

## Trip 5 – Episode #8: Salinas & Steinbeck

While we were in Monterey, we felt the need to go to Salinas, which was so close.

After all, Steinbeck had travelled the country in his own motor home, about 60 years before we did. And while we've been travelling *in* Charles, he had travelled *with* Charles. Well, actually Charley, his dog.

And also, he's Steinbeck, for god's sake! Just like we had to go to Mark Twain's birthplace, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to visit Steinbeck's.

So, one day, we headed out of Monterey in search of Steinbeck's Salinas.



Salinas is known as the "Salad Bowl of the World", because of its "large, vibrant agriculture industry". And as you're driving toward it, you understand. If you're familiar with the flat, fertile Holland Marsh north of Toronto, this will look familiar.



Except that this valley goes on and on for miles. And today, it supplies 80% of the country's lettuce and artichokes, as well as many other crops.

We were expecting to see all the farmland. What we weren't expecting was a town with such vibrancy and style.



Apparently, by the end of World War I, Salinas had the highest per capita income in the country. And you can see the wealth in many of the buildings on the main street.



We counted three theaters on the main street.





But the main attraction in the town is the Salinas City Centre, which houses the National Steinbeck Centre.



“I think I would like to write the story of this whole valley, of all the little towns and all the farms and the ranches in the wilder hills.”

# Journey Through Steinbeck's Valley of the World

I can see how I would like to do it so that it would be the valley of the world.”

(John Steinbeck to his friend George Albee, from Salinas, 1933)





# KATE'S WALK

In his novel *East of Eden*, Steinbeck offers readers a walking tour of 1917 Salinas as experienced by Adam Trask's renegade wife, Kate. As she makes her weekly trip to the bank to deposit the week's earnings from her prosperous bordello, she passes by or enters a number of actual businesses.



The Monterey County Bank building still stands at 201 Main Street. William Weeks was the architect of the 1907 structure.

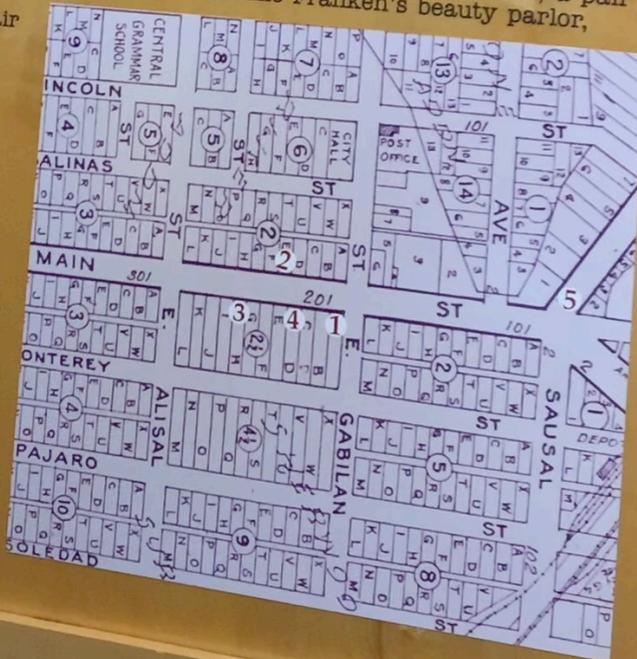
The Farmer's Mercantile building, 247 Main Street, became a music store and later, a gym.

Castroville Street is now called Market Street.

## Use the map to follow Kate through downtown Salinas:

“She always went to the same places—first to the Monterey County Bank (1) where she was admitted behind the shining bars that defended the safe-deposit vault.... Then she moved slowly along Main Street, looking in the store windows. She stepped into Porter and Irvine's (2) and looked at dresses and sometimes made a purchase—elastic, safety pins, a veil, a pair of gloves. About two-fifteen she entered Minnie Franken's beauty parlor, stayed an hour, and came out with her hair pinned up in tight curls....

“At three-thirty she climbed the stairs to the offices over the Farmer's Mercantile (3) and went into the consulting room of Dr. Rosen. When she came down from the doctor's office she stopped for a moment at Bell's candy store (4) and bought a two-pound box of mixed chocolates. She never varied the route. From Bell's she went directly back to Castroville Street (5) and thence to her house.”





