John Steinbeck

1 John Sherffius, ill., “Grapes of Wrath Author, John Steinbeck”, under “Wyandotte County Celebrates the Big Read: Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath”, Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, www.kckpl.lib.ks.us/thebigread
Biography

John Ernst Steinbeck was born on February 27, 1902, in Salinas, California. He was of German and Irish descent. John’s father, John Steinbeck Sr., served as Monterey County Treasurer. John’s mother, Olive Hamilton, a former school teacher, shared Steinbeck’s passion of reading and writing.

Steinbeck lived in a small rural town that was essentially a frontier settlement, set amid some of the world’s most fertile land. He spent his summers working on nearby ranches and later with migrant workers on Spreckels ranch. He became aware of the harsher aspects of migrant life and the darker side of human nature, which he later expressed in such works as *Of Mice and Men*. He also explored his surroundings, walking across local forests, fields, and farms.

In 1919, Steinbeck graduated from Salinas High School and attended Stanford University intermittently until 1925, eventually leaving without a degree. He travelled to New York City and held odd jobs while pursuing his dream of becoming a writer. When he failed to get his work published, he returned to California and worked for a time in 1928 as a tour guide and caretaker at a fish hatchery in Tahoe City, where he would meet tourist Carol Henning, his future first wife. Steinbeck and Henning were married in January, 1930.

After the publication of his Monterey novel *Tortilla Flat* in 1935, his first clear novelistic success, the Steinbecks emerged from relative poverty and built a summer ranch-home in Los Gatos. In 1940, Steinbeck went on a voyage around the Gulf of California with his influential friend Ed Ricketts, to collect biological specimens. *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* describes his experiences.

In 1943, Steinbeck filed for divorce against Carol and married Gwyndolyn “Gwyn” Conger, with whom he had two children. Steinbeck and his second wife divorced in 1948. In December 1950, Steinbeck married stage-manager Elaine Scott, a marriage which lasted until his death in 1968.¹

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¹ “John Steinbeck: Information, Facts, and Links”, *eNotes*, [www.enotes.com/authors/john-steinbeck](http://www.enotes.com/authors/john-steinbeck)

Steinbeck penned twenty-seven novels, three collections of short stories, and numerous essays between 1929 and his death in 1968. He is best known for The Grapes of Wrath, a Depression-era (1930s) novel that follows the migratory experiences of the Joad family, who travel from the ravaged Oklahoma Dust Bowl to the “Promised Land” of California. Committed to diversity in his writing, Steinbeck’s other works of note include the semiautobiographical novel East of Eden, the comical Tortilla Flat, the travelog Travels with Charley, and the nonfiction work Log from the Sea of Cortez.1

Steinbeck composed stage scripts from three of his works: Of Mice and Men, The Moon Is Down, and Burning Bright.2 Hollywood loved Steinbeck. Film adaptations of his work include The Grapes of Wrath, Cannery Row, East of Eden, Of Mice and Men, The Pearl, The Red Pony, and Tortilla Flat3.

Steinbeck also wrote a number of screenplays: The Forgotten Village (1941), La Perla (1947), The Red Pony (1949), and VIVA ZAPATA! (1952).4

Steinbeck wrote a total of twenty-seven books, including sixteen novels, six non-fiction books and five collections of short stories5. In 1962, Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962 “for his realistic as well as imaginative writings, distinguished by a sympathetic humor and a keen social perception.”6 Privately, however, he feared that the prize usually spelled the end of a writer’s career. In 1964, Steinbeck was awarded the United States Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

John Steinbeck died in New York City on December 20, 1968 of heart disease and congestive heart failure.7

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2 “Steinbeck Archives: Stage & Screen”, National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, CA, www.steinbeck.org/StageScreen.html
4 “John Steinbeck”, The Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com/name/nm0825705/
Selected Materials Available at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Works by the Author

Print Works

Novels¹:

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197ac (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 Ste C (B1 -- Shadi Abdel Salam Collection)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197v (B4 -- Closed Stacks)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197cu (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

¹ Original works in English are sorted alphabetically, followed by their translations into other languages.

091234 Bibliotheca Alexandrina Compiled by Manar Badr, Mervat Abdelfattah & Rasha Mohsen
  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197e 1955 (E)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197a (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

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Steinbeck, John. **La battaglia**. Milano: Bompiani, 1940.
  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197ba (B4 -- Closed Stacks)

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  BA Call Number: 813.52 Ste N (E)

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  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197pe (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

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  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197sw (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197te (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197t (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197to (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

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  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197r 1960
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BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197wi (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

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Novel-Plays:

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197b (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197mo (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)
  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197n (B2 -- Special Collections -- Closed Stacks)

  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197o (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)
  BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197so (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

1 Original works in English are sorted alphabetically, followed by their translations into other languages.
Short Stories:

BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197re (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197po (F1 -- Young People’s Library)

BA Call Number: 917.3 S8197tr (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

Travelogs:

BA Call Number: 910.91641 S8197lo (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

Miscellaneous Works:

BA Call Number: 813.52 S8197 (F1 -- Closed Stacks -- Nobel Collection -- 1962)

BA Call Number: 358.420973 S8197 (B2 -- Special Collections -- Closed Stacks)

¹ Original work in English is followed by translations into other languages.
**E-books**

**Novels:**


http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetails-47454


http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetails-26076


http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetails-83877


http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetails-288


http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetails-142071


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Novel-Plays:


http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetails-75302


http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetails-97953


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**Short Stories:**


**Articles:**

Works about John Steinbeck

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BA Call Number: 813.52 J653 2008 (E)

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Roane, Margaret C. “John Steinbeck as a Spokesman for the Mentally Retarded”. Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature 5, no. 2 ( Summer 1964), Books & Writers of the 1920's & 1930's: 84-177. e-article. JSTOR (Database).


Thompson, Paul B. “Agriculture and Working-Class Political Culture: A Lesson from The Grapes of Wrath”. Agriculture and Human Values 24, no. 2 (June 2007). e-article. SpringerLink (Database).


**Audiovisual Materials:**

BA Call Number: DVD 512 ; DVD 513
   (B3 -- Arts & Multimedia Library -- Closed Stacks)

BA Call Number: DVD 346 (B3 -- Arts & Multimedia Library -- Closed Stacks)

[www.neabigread.org/books/grapesofwrath/radioshow.php](http://www.neabigread.org/books/grapesofwrath/radioshow.php)

BA Call Number: DVD 348 (B3 -- Arts & Multimedia Library -- Closed Stacks)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6Y3-HTSxUk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6Y3-HTSxUk)
Web Resources:


“Pace University Library Celebrates the John Steinbeck Centennial”. Pace University. www.pace.edu/page.cfm?doc_id=20960 [accessed 20 Nov 2009]
