



## America and Americans and Selected Nonfiction (Penguin Classics)

*By John Steinbeck*



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**America and Americans and Selected Nonfiction (Penguin Classics)** By John Steinbeck

More than four decades after his death, John Steinbeck remains one of the nation's most beloved authors. Yet few know of his career as a journalist who covered world events from the Great Depression to Vietnam. Now, this distinctive collection offers a portrait of the artist as citizen, deeply engaged in the world around him. In addition to the complete text of Steinbeck's last published book, *America and Americans*, this volume brings together for the first time more than fifty of Steinbeck's finest essays and journalistic pieces on Salinas, Sag Harbor, Arthur Miller, Woody Guthrie, the Vietnam War and more. This edition is edited by Steinbeck scholar Susan Shillinglaw and Steinbeck biographer Jackson J. Benson.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Amazon.com Review**

*America and Americans* is a representative, noteworthy collection of John Steinbeck's journalism, including the title piece, actually his last book. Editors Susan Shillinglaw and Jackson J. Benson, who provide an able, informative introduction as well as succinct sectional prefaces, have wisely organized the book thematically rather than chronologically. There are travel pieces (including the hilariously bittersweet "The Making of a New Yorker"); political reflections (including three articles on California migrant workers, written before the last draft of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and a short screed on the spiritual oppression of communism, in which he writes, "Communists of our day are about as revolutionary as the Daughters of the American Revolution"); correspondence from both World War II and Vietnam; and snapshots of Ernie Pyle, Henry Fonda, and other friends. Not all the pieces are timeless, but most are sprinkled with bright gems--"Writers are taken seriously in Italy and are accorded the same respect that Lana Turner's legs get in our country"--and everywhere girded by deep concern and anger about social injustices. --H. O'Billovich

### **From Publishers Weekly**

Few may remember that the Nobel Prize-winning novelist pursued a parallel 30-year career in journalism, but this collection (timed to mark the centennial of Steinbeck's birth) demonstrates that the author was a major journalistic voice in the mid-20th century. Of course, the pieces vary in quality: Steinbeck's travel writing, personal recollections and political journalism are more entertaining than his essays on craft or dated dispatches from war zones, and one questions why the editors, both Steinbeck scholars, chose certain brief reports. Still, Steinbeck's humor shines through in a number of fine essays, especially in one about a visit to his Sag Harbor cottage with two teenage sons, and another on his battles (in print) with a Communist newspaper in Italy. Three reports on the plight of California's migrant workers written in the mid-1930s before Steinbeck had finished *The Grapes of Wrath* shed light on the novel's roots. A particularly moving essay details the author's long friendship with Ed Ricketts, the man who found his way into Steinbeck's Cannery Row and *The Sea of Cortez*. The last 100 pages of the collection reprints his final book, *America and Americans*, in which the author offers a wide-reaching commentary on the American 20th century. "Journalism not only is a respected profession, but is considered the training ground of any good American author," wrote Steinbeck in 1966. Though this statement is no longer true, the collection shows that it certainly once was. (On sale Feb. 4) Forecast: No doubt publicity around Steinbeck's centennial will help sales to new readers as well as devotees.

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### **From Library Journal**

Just in time for the centenary of Steinbeck's birth: a reissue of his last published book and a collection of his journalism.

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Kenneth Grimes:**

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