



A John Steinbeck Timeline

- 1902 February 27: John Ernst Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California.
- 1919-25 Attends classes at Stanford University, leaving without a degree.
- 1925 Travels by freighter to New York City, gets a job on a Madison Square Garden construction crew.
- 1926 Gets a job as a reporter for the *New York American*. Lives in Lake Tahoe, California, and works as a caretaker at a house on the south shore.
- 1929 John's first novel, *Cup of Gold*, is published.
- 1930 January 14: John marries Carol Henning. Steinbeck meets Edward F. Ricketts.
- 1931 Mythologist and author Joseph Campbell comes to Monterey and meets Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts.
- 1932 *The Pastures of Heaven*.
- 1933 *To a God Unknown*.
- 1934 Steinbeck's mother dies.
- 1935 *Tortilla Flat*. Steinbeck's poverty ends with the novel's success.
- 1936 Steinbeck purchases land in Los Gatos, California. The California Literature Gold Medal awarded to Steinbeck for *Tortilla Flat*. *In Dubious Battle* published.
- 1937 *Of Mice and Men*. The Steinbecks visit Sweden, Finland, Russia. *The Red Pony*. The stage version of *Of Mice and Men* opens in New York's Music Box Theater.
- 1938 Steinbeck spends ten days at migrant worker camps in Visalia with Tom Collins. "Their Blood Is Strong," a nonfiction account of the migrant labor problem in California, is published by the Simon J. Lubin Society. "Starvation under the Orange Trees," is published by the *Monterey Trader*. Steinbeck receives the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for the play *Of Mice and Men*. *The Long Valley* published. Steinbeck finishes *The Grapes of Wrath* manuscript.
- 1939 April 14: *The Grapes of Wrath* is published.
- 1940 Film version of *The Grapes of Wrath* premieres in New York. John conducts a marine expedition in the Gulf of California with Ed Ricketts. Steinbeck spends months in Mexico. *The Grapes of Wrath* receives the National Book Award. *The Grapes of Wrath* wins the Pulitzer Prize. Steinbeck meets with FDR and presents a plan of print and radio propaganda in Latin America. Returns to Mexico to continue work on *The Forgotten Village*. Meets Gwyn Conger in Hollywood.
- 1941 Steinbeck separates from Carol. The book version of *The Forgotten Village* is published. John moves to New York City with singer Gwyn Conger. *The Sea of Cortez* published. *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* is published.
- 1943 Writes the screenplay for Hitchcock's movie *Lifeboat*. John and Gwyn move into a New York City apartment. John leaves New York aboard a troop ship for London to report on the war. John writes Gwyn that he is in Northern Africa (probably Algiers). John reaches the Italian mainland to cover Salerno invasion. Returns to the USA from London.

- 1944 Meets Ernest Hemingway for the first, and only time, at Tim Costello's bar in Manhattan. August 2: Steinbeck's first son, Thomas, is born.
- 1945 *Cannery Row*.
- 1946 June 12: Steinbeck's second son, John IV, is born.
- 1947 *The Wayward Bus*. Injures his knee after a fall from a second-story window. John, Gwyn, and Robert Capa travel to Paris. Steinbeck and Capa land in Moscow.
- 1948 *A Russian Journal*. Ed Ricketts dies in injuries sustained in the May 8th automobile accident; Steinbeck cannot get to California in time to see his friend before he passes. Steinbeck spends much of these months in Mexico working on the film *Viva Zapata!* Gwyn tells Steinbeck she wishes to divorce him.
- 1949 John spends the weekend in Pacific Grove with Ann Southern and Elaine Scott. This is the first time he meets his future wife Elaine.
- 1950 *Burning Bright*. Steinbeck marries third wife, Elaine Anderson Scott.
- 1951 *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*.
- 1952 European travels. *East of Eden* is published. Steinbeck becomes involved with Adali Stevenson's campaign for president and writes speeches for Stevenson rallies throughout the East Coast.
- 1954 More European travels. *Sweet Thursday*.
- 1955 William Faulkner and Steinbeck meet for the first time. The film version of *East of Eden* opens in the United States.
- 1957 *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*. Steinbeck meets the great Malory scholar Eugene Vinaver in Manchester for the first time. Steinbeck travels along Hadrian's Wall and down into Wales.
- 1958 Steinbeck and Elaine travel to England for research on the Malory project. Steinbeck travels by train from London to Glastonbury. While in Glastonbury, he stays in the George and Pilgrim and meets Robert Bolt. *Once There Was a War*.
- 1959 March–October: John travels in England and Wales, researching background for a modern English version of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Steinbeck disheartened by an initial review of his *Le Morte d'Arthur* rewrite by Chase Horton and Elizabeth Otis. Steinbeck is in Cadbury for Mid-Summer's Eve and believes he saw the ghost of King Arthur. In New York, a minor stroke hospitalizes John for two weeks.
- 1960 September 23–November: Steinbeck tours the United States with his poodle, Charley.
- 1961 Steinbeck and Elaine attend President Kennedy's inauguration with John Kenneth Galbraith and his wife. *The Winter of Our Discontent*. John, Elaine, and John's sons set sail for England aboard the Rotterdam, followed by ten months in Europe. Steinbeck suffers a minor stroke/heart attack in Milan.
- 1962 *Travels with Charley*. October 25: Steinbeck is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and holds a press conference.
- 1964 Steinbeck meets with Jacqueline Kennedy regarding a biography of John F. Kennedy. The project never came to fruition. John is presented with the United States Medal of Freedom by President Johnson. Longtime friend and Steinbeck's publisher Pat Covici dies.
- 1965 LBJ invites John and Elaine for a weekend at the White House.

- 1966 *America and Americans* is published by Viking Press. Steinbeck visits South Vietnam for fact-finding and to visit his son John IV.
- 1968 December 20: Steinbeck dies in New York of arteriosclerosis.
- 1969 *Journal of a Novel: The "East of Eden" Letters*.
- 1975 *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters* is published by Viking Press.
- 1976 *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* is published by Viking Press.

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Clay Jenkinson

Books by Clay Jenkinson

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Bring Out Your Dead: The Literature and History of Epidemics

*Message on the Wind: A Spiritual Odyssey
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in North Dakota*

*Becoming Jefferson's People: Re-Inventing
The American Republic in the 21st Century*

*A Free and Hardy Life: Theodore Roosevelt's
Sojourn in the American West*

*The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Explorer
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“All war is a symptom of
man's failure as a thinking
animal.”

Steinbeck

A Few Books on John Steinbeck

Jackson Benson. *John Steinbeck, Writer: A Biography.*

Richard Astro. *John Steinbeck and Edward F. Ricketts: The Shaping of a Novelist.*

Robert DeMott. *Steinbeck's Typewriter: Essays on His Art.*

Timothy Egan. *The Worst Hard Time.*

William Souder. *Mad at the World: A Life of John Steinbeck.*

Jay Parini. *John Steinbeck.*

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Clay is a writer, public humanities scholar, editor, public radio personality, adventurer, leader of cultural tours. He lives in Bismarck, North Dakota, one of the last agrarian places in America. He has a particular interest in the American West. He was the founder of the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University. He writes for Governing.com, where he is a senior editor. He is leading an initiative called **Listening to America**, on the principle that most of the country lies well within the middle, well between FOX and MSNBC. The website is LTAmerica.org.

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