

APPENDIX

The Author

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, on February 27, 1902. Steinbeck lives most of his forty years in the Salinas Valley, where his mother teach in the public school of the area and his father is treasurer of Monterey County.

His novels are influenced by his birth and growth to maturity in the Salinas Valley. At that time the valley is a series of small farmers with the cattle raising and the growing of fruit and vegetables, among which there are little towns where the farmers bring their produce to market, young Steinbeck works during school for the neighboring farmers and ranchers. Actually these early years of life close to nature form the background from which Steinbeck draws his beautiful description of natural phenomena.

It is clear that Steinbeck read widely, probably through the influence of his mother. He likes to read fictional books of Walter Scott, Hardy, Jack London and also non fictional universally great books, such as the Bible, philosophical literature of ancient India, and Greek historians. Steinbeck emphasizes his writings upon the concrete and experiential rather than the abstract and theoretical.

The entire period of his young adulthood was mixed with many experiences in the laboring world. Before beginning courses at Stanford he works as an assistant chemist in a sugar-beet factory nearby and he also was employed on ranches. Since he makes unsuccessful attempts to publish stories, he works both as a newspaper reporter and a laborer. All of these experiences provides observations of the attitudes, manners and language of the working man, as well as his sympathy with the situation of such laborers.

Steinbeck observes regional and national unrest and later utilizes especially in his three most sociologically oriented novels : In Dubious Battle (1936), Of Mice and Men (1937), and The Grapes of Wrath (1939). All of which are post-depression novels and dealt with proletarian matter. The economic structure of the Salinas Valley itself changes such as small farmers are replaced by larger ones and the financial picture enlarges to include corporations and large investments. The gap lengthenes between the little man working for the big man, dissatisfaction also increases, with unemployment and threatened strikes. It is all part of the generalized national situation which culminates in the stock market crash of 1929 and the depression period following.

Steinbeck is not a regional writer, but he is associated primarily with California in his work, and he

write of that state with the mixture of love, poetry, cynicism, and outright bitterness which a man can have only for his native region. He has lived in many places, California, Mexico, Europe, but it is only in New York where he find both the privacy and the friendliness that he get in a home place.

In 1930 he married (the first of three times) and moved to Pacific Grove, California, where his father provided a house and small allowance to support him. His first success is his fourth novel, *Tortilla Flat*, which appeared in 1935. It is an episodic, warmly humorous treatment of the lives of poisanos, ethnically mixed Mexican-Indian-Caucasians, who lived in the Salinas Valley. The subject of his second successful novel, *In Dubious Battle* (1936), is concerned with specific social problems of the period violence, particularly of strikes and strikebreaking, and politically speaking, in bringing about more humane conditions and equitable solutions to labor conflicts. His sympathy for the underdog is shown again in *Of Mice and Men* (1937), about two drifting ranch hands, one of whom is simpleminded.

The Grapes of Wrath is his masterpiece of social consciousness in its picture of helpless people crushed by drought and depression. The high point Steinbeck's career is reached in *The Grapes of Wrath*, an epic about "Okies" (his Joad family) who, impoverished and dispossessed of their Oklahoma farms, attempt to resettle

in California. After losing their land Joad family migrates to California on U.S. Highway 66 looking for, but not finding, a better life. Steinbeck means to give these outcasts a tragic dignity, and he succeeds at least with Ma Joad, who tries to hold the family together throughout their sufferings. *The Grapes of Wrath* is one of the most important. It combines naturalist and symbolist techniques to depict his characters' plights, and it expresses simple but strong responses to their sufferings, compassion, outrage, and admiration. Steinbeck has written variously over the years since 1929. Significantly his recent works, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), is set in New England, *Travels with Charley* (1962) is an account of travels throughout The United States. He was awarded the Noble Prize for literature in 1962 for his realistic and imaginative writings.

Nothing that he has written since then has matched it in power and beauty, although his retelling of an old Mexican folktale in *The Pearl* has something of its dignity and noble simplicity. Only once in recent years Steinbeck has attempted a really ambitious novel. This is *East of Eden*, a long, realistically detailed saga of a California family. The book is a best seller and is made into a motion picture.

During World War II, Steinbeck did special writing

assignments for the U. S. Army Air Forces. In 1943 he went to Europe as a correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune. Since the war ended he has traveled extensively and reported on his travels for several magazines and newspapers. In 1948 his visit to Russia with the photographer Robert Capa was described in a straight forward and unpretentious book, Russian Journal. In 1943, after a divorce from his first wife, Steinbeck married Gwyn Conger, by whom he had two sons. His third marriage was to Elaine Scott in 1950.

His Works

Steinbeck's major works to date are as follows : Cup of Gold, 1929; The Pastures of Heaven, 1932; To a God Unknown, 1933; Tortilla Flat, 1935; In Dubious Battle, 1936; The Red Pony, 1937; Of Mice and Men, 1937; The Long Valley, 1938; The Grapes of Wrath, 1939; Sea of Cortez, 1941; Bombs Away, 1942; The Moon is Down, 1942 (this work and Of Mice and Men also appear as plays); Cannery Row, 1945; The Pearl, 1947; The Wayward Bus, 1947; East of Eden, 1952; Sweet Thursday, 1954; The Short Reign of Pippin IV, 1957; The Winter of Our Discontent, 1961; Travels with Charley, 1962.

S y n o p s i s

It is the story about the Joad family who migrates from Oklahoma to California because their land is hit by drought and depression. Everything is covered by the

dust. Nobody can't live their houses. They tie handkerchiefs over their noses when they went out. They almost can't breathe the fresh air. The people can do nothing about it.

Having sold their remaining possessions, Joads, Uncle John and their friend, Jim Casy, pack up everything, and are gone in the dawn. The Joads consist of Pa Joad, Ma Joad, Noah, Tom, Rosasharn, Al, Ruthie and Winfield. The houses are left vacant on the land. Everybody is rushing for leaving Oklahoma. The desolation of the deserted houses and land is depicted here which also contains harsh comment on the loveless mechanisms of the tractors and their drivers. A dust settles on the floors, and only mouse and weasel and cat tracks disturbed it.

Highway 66 is the main migrant road. 66 is the long concrete path across the country into the rich California valleys. The people in flight crowded on 66, sometimes a single car, sometimes a little caravan. All day they rolled slowly along the road, and at night they stopped near water.

The first camp site for the Joads is a significant one, for they met the Wilsons, with whom they form an alliance. Grampa dies abruptly of a stroke in their tent. In fact a relationship has been established by their acting together in sorrow, and they decide to

travel together, which will enable them to space the load more easily over the two automobiles.

As the Joads and the Wilsons crawl on toward California in their two vehicles, they are more and more crises. They are tired and dusty and hot. The highway become their home and movement their medium of expression. Little by little they settle into the new life. They share their lives, their food, and the things they hope in the new country. Ma's anger and violence are aroused when there is a real crisis involving preserving and protecting her family, as she feel the growing desperateness and futility of the situation. When they arrive at California the conditions of the Joads are worse, for example Noah Joad, the eldest, left his family by wading down the river near the camp and Grandma's death. Even the development ownership of the land in California is in the hands of a few large owners.

When the harvest time come in California, the big canneries are owned by the big land-owners and then they depress the prices and force whole sale of crops eventhough people are starving everywhere. And the children dying of pellagra must die because of eating green grapes.

The Joads continue their journey until they arrive at Hooverville, then they live in migrant's camp. At that place, the Joads try to look for a job. The next day Floyd Knowles, warns Tom that they should leave the camp

because the deputies will burn the camp in the night. Then Tom tells his family of Floyd's story, and the Joads decide to leave that place.

After arriving in the government camp at Weedpatch, Tom get a job. But after spending a month in the camp, the Joads have no work and no crops. They almost have no food. So the family decide to move to another place.

The family is forced out to leave the government camp where they have experienced security and respect for the first time on their journey. They go to the peach orchads of Hooper Ranch. There Casey is murdered, Tom kills Casey's murderer, and the family flees to the boxcar camp where they will make their last stand for survival.

Twelve boxcars stand beside the stream. At that place, the Joads have a close neighbor, the Wainwright family. The Joads make a good relationship with other migrants too because they have the same fate. One day, Ma tells the Wainwrights about the Joads' idea for leaving the camp soon, but Al will get married with Aggie Wainwright and they stay at the camp.

It settles down to steady rain, and the boxcar camp was bit by bit flooded out. First the people in tents flee the water ; then those privileged folks in the boxcars watch with panic and indecision as the water rises around their vehicles and toward the floors of the boxcars. During that day and night the men sleep

soddenly, side by side on the boxcar door. They always try to stop the flood. Rosasharn's baby who have been born dies. Uncle John floates it down the floadtide. During the day and the night the families huddle on the damp platforms ; in the dawn Ma assertes that they must go to higher ground.

They start out through the deep water, the adults carrying the little ones on their backs and helping the weak Rosasharn. After walking along the highway they stop for a while. There is hay there. In one of its corners there is a young boy and his father who is starving. Then Rosasharn lies down beside the starving man and offers him the saving milk from her breast.

BIBLIOGRAPHY