

A Brief Chronology of Events in John Steinbeck's Life, by Robert Harmon

1902 On February 27, John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California. He was the third of four children and the only son of John Ernst II and Olive Hamilton Steinbeck. He spent his childhood and adolescence in the Salinas Valley, later called "the salad bowl of the nation."

1915-19 Attended Salinas High School

1919-25 Attended classes at Stanford University, leaving without taking a degree. During these years, Steinbeck dropped out for several months and was employed intermittently as a sales clerk, farm laborer, ranch hand, and factory worker.

1925 November, traveled by freighter from Los Angeles to New York City; worked as a construction laborer and, briefly, for the *New York American*

1926-28 Lived in Lake Tahoe, California and worked as a caretaker for a summer home.

1929 August, publication of first novel, *Cup of Gold*, by McBride (New York).

1930 January 14, marries Carol Henning. October, meets Edward F. Ricketts, marine biologist, philosopher, longtime friend.

1932 October, novel, *The Pastures of Heaven*, published by Brewer, Warren, and Putnam (New York).

1933 September, novel, *To A God Unknown* published by Ballou (New York).

1934 Gathers information on farm labor unions. Interviews labor organizer in Seaside.

1935 May 28, first popular success, novel *Tortilla Flat* about Monterey's paisanos. Published by Covici-Friede (New York); beginning of lifelong friendship with editor Pascal Covici.

1936 October, novel, *In Dubious Battle*, about striking workers. Published by Covici-Friede.

1937 February 6, play-novelette, *Of Mice and Men* published by Covici-Friede; Summer, first trip to Europe and Russia; September, *The Red Pony*, three connected stories, published by Covici-Friede; November 23, New York opening of the play *Of Mice and Men* (207 performances).

1938 April, *Their Blood Is Strong*, a nonfiction account of the migrant labor problem in California, published by the Simon J. Lubin Society (San Francisco); May, receives the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for the play *Of Mice and Men*; September, short story collection, *The Long Valley*, incorporating *The Red Pony* (1937), published by Viking (New York), where Pascal Covici became an editor after the bankruptcy of his own firm.

1939 April, *The Grapes of Wrath*, his greatest critical success, published by Viking, provoking both great popular acclaim and violent political condemnation for its depiction of Oklahoma migrants and California growers, as well as for its alleged "vulgar" language and socialist bias. December, film of *Of Mice and Men* released.

1940 January, film of *The Grapes of Wrath* released; March 11 - April 20, marine expedition in the Gulf of California with Ricketts; Spring, receives the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *The Grapes of Wrath*; Summer, documentary film about living conditions in rural Mexico, *The Forgotten Village*.

1941 Spring, separated from Carol; Fall, moves to New York City with singer Gwyndolyn Conger; December 5, *Sea of Cortez*, written with Edward Ricketts, published by Viking.

1942 March, sued for divorce by Carol; March 6, novel, *The Moon Is Down* published by Viking; April 8, New York opening of the play *The Moon Is Down*; May, film of *Tortilla Flat* released; November 27, *Bombs Away* published by Viking.

1943 March, film of *The Moon Is Down* released; March 29, marries Gwyn Conger in New Orleans; June-October, in Europe and North Africa as war correspondent for *New York Herald Tribune*. Divorce from Carol final.

1944 August 2, birth of first son, Thom.

1945 January 2, publication of novel *Cannery Row*, by Viking.

1946 June 12, birth of second son, John IV.

1947 February, novel, *The Wayward Bus*, published by Viking; August-September, tour of Russia with photographer Robert Capa, for the *New York Herald Tribune*; November, novella *The Pearl* published by Viking.

1948 April, *A Russian Journal*, an account of his 1947 tour of Russia, published by Viking; May, Ed Ricketts killed in automobile accident; August, divorced by Gwyn; December, elected to American Academy of Arts and Letters.

1950 October, novella, *Burning Bright*, published by Viking; October 18, New York City opening of the play *Burning Bright*, December 28, marries third wife, Elaine Anderson Scott.

1951 September, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, the narrative part of the *Sea of Cortez* (1941) including an original essay "About Ed Ricketts," published by Viking.

1952 March, film, *Viva Zapata!* released (screenplay published in Rome by Edizioni Filmcritica in 1953; first published in America, edited by Robert Morsberger, by Viking in 1975); September, novel *East of Eden* published by Viking.

1954 June, novel, *Sweet Thursday*, published by Viking (a sequel to *Cannery Row*).

1955 March, purchases a summer home in Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York; November 3, New York City opening of *Pipe Dream*, a Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein III musical based on *Sweet Thursday*.

1957 April, novel, *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*, published by Viking; film of *The Wayward Bus* released.

1958 September, *Once There Was a War*, a collection of his 1943 wartime dispatches, published by Viking.

1959 February-October, travels in England and Wales, researching background for a modern English version of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485).

1960 September-November, tours United States with poodle, Charley.

1961 April, twelfth novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, published by Viking.

1962 July, *Travels with Charley*, the journal of his 1960 tour, published by Viking; October 25, Steinbeck is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

1963 October-December, travels to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Russia on United States Information Agency cultural tour, with dramatist Edward Albee.

1964 September 14, presented with United States Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1966 October 12, *America and Americans*, reflections on contemporary America, published by Viking.

1968 December 20, dies of arteriosclerosis in New York.

1969 Publication of *Journal of a Novel: The "East of Eden" Letters*, journal kept during composition of *East of Eden* published by Viking.

1975 *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters* (selected correspondence), edited by Elaine Steinbeck and Robert Wallsten, published by Viking.

1976 Publication of *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* (edited by Chase Horton), an unfinished translation of *Morte d'Arthur*

1979 U.S. commemorative stamp issued on what would have been his seventy-seventh birthday

1984 *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer* (biography), by Jackson J. Benson is published by Viking; pictured on half-ounce gold medal issued by the U.S. Government.

1987 First issue of *The Steinbeck Newsletter*, later Steinbeck Studies, the Steinbeck journal published by San Jose State University

1989 *Working Days: The Journal of "The Grapes of Wrath,"* edited by Robert DeMott (journal kept during writing of the novel in 1938, published on the novel's fiftieth anniversary).

"*The Grapes of Wrath, 1939-1989: An Interdisciplinary Forum* held at San Jose State University.

1991 Frank Gallati's Steppenwolf Theater dramatization of *The Grapes of Wrath* wins New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play of the season.

1992 Gary Sinise directs and stars in (with John Malkovich), in another film version of *Of Mice and Men*; Nantucket conference on "Steinbeck and the Environment," co-sponsored by the Steinbeck Research Center and University of Massachusetts.

1994 Biography by Jay Parini, *John Steinbeck: A Biography* is published in England by Heinemann.

1995 A revised version of Parini's biography is published in the United States by Henry Holt and Company in New York.

1997 "*Beyond Boundaries: Steinbeck and the World*" the Fourth International Steinbeck Congress held in San Jose and Monterey in March. Co-sponsored by the Center for Steinbeck Studies and the Japanese Steinbeck Society.

2002 *Steinbeck Centennial*. See www.steinbeck100.org. Centennial Conference, John Steinbeck's Americas held at Hofstra University in March.