

Notes and Sources

Chapter 1

1. Carol Steinbeck - see Dramatis Personae.
2. Little Bit of Sweden on Sunset Boulevard - the restaurant where Gwyn and John went on their first date.
3. *Black Marigolds* - a thousand year's old love poem (in translation) written by Kashmiri poet Bilhana Kavi.
4. Robert Louis Stevenson - Scottish novelist, most famous for *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Stevenson met with one of the Wagner family on his travels. He died aged 44 in Samoa.
5. Synge – probably the Irish poet and playwright.
6. Matt Dennis - band leader, pianist and musical arranger, who wrote the music for *Let's Get Away From It All*, recorded by Frank Sinatra, and others.
7. Dr Paul de Kruif - an American micro-biologist and author who helped American writer Sinclair Lewis with the novel *Arrowsmith*, which won a Pulitzer Prize.
8. Ed Ricketts - see Dramatis Personae.
9. The San Francisco State Fair - this was the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939 and 1940, held to celebrate the city's two newly built bridges – The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and The Golden Gate Bridge. It ran from February to October 1939, and part of 1940. At the State Fair, early experiments were being made with television and radio; Steinbeck heard Gwyn singing on the radio and called her, some months after their initial meeting.

Chapter 2

1. *Forgotten Village* - a screenplay written by John Steinbeck and released in 1941. Narrated by Burgess Meredith - see Dramatis Personae. The New York authorities banned it, due to the portrayal of childbirth and breast feeding. The film was restored and re-released in 2011.
2. *The Log From The Sea of Cortez* - a joint effort by Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts – a mixture of travelogue and data – which was not well received due to war time conditions and its style being so different to anything Steinbeck had produced before. It was based on an expedition made in early 1940, on which Carol accompanied them. She is never mentioned once in the narrative, although all other crew members are. The first separate printing was published by Viking in the USA in 1951. A reworked narrative only was published in 1959 under Steinbeck's sole name and was interesting to Steinbeck's enormous following then, because of its description of his relationship with Ed Ricketts, and how he contributed to Steinbeck's thoughts and writing. The Sea of Cortez is, the Gulf of California.
3. Helen Morgan - an American singer of sentimental ballads who died in 1941. Gwyn took some of her singing style from her.
4. Pacific Grove - the Steinbeck family had a holiday home for many years at Pacific Grove. John and Carol bought a house at 425 Eardley Street – which he kept after they split.
5. Boris Karloff - the stage name of an English actor, William Henry Pratt. Karloff specialised in roles in horror films, notably his portrayal of *Frankenstein* in three major films in the

1930s based on the novel by Mary Shelley. He chose his stage name to avoid embarrassment to several of his family, who held high ranking posts in the British diplomatic service.

6. Carol was presumably referring to the decisions she had made about having children, saying she would “rather have rabies and babies.” She had told one friend that she wanted children, but John did not-insisting his books were his children.

7. *The Wayward Bus* - published in 1947. The book describes an eventful bus journey in the Californian mountains where an assorted bunch of disparate passengers are travelling. It was dedicated to Gwyn Conger Steinbeck. Later it became a film in 1957 starring English actress Joan Collins and blonde bombshell American, Jayne Mansfield.

Chapter 3

1. Lewis Milestone - a Moldavian born American film director who directed *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Steinbeck's own *Of Mice and Men* (1939). He also directed with Marlon Brando on the film *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

2. *The Red Pony* - this was written in 1933. Early chapters were published in magazines and the full book in 1937. It was later filmed – directed by Lewis Milestone and starring Robert Mitchum and Myrna Loy, with music by American composer Aaron Copeland.

3. Ellwood Graham - painter/artist who knew Steinbeck who sponsored some of his early work.

4. Burgess Meredith – See *Dramatis Personae*

5. Elia Kazan - a Greek/American writer, actor and director, best known for directing Steinbeck's *East of Eden* starring James Dean, Burl Ives and Raymond Massey. The film won two Oscars. He also directed *A Street Car named Desire*, starring Brando and Vivien Leigh, and *On the Water Front*, again starring Brando, together with Rod Steiger.

6. Ed Ricketts – see *Dramatis Personae*.

7. *The Moon is Down*-For this film Steinbeck received from the King of Norway the country's Freedom Cross. The story told of the occupation of an unnamed country by unnamed invaders. It was never implied that they were German, but the book inspired Resistance fighters in Occupied Europe. It became the best known book of U.S literature in the Soviet Union during the war. The title comes from Macbeth. Banquos' son, when asked the time, replies “The moon is down: I have not heard the clock”.

7. Mickey Finn - knock-out drops used to incapacitate and rob drunken customers. The name probably originated in a Chicago bar, owned by one Mickey Finn, which closed in December 1903. Incapacitated patrons would be carried into a back room, robbed and then dumped in an alley, waking up the next day with no memory of what had happened.

