

# The Grapes of Wrath (1940)

## Written by

Nunnally Johnson & John Steinbeck

## Directed by

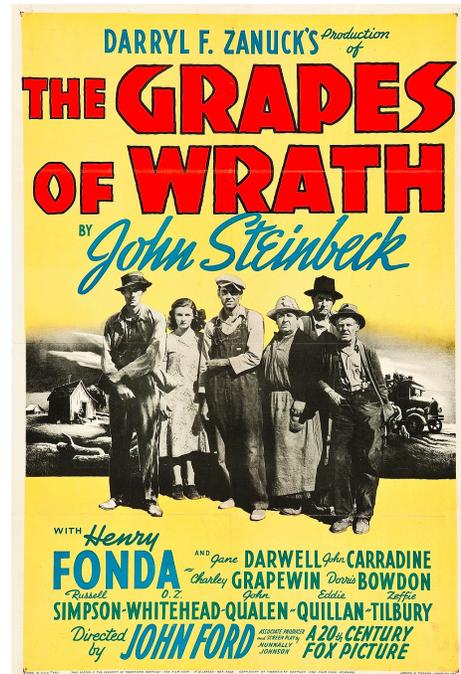
John. Ford

## Cast

Henry Fonda	<i>Tom Joad</i>
Jane Darwell	<i>Ma Joad</i>
John Carradine	<i>Casy</i>
Charley Grapewin	<i>Grandpa</i>
Dorris Bowdon	<i>Rosasharn</i>
Russell Simpson	<i>Pa Joad</i>
O.Z. Whitehead	<i>Al</i>
John Qualen	<i>Muley</i>
Eddie Quillan	<i>Connie</i>
Zeffie Tilbury	<i>Grandma</i>
Frank Sully	<i>Noah</i>
Frank Darien	<i>Uncle John</i>
Darryl Hickman	<i>Winfield</i>
Shirley Mills	<i>Ruth Joad</i>

## Trivia

- Prior to filming, producer Darryl F. Zanuck sent undercover investigators out to the migrant camps to see if John Steinbeck had exaggerated the squalor and unfair treatment there. He was horrified to discover that Steinbeck had actually downplayed what went on there.
- John Steinbeck loved the movie and said that Henry Fonda as Tom Joad made him "believe my own words".
- John Steinbeck was particularly enamored with the performance of Henry Fonda as Tom Joad. The two became good friends. Indeed Fonda did a reading at Steinbeck's funeral.



- The pro-union stance of the film led to both John Steinbeck and John Ford being investigated by Congress during the McCarthy "Red Scare" era for alleged pro-Communist leanings.
- John Ford preferred only one take and little or no rehearsal to catch the most spontaneous moment. For the key climactic final scene between Tom and Ma, Ford didn't even watch the rehearsal. When the time came to shoot, Ford led Fonda and Jane Darwell through the silent action of the scene, preventing them from starting their lines until the two actors were completely in the moment. It was done in a single take and Fonda said on screen it was "brilliant."
- In the book, John Steinbeck had the character of Casy parodying the song "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" by singing "Yes sir, that's my Savior/ Jesus is my Savior/Jesus is my Savior now." The Motion Picture Production Code then in effect forbade use of the words "God" and "Jesus" except when used "reverently", so the script resorted to having him hum: "Mm-mmm, mmm, my Savior".
- While filming the Joads' car traveling down the highway, John Ford wanted to add a shot showing the large number of caravans heading west, so they stopped actual cars making the trek and paid the drivers five dollars to escort the Joads' jalopy for the cameras.
- Slightly more than halfway through the film, when the Joads pull over to fix a tire, Ma sits on the front fender while Tom crawls under the car. You can just barely hear him say, "Ma, get the hell off, this thing's heavy enough," language that which somehow passed the censors.
- The joke that the truck driver at the diner is telling gets cut off and is never finished. John Steinbeck has the full version in the book: Little kid comes in late ta school. Teacher says, "Why ya late?" Kid says, "Had a take a heifer down-get 'er bred." Teacher says, "Couldn't your ol' man do it?" Kid says, "Sure he could, but not as good as the bull."
- The truck in the movie is a 26 Hudson "Super 6" - same as in the book.
- The budget for the film was \$750,000.
- The disease described by the man returning from California is likely kwashiorkor, which is due to a lack of protein.
- The movie was released less than a year after the book's initial publication.