



Smithsonian Associates

In Search of America: Travels with Charley (and Clay)

Clay Jenkinson

Tuesday, July 16, 2024 - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. ET

Books by Clay Jenkinson

The Language of Cottonwoods: Essays on the Future of North Dakota

Bring Out Your Dead: The Literature and History of Epidemics

*Message on the Wind: A Spiritual Odyssey
on the Northern Plains*

*The Writings of the Lewis & Clark Expedition
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
in the Wilderness*

Listening to America is Clay Jenkinson's new initiative to make a series of journeys in search of the heart of America at this perplexing time in our history. Please visit LTAmerica.org for more details. On April 24, Clay began his 11,500 mile odyssey around the United States in the "footsteps" of John Steinbeck's 1960 *Travels with Charley* journey.

A Few Books about John Steinbeck:

Bill Steigerwald. *Dogging Steinbeck: How I Went in Search of John Steinbeck's America.*

Jay Parini. *John Steinbeck: A Biography.*

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

Jackson J. Benson. *Looking for Steinbeck's Ghost.*

Susan Shillinglaw. *On Reading the Grapes of Wrath.*

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

Robert DeMott. *Steinbeck's Imaginarium: Essays on Writing, Fishing, and Other Critical Matters.*

To follow Clay's Travels with Charley epic journey around the United States in the summer and fall of 2024, visit LTAmerica.org. Sign up for our weekly newsletter. Clay's weekly podcast, **Listening to America**, will feature his adventures and reflections as he travels 11,500 miles around the perimeter of the United States—as we approach the nation's 250th birthday.

Clay is the editor of *We Proceeded On*, the quarterly journal of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. You should subscribe: www.lewisandclark.org.

Clay lectures throughout the United States about the future of the humanities in higher education. His company is known as **The Erasmus Group**. Clay believes that much of the current collapse of American norms is related to the loss of humanities education.

Clay performs a one-man show called **Shakespeare without Tears** throughout the United States. The purpose is to show a: that Shakespeare is not nearly so intimidating as he might seem; b: that today is the best time since the Elizabethan era to appreciate Shakespeare. This highly entertaining show is not just for English majors!

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.

A John Steinbeck Timeline

27 February **1902**: Steinbeck born in Salinas, California

1919-25: Attended classes at Stanford University, leaving without taking a degree.

1925: 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: publication of first novel, *Cup of Gold*, by McBride (New York).

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

1932: *The Pastures of Heaven*.

1933: *To A God Unknown*.

1935: *Tortilla Flat*; beginning of lifelong friendship with editor Pascal Covici.

1936: *In Dubious Battle*.

1937: *Of Mice and Men*; first trip to Europe and Russia; *The Red Pony*

April **1938**: *Their Blood Is Strong*.

April **1939**: *The Grapes of Wrath*

1940: film of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

1941: separated from Carol; Fall, moves to New York City with singer Gwyndolyn Conger; December, *Sea of Cortez*.

1943: marries Gwyn Conger in New Orleans; June-October, Europe and North Africa as war correspondent for *New York Herald Tribune*.

1944: birth of first son, Thom.

1945: *Cannery Row*.

1946: birth of second son, John IV.

1947: novel, *The Wayward Bus*; tour of Russia with photographer Robert Capa, for the *New York Herald Tribune*; November, *The Pearl*.

1948: *A Russian Journal*; May, Ed Ricketts killed in automobile accident; August, divorced by Gwyn

1950: novella, *Burning Bright*.

1950: marries third wife, Elaine Anderson Scott.

1951: *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*.

1952: *East of Eden*.

1954: *Sweet Thursday*.

1955: purchases a summer home in Sag Harbor, Long Island.

1957: *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*.

1958: *Once There Was a War*.

February - October **1959:** Discover Cottage in Somerset; travels in England and Wales, researching background for a modern English version of Malory's *Morte Darthur* (1485).

1960: the *Travels with Charley* tour of America.

1961: *The Winter of Our Discontent*.

1962: *Travels with Charley*; 25 October, Steinbeck is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

1963: travels to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union on United States Information Agency cultural tour.

1964: presented Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1966: *America and Americans*.

December **1966** - January **1967:** extensive fact-finding visit to South Vietnam.

20 December **1968:** dies of arteriosclerosis in New York City.

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