8. Snedens' Landing - sometimes known as “Hollywood on the Hudson”. It has been home at various times to Bill Murray, Uma Thurman and Angelina Jolie.

9. Maxwell Anderson - an American playwright, author, journalist and lyricist who wrote the words to *September Song*. A prolific writer, one of his plays was named, and may have coined the phrase *Candle in the Wind*.

10. Paulette Goddard - an American actress and Ziegfeld girl. One time girlfriend of Charlie Chaplin, and if they were ever married, she was granted a divorce from him in 1942, and married Burgess Meredith. Later, she had a brief relationship with Steinbeck.

11. Kurt Weill - a German composer who moved to the United States and wrote *The Threepenny Opera* which included the classic standard *Mac the Knife*.

12. Henry Varnum Poor - an American architect, painter, sculptor and muralist. As an architect, he did house renovations for Burgess Meredith and Maxwell Anderson. He painted a portrait of Gwyn together with John and son Thom.

13. Pare Lorentz - an American film maker who made documentaries. Steinbeck would have been influenced by his film *The Plow Who Broke the Plains* (1936), about the creation of a dust bowl which led to Okies moving to California. Lorentz made state-funded films about aviation and one about the Nuremberg Trials.

14. Helen Hayes - American actress nicknamed "The First Lady of American Theatre". Winner of an Emmy, a Grammy and an Oscar, she was a lifelong philanthropist.

Chapter 4

1. Cannery Row – the first major cannery opened in 1908 and by 1918, 'The Row' became a boomtown of corrugated canneries producing 1.4 million cases of sardines. After World War II, the sardines disappeared from Monterey Bay and the fishing industry collapsed, as predicted by Ed. Ricketts.

2. Jacques Cousteau - a French undersea explorer and film maker, who co-invented the aqualung – the breathing device for scuba diving. He became a world famous advocate of environment protection.

3. The proposed trip to the remote hostile Queen Charlotte and Aleutian Islands was abandoned after Steinbeck's fall, fourteen feet, from an upstairs window in New York, when a balcony gave way. He heeded medical advice that such a trip on the lines of the Sea of Cortez mission would be very unwise. He was told, that with the viscosities in his legs, a slip while gathering specimens could cause a serious embolism in his legs. So instead, he hobbled to Russia with Robert Capa.

Chapter 5

1. Paul de Kruif - an American microbiologist and author famous for his 1926 book on that subject. As a young man de Kruif had fought in Mexico during the Revolution.

2. Kit Carson - Kentucky born frontiersman, Indian agent and US Army Officer. Carson in the American Civil War led a regiment of Hispanic volunteers from New Mexico on the Union side. He later led forces to suppress Navaho, Apache, Comanche and other Indian tribes. He was a western comic book hero to a generation, married three times and had ten children, dying at age fifty-eight. He was involved in the Bear Flag revolt by American settlers in 1846 against Mexican authority and Steinbeck's *Sweet Thursday* was originally entitled *Bear Flag*.

3. Route 66 - A road of some 2400 miles opened in 1926 it ran from Chicago through Missouri, Kansas, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona before ending in California; a major migration path for those leaving the dust bowl states in the 1930s.

4. Barney Oldfield - an American pioneer racing driver, Barney was christened Berna, but changed his 'cissy' name to Barney as a teenager. Graduating from cycles to motorbikes and then to cars, he became a household name, setting a world land speed record at Daytona Beach, Florida in 1910 of 131 miles an hour. He became the first 100 mile an hour racer at the Indianapolis Raceway and later he raced a Fiat car against bi-planes at county fairs – earning a fortune and surviving long enough to spend it, dying peacefully in 1946, age 68.

5. Las Vegas (New Mexico) - the county seat of San Miguel County, New Mexico, 65 miles east of Santa Fe and some way from Las Vegas Nevada.

6. Mike Romanoff's – a restaurant in Beverley Hills whose proprietor was once described as "The most wonderful liar in 20th Century USA". Mike, claimed to be a Russian aristocrat, but was born in Lithuania; real name Herschel Geguzin. At lunchtime, the first booth was sometimes occupied by Humphrey Bogart., while the proprietor often dined with his large dogs at his own table. Patrons who could not get the best tables, said they were sometimes forced to sit "in Siberia".

Chapter 6

1. Elizabeth Otis - see Dramatis Personae.

2. Alfred Hitchcock (Sir) - an English film director known as the Master of Suspense. Son of an English greengrocer, Hitchcock was intensely disliked by Steinbeck, despite his being one of the most renowned English film directors of the time. Films like *The Lady Vanishes*, *Jamaica Inn*, *Rebecca* and *Psycho* made him world-famous. He often had a quick cameo appearance in his films, usually near the start, because he knew film goers were waiting to spot him, and he did not want to divert their attention away from the story.

3. John Hodiak - starred in the film *Lifeboat*, opposite Tallulah Bankhead.

4. Tallulah Bankhead - a striking American actress from a prominent political family. Her grandfather and uncle were U.S. Senators. She struggled with alcoholism and drug addiction and was famous for her uninhibited sex life – her husky voice made her far more famous than her film appearances.

5. Lon Chaney Junior - American actor who played Lenny Small in the film *Of Mice and Men*. He made dozens of films, largely playing monstrous characters such as *Frankenstein*. He appeared in the film *High Noon* and in later life as Chingachgook in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

6. Tortilla Flat - Steinbeck's first major success in 1935. One of three Cannery novels; the others being *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*. The film in 1942 featured Spencer Tracy, Hedy Lamarr and John Garfield.

7. Henry Fonda - Henry Jaynes Fonda played Tom Joad in the adaptation of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Part of a famous acting dynasty his family included Jane Fonda (Hanoi Jane) and Peter Fonda, star of *Easy Rider*. Fonda finally won an Academy award in 1981 for his last film *On Golden Pond*. In 1973 he starred in *The Red Pony* based on the Steinbeck novella. When he died the New York Times reported that, in accordance with his family's wishes, his body was to be disposed of, 'without ceremony of any kind'.

Chapter 7

1. Higgins the boat builder - Andrew Higgins was described by President Eisenhower as “the man who won World War II for us”. He designed landing craft which were so flexible, so reliable and so fast, that the Americans could reach many parts of the coastline, not just the major ports, giving the Allies an option of landing spots in North Africa, Italy and France. Higgins (like the Wright Brothers), had a problem in convincing the American military of his achievements; that a small boat builder from Nebraska could have the necessary answers.

Chapter 8

1. The Monteleone Hotel - still exists in New Orleans. It was founded in 1886.
2. Ramos Fizz - a New Orleans gin fizz.
3. Dr Paul De Kruif – see Chapter 1, note 7.
4. Lohengrin – coincidentally the character is a Knight of the Holy Grail – a theme, which intrigued Steinbeck throughout his life..
5. Lyle Saxon - a writer, journalist and historian on New Orleans.
6. Antoine’s - a renowned French-Creole cuisine restaurant. It was founded around 1840. During the Prohibition Era, one of the back rooms (such as used for the Steinbeck wedding) was known as the “Mystery Room”. This acquired its name due to the fact that diners would go through a door in the ladies rest room to a secret room, and exit with a coffee cup full of booze. The protocol phrase at table, when asked from whence it came was “It’s a mystery to me”.
7. It seems highly likely that Gwyn knew the identity of ” Lady M.” but felt it best not to identify her, in as much as she worked at McIntosh & Otis.

Chapter 9

1. George Frazier – travel and entertainment writer and jazz critic.
2. Sam Spewack – was a Ukrainian born writer who with his wife Bella wrote the libretto for the musical *Kiss Me Kate* with music by Cole Porter.
3. Quentin Reynolds – war correspondent and journalist and associate editor for *Colliers Weekly*.
4. Fernet Branca – a bitter Italian herbal liqueur.
5. Red Norvo – a jazz musician who recorded with Billie Holliday, Sinatra and Dinah Shore.
6. Virginia Mayo – star of some fifty films. Best known for her comedies with Danny Kaye but played opposite James Cagney, Bob Hope and Paul Newnan.
7. Burl Ives – originally a folk singer who was born Burl Icle Ivanhoe Ives. He sang with Woody Guthrie and recorded songs like *A Little Bitty Tear* and *The Blue Tailed Fly*. Later he became a popular actor, appearing with Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and in 1955 played Sam the Sherriff in Elia Kazan’s film production of Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*. He won an Oscar for his portrayal of Rufus in the epic western *The Big Country*.
8. Robert Ruark – a columnist and big game hunter.

9. Hazel Scott – Trinidadian born jazz pianist and singer.

10. Adam Clayton Powell – Congressman for Harlem and one of the first black Americans to be elected to the U.S House of Representatives.

Chapter 10

1. Mitla – a renowned archaeological site near Oaxaca in Mexico, where buildings up to 1500 years old are to be seen, very well preserved by the extremely dry climate.

2. 21 Club - opened in Greenwich Village in 1922, but moved to its current location at 21 West Fifty Second Street, New York, in 1930. The old site was redeveloped as the Rockefeller Centre. When raided during prohibition, the shelves on the bars would automatically tip all liquor through a chute and into oblivion. The cellar was next door to the club, so staff could truthfully say there was no “booze” on the premises. After prohibition, it housed private wine cellars for such names as Sophia Loren, John F. Kennedy, Ernest Hemingway and Frank Sinatra. Even today, the club owned by Belmond Ltd (formerly Orient-Express Hotels), does not allow jeans and all patrons must wear a jacket. If they forget, they hire a ‘loaner’ jacket, probably by Hugo Boss or Ralph Lauren. The Club has been patronised by almost every famous American from the world of sport, politics, and entertainment, many of whom are associated with specific tables in the Club.