


**John Steinbeck's**  
*Of Mice And Men*

as read by  
**Vincent G. Gibbs**



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Executive Producer Linda M. Font

(LINDA TYSON, CLASS OF '68)

Producer Joe Fab

(JOE FABISZEWSKI, CLASS OF '69)

Engineer Bruce Kane

FROM *OF MICE AND MEN* BY JOHN STEINBECK,  
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NET PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THIS LIMITED EDITION BOOK-ON-TAPE  
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***Rarely in life*** does one get the opportunity to help another person establish a special legacy — one that stretches across miles and across years - the end result being a Treasure. Serendipity must bring together the idea, the time, the inclination, the resources, the energy and the commitment. The talent must also be there, as well as their muse. Such has happened here, I think, in this audio book recording of Vincent G. Gibbs reading *Of Mice and Men*.

Nearly forty years ago, having graduated from Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky, Mr. Gibbs began his teaching career at Robert E. Peary High School in Rockville, Maryland. He served for

**“I Will Find A Way  
Or Make One.”**

all of the school’s 24 years as an English teacher and also developed quite a reputation for his Drama classes, and for directing a long list of memorable stage (and gym floor) produc-

tions. As part of the curriculum in his sophomore English classes, he started reading *Of Mice and Men* aloud. Through his distinctive character interpretations, Mr. Gibbs brought George and Lenny, Candy and Slim, Crooks, Curly, Curly’s wife, and Carlson to life. Listening to this poignant story sparked lively class discussions about its themes — friendship, the responsibility of human beings to care for one another, coping with loneliness and working hard to realize fragile dreams in the face of harsh reality.

Peary High School closed in 1984 due to demographic shifts

in the neighborhood. However, the memory of Mr. Gibbs and his reading of this Steinbeck masterpiece is very much alive in the hearts of alumni. This is evident by how frequently he and the book are mentioned in the REPHS Alumni Association "Midnight Sun On-Line" newsletter (<http://www.pearyhs.org>). Shortly after the turn of the millennium, I encouraged Mr. Gibbs to record this book as an association fund-raiser. He doubted there would be enough interest. However, our school motto is "I will find a way or make one", so I persisted. After getting the necessary permissions, I was able to announce the project officially at the REPHSAA Homecoming 2000 Reunion this past June. In contrast to Mr. Gibbs' concerns, the response was overwhelmingly positive. And, it was virtually immediate - many orders were taken right at the reunion, and the first enthusiastic response to my e-mails came back to me within 9 minutes!

**"Inveniam Viam  
Aut Faciam."**

As the executive producer for this project, I need to acknowledge the contributions of several people. First, I extend my deep appreciation to the producer, Joe Fab (Joe Fabiszewski, Class of '69). He is Vice-President of The Johnson Group, a video and event production company in McLean, VA. Thanks, Joe, for all your hard work, guidance in the intricacies of production, and renewed friendship after 32 years. Next, to our engineer, Bruce Kane, of Sterling Productions, Inc., thank you for making the weekly trips to the stu-

dio in Sterling, VA a pleasure and for helping us put together the finished product. I am also grateful to Florence Eichen at Penguin Putnam Publishing, Inc., for getting us the permission to make these 50 recordings. Special thanks also goes to the REPHS Alumni Association — specifically, the current President, Terry Brooks ('69), the immediate past-president, Neal Pizzano ('76), and the dozens of alumni who responded to the offer to purchase this recording. You are in for a treat, and will no doubt enjoy re-visiting this wonderful memory and sharing it with present and future generations of family, friends and students.

To this end, the association is donating copies of the recording to two special recipients. One is the Marvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy. They now occupy what used to be Robert E. Peary High School and were gracious enough to allow the use of the refurbished school facilities for the Homecoming 2000 Reunion. The other copy