

John Steinbeck

جون شتاينبك



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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.

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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 1968.²

¹ "John Steinbeck: Information, Facts, and Links", eNotes, www.enotes.com/authors/john-steinbeck

² "John Steinbeck", Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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 stagescripts 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 Flat*.³

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

¹ "John Steinbeck: Information, Facts, and Links", eNotes, www.enotes.com/authors/john-steinbeck

² "Steinbeck Archives: Stage & Screen", National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, CA, www.steinbeck.org/StageScreen.html

³ "John Steinbeck: Information, Facts, and Links", eNotes, www.enotes.com/authors/john-steinbeck

⁴ "John Steinbeck", The Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com/name/nm0825705/

⁵ "John Steinbeck", Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Steinbeck

⁶ "John Steinbeck: Information, Facts, and Links", eNotes, www.enotes.com/authors/john-steinbeck

⁷ "John Steinbeck", Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Steinbeck

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