

*World-acclaimed author's work didn't always sit well with the people in his own hometown*

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**I**gnoring John Steinbeck, Salinas' native son, is impossible in Monterey County.

Steinbeck's words cast a bright beam of literary insight on the state of humankind. His revelations continue to enlighten his readers. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize, Steinbeck wrote classics such as "Grapes of Wrath," "Of Mice and Men" and "East of Eden."

Not all the locals were impressed. Many of his fictional characters bore striking resemblances to people he'd known growing up in the family home in Salinas. That those portrayals were not always flattering, that Steinbeck unflinchingly championed the down-and-out 1930s Dust Bowl migrant farm worker, grated on many in his hometown.

Locations in his novels, too, may generate a familiar feel.

"Of Mice and Men," for example, was set near Soledad south of Salinas. It opens with a scene along the Salinas River where the river's waters, as he wrote, run, "deep and green."

— Dave Nordstrand

A statue of writer John Steinbeck stands like a sentry in front of the Salinas Public Library branch named for him on Lincoln Avenue. Steinbeck, once reviled by some city leaders for his critical depiction of the powerful in the Salinas Valley, finally became revered as Salinas' native son when his literary brilliance was recognized worldwide and put Salinas on the map. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962.



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## Stalking Steinbeck

Many points of interest exist to help one get a sense of Steinbeck and the forces that shaped his writings. Among them:

- **The Steinbeck House Restaurant**, 132 Central Ave., Salinas. A restaurant in the Victorian home where Steinbeck was born and grew up. Open for lunch. 424-2735.
- **The National Steinbeck Center**, 1 Main St., Salinas. Contains memorabilia, original editions and manuscripts and much more. The center sponsors a Steinbeck Festival Aug. 7-10. 775-4720, [www.steinbeck.org](http://www.steinbeck.org).
- **Ed Ricketts' Lab**, 800 Cannery Row, Monterey, and atmosphere of Cannery Row, itself. While not open to the public, the lab sits directly facing the street.

- **Garden of Memories Cemetery**, 768 Abbott St., Salinas. Steinbeck, his wife, Elaine, his mother and father and other family members are buried there. 422-6417.
- **The John Steinbeck Library**, 350 Lincoln Ave., Salinas. Check out the 6-foot bronze statue of Steinbeck sculpted by Tom Fitzwater.
- Take a stroll along Central Avenue by the **Steinbeck House**. It's Steinbeck's neighborhood. Many of the homes from his youth still stand, and a sense of those times lingers.
- Many key Steinbeck-related sites exist on the Monterey Peninsula, such as the **Steinbeck family cottage**, 147 11th St., Pacific Grove. [www.93950.com](http://www.93950.com).