry E. Hootman

THE COLLECTION

*** *Men on Bataan.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1942. First Edition.

--Hersey's first book, based on *Time-Life* files, about General MacArthur and the last four months before the U.S. surrender at Manila Bay.

* "The Battle of the River,"

Life (November 22 1942): 99-114 (from the John Shaw Billings Collection)

*** *Into the Valley.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1943. First Edition, in dust jacket.

--eye-witness account of US Marines ambushed on Guadalcanal Island.

Second copy from the John Shaw Billings Collection, inscribed to Billings, Hersey's editor at *Life*.

*** *A Bell for Adano.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1944. First Edition, in dust jacket

--novel about a small Italian town in 1943 after the invasion of Italy in 1943. It won the Pulitzer Prize in fiction in 1945. Second copy from the John Shaw Billings Collection, inscribed to Billings.

*** *Hiroshima.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1946. First Edition, in dust jacket

-- the story of six people who were survivors of the first atom bomb ever dropped on a city; Hersey's report first

appeared as a complete issue of *The New Yorker*, 22 (August 31, 1946): 15-68.

* *The Wall*.

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1950. First Edition, in dust jacket

--a novel of "contemporary history" about life in the Warsaw ghetto.

* *The Marmot Drive*.

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1953. First Edition, in dust jacket

--novel set a remote Connecticut village, allegorizing 1950's security investigations.

* *A Single Pebble*.

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1956. First Edition, in dust jacket

--novel about an American engineer in China in the 1920s.

* *The War Lover*.

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1959. First Edition, in dust jacket

--novel about an American bomber crew in England before D-Day.

* *The Child Buyer*.

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1960. First Edition, in dust jacket

--novel presented as investigative hearings by a state senate committee.

* *Here to Stay*.

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1963. First Edition, in dust jacket

--nine journalistic pieces on the theme of tenacity.

* *White Lotus*.

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1965. First Edition, in dust jacket

--the first-person narrative of an American girl transported to slavery in China.

*** *Too Far To Walk.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1966. First Edition,
in dust jacket

--the boredom and rebellion of
undergraduates in a New England
college.

*** *Under the Eye of the Storm.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1967. First Edition,
in dust jacket

--a sea tale about two men and their
wives going through a hurricane.

*** *The Algiers Motel Incident.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1968. First
Edition, in dust jacket

--account of the 1967 Detroit riot when
three Negroes had been killed.

*** *Letter to the Alumni.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1970. First Edition,
in dust jacket

--a cautionary essay to graduate parents
about a crisis at Yale in 1970.

*** *The Conspiracy.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1972. First Edition,
in dust jacket, signed.

--novel about Nero, as allegory of the
Nixon administration.

*** *The Writer's Craft.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1972. First Edition,
--essays on writing by thirty-two writers.

*** *My Petition for More Space.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1974. First
Edition, in dust jacket

--novel about dissent, as a wakeup call to
the politically-correct generation.

*** *Aspects of the Presidency.***

New Haven: Ticknor & Fields, 1980.
First Edition, in dust jacket

--inside reports on the presidential offices
of Harry Truman and Gerald Ford.

*** *The Walnut Door.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1977. First Edition, in dust jacket

--novel about a young woman alone in a strange city, and a young man stranded from 1960s who crafts perfect wooden doors offering false reassurance of security.

*** *The Call.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1985. First Edition, in dust jacket

-novel about an American missionary in China.

*** *Blues.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1987. First Edition, in dust jacket

--summer fishing for bluefish off Martha's Vineyard.

*** *Life Sketches.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1989. First Edition, in dust jacket

--eighteen non-fiction sketches of memorable people, from writers to politicians.

*** *Fling and Other Stories.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1990. First Edition, in dust jacket

--eleven short stories.

*** *Antonietta.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1991. First Edition, in dust jacket, ex-library.

-novel about a Stradivarius violin from its creation in 1699 to its purchase in 1990 by a tone-deaf financier.

*** *Key West Tales.***

NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1994. First Edition, in dust jacket

--fifteen short stories set in Key West.