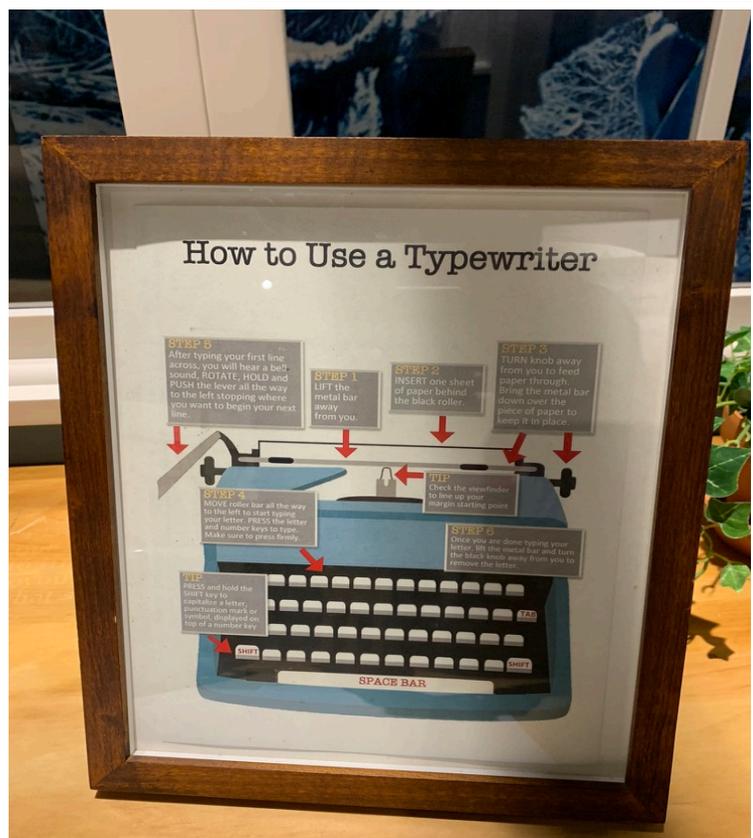
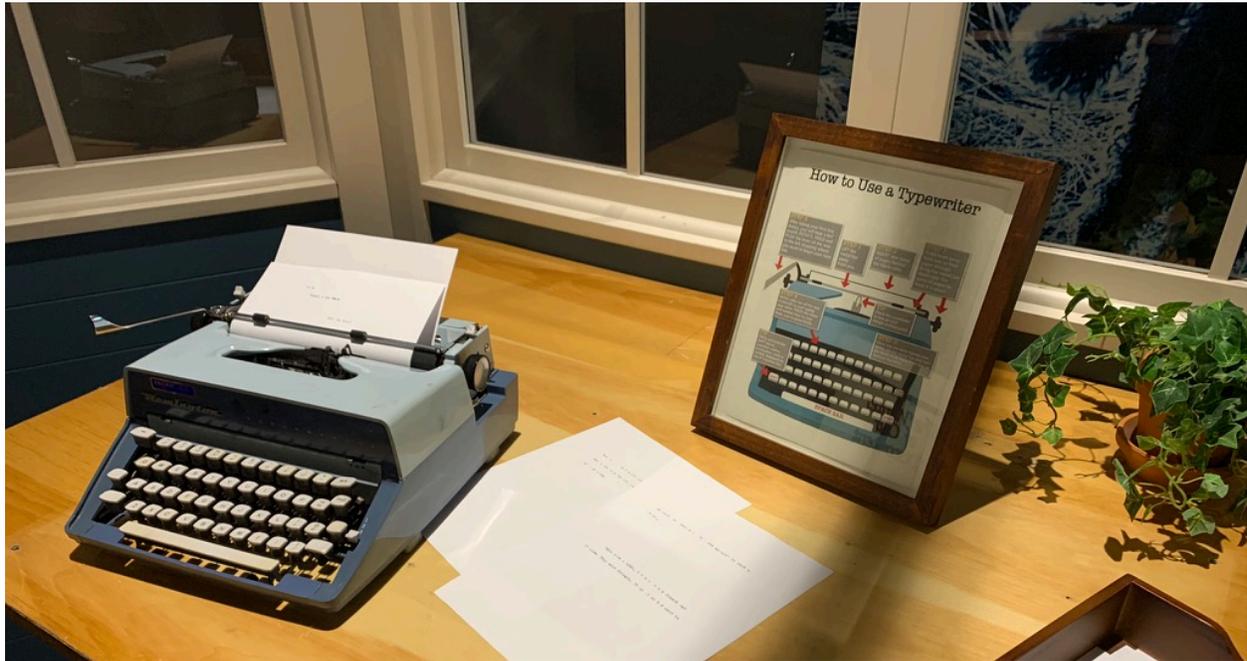
There were lots of opportunities for kids to get engaged.



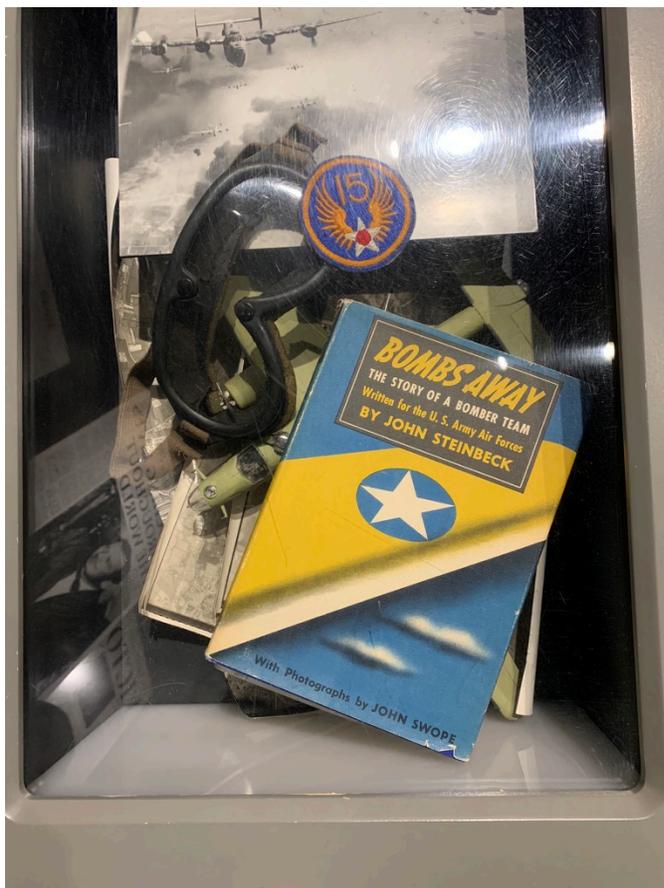
Having just spent time in Cannery Row (and now listening to the audio book) this part fun for us.



This was a little shocking. You could sit down and try writing the way Steinbeck did. We are SO old!



I hadn't realized just how prolific Steinbeck was, or how much travelling he had done.



Steinbeck wrote 33 books, mostly novels, but also several non-fiction books. He also wrote screenplays, some based on his books.

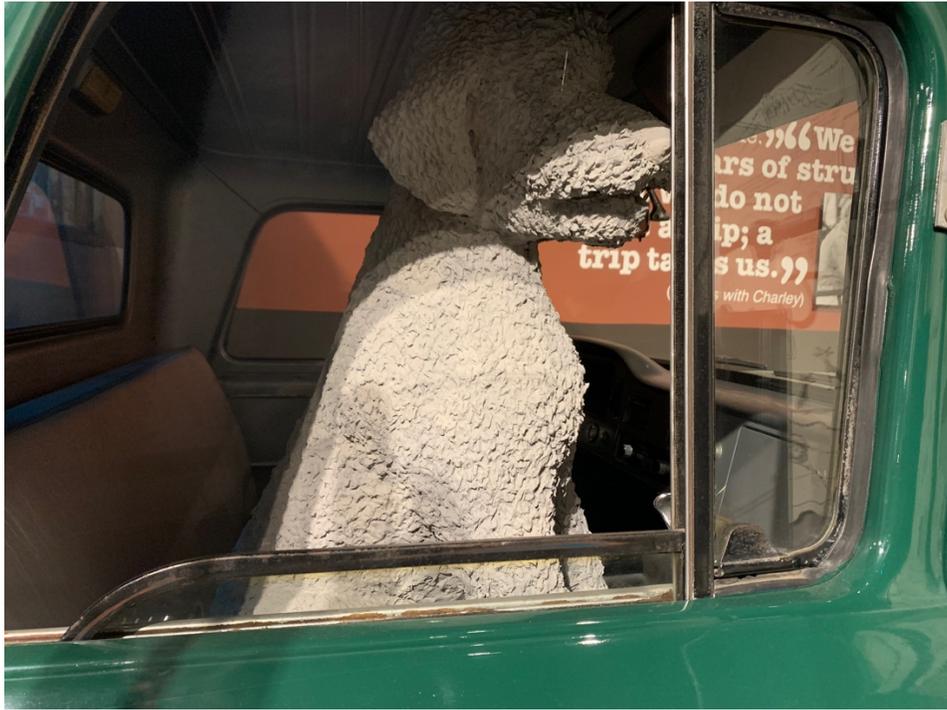
It ended with an exhibit that felt especially close to us.



We had listened to the audio book last year, and felt some affinity with Steinbeck. It was especially fun to see "Rocinante", the actual truck that he drove (with Charley) around America in the early 60s.

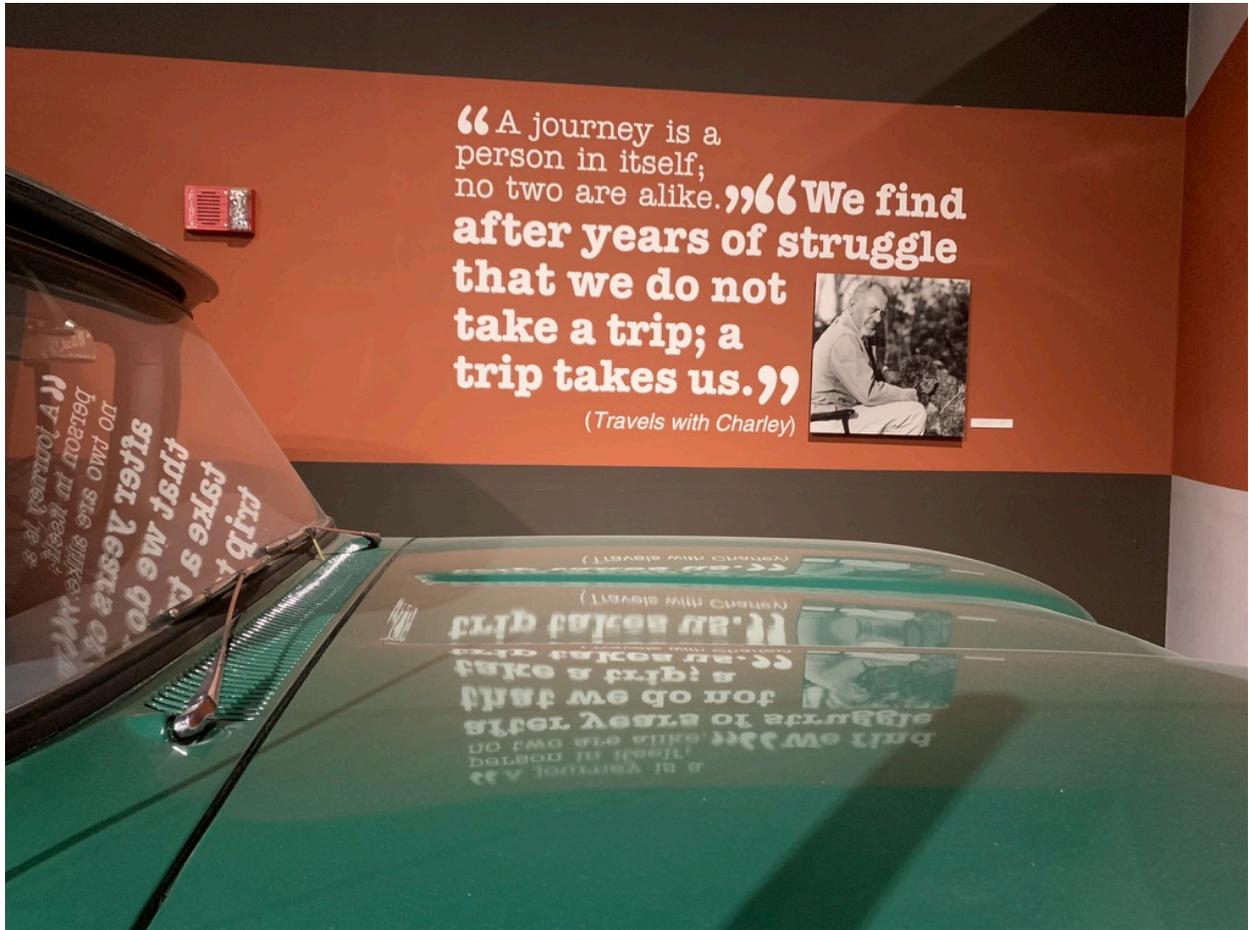


Don't think this is the actual Charley.



It's not quite as elegant as Charles, but for its time, it was quite a sophisticated travelling office.





We were glad our travels took us to Salinas.