**John Steinbeck's Life and Works**

by Robert B. Harmon

1902-02-27, Steinbeck born in Salinas, California, 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 - 1919 Attended Salinas High School (Original building no longer in existence.)

1919 - 1925 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, bench chemist and factory worker.

1925-11, 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.

1929-08, publication of first novel, *Cup of Gold*, by McBride (New York).

1930-01-14, marries Carol Henning.

1930-10, meets Edward F. Ricketts, marine biologist, philosopher, longtime friend.

1932-10, novel, *The Pastures of Heaven*, published by Brewer, Warren, and Putnam (New York).

1933-09, novel, *To a God Unknown* published by Ballou (New York).

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

1935-05-28, first popular success, *Tortilla Flat*, about Monterey's paisanos. Published by Covici-Friede (New York); beginning of lifelong friendship with editor Pascal Covici.

1936-10, novel, *In Dubious Battle*, about striking workers. Published by Covici-Friede.

1937-02-06, play-novelette, *Of Mice and Men* published by Covici-Friede.

1937 summer, first trip to Europe and Soviet Union.

1937-09, *The Red Pony*, three connected stories (later four), published by Covici-Friede.

1937-11-23, New York opening of the play *Of Mice and Men* (207 performances).

1938-04, *Their Blood Is Strong*, a nonfiction account of the migrant labor problem in California, published by the Simon J. Lubin Society (San Francisco).

1938-05, receives the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for the play*Of Mice and Men*.

1938-09, 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.

1939-04, *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.

1930-12, film of *Of Mice and Men* released.

1940-01, film of *The Grapes of Wrath* released.

1940-03-11 - 1943-04-20, marine expedition in the Gulf of California with Ricketts.

1940 spring, receives the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for*The Grapes of Wrath*.

1940 summer, documentary film about living conditions in rural Mexico,*The Forgotten Village*.

1941 spring, separated from Carol.

1941 autumn, moves to New York City with singer Gwyndolyn Conger

1941-12-05,*Sea of Cortez*, written with Edward Ricketts, published by Viking.

1942-03, sued for divorce by Carol.

1942-03-06, novel, *The Moon Is Down* published by Viking.

1942-04-08, New York opening of the play *The Moon Is Down*;

1942-05, film of *Tortilla Flat* released.

1942-11-27,*Bombs Away* published by Viking.

1943-03, film of *The Moon Is Down* released.

1943-03-29, marries Gwyn Conger in New Orleans.

1943-06 - 1943-10, in Europe and North Africa as war correspondent for *New York Herald Tribune*. Divorce from Carol final.

1944-08-02, birth of first son, Thom.

1945-01-02, publication of novel *Cannery Row*, by Viking.

1946-06-12, birth of second son, John IV.

1947-02, novel, *The Wayward Bus*, published by Viking;

1947-08 - 1947-09, tour of the Soviet Union with photographer Robert Capa, for the *New York Herald Tribune*.

1947-11, novella *The Pearl* published by Viking.

1948-04, *A Russian Journal*, an account of his 1947 tour of the Soviet Union, published by Viking.

1948-05, Ed Ricketts killed in automobile accident;

1948-08, divorced by Gwyn; December, elected to American Academy of Arts and Letters.

1950-10, novella, *Burning Bright*, published by Viking.

1950-10-18, New York City opening of the play *Burning Bright*.

1950-12-28, marries third wife, Elaine Anderson Scott.

1951-09, *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.

1952-03, film, *Viva Zapata!* released (screenplay published in Rome by Edizoni Filmcritica in 1953; first published in the United States, edited by Robert Morsberger, by Viking in 1975);

1952-09, novel *East of Eden*published by Viking.

1954-06, novel, *Sweet Thursday*, published by Viking (a sequel to Cannery Row).

1955-03, purchases a summer home in Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York;

1955-11-03 New York City opening of*Pipe Dream*, a Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein III musical based on*Sweet Thursday*.

1957-04, novel, *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*, published by Viking; film of *The Wayward Bus* released.

1958-09, *Once There Was a War*, a collection of his 1943 wartime dispatches, published by Viking.

1959-02 - 1959-10, travels in England and Wales, researching background for a modern English version of Malory's*Morte Darthur* (1485).

1960-09 - 1960-11, tours United States with poodle, Charley.

1961-04, twelfth novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, published by Viking.

1962-07, *Travels with Charley*, the journal of his 1960 tour, published by Viking

1962-10-25 October, Steinbeck is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

1963-10 - 1963-11, travels to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union on United States Information Agency cultural tour with dramatist Edward Albee.

1964-09-14, presented with United States Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1966-10-12, *America and Americans*, reflections on contemporary America, published by Viking.

1966-12 - 1967-01, extensive visit to South Vietnam for fact-finding and to visit John IV.

1968-12-20, dies of arteriosclerosis in New York City.

**Some Subsequent Events of Interest:**

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 Darthur*

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 15.55 gram gold medal issued by the U.S. Government.

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

1989*Working Days: The Journal of The Grapes of Wrath*,edited by Robert DeMott (journal Steinbeck 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 Galati's Steppenwolf Theater dramatization of *The Grapes of Wrath* wins New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play of the season. Donald V. Coers'*John Steinbeck as Propagandist* published by University of Alabama Press.

1992 Gary Sinise and John Malkovich direct and star 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 (Henry Holt) and *Parallel Expeditions: Charles Darwin and the Art of John Steinbeck* by Brian E. Railsback (University of Idaho Press) are published.

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.

2002-03 Steinbeck Centennial. " John Steinbeck's Americas" conference held at Hofstra University.

2004 *Steinbeck Review* begins publication. The *Review*and *Steinbeck Studies* later merged and became part of Wiley-Blackwell's American Literature Collection.

2007 On-line bibliography of secondary sources, with over 7,000 articles, goes live.

2008 The first of a four volume series, *John Steinbeck, World War II Correspondent: An Annotated Reference Guide*published by R. B. Harmon (DibCo).

2009 *A John Steinbeck Reader: Essays in Honor of Stephen K. George*, edited by Barbara A. Heavilin, published by Scarecrow Press.

**About Robert B. Harmon**

R. B. Harmon (DibCo) publishes three volumes of translated and documented guides to Steinbeck's journalistic writings, including:

*John Steinbeck and Newsday with a Focus on 'Letters to Alicia': An Annotated and Documented Reference Guide.*

*John Steinbeck and the Saturday Review: An Annotated and Documented Guide to Information Sources.*

*John Steinbeck and the Louisville Courier-Journal: An Annotated and Documented Guide to Information Sources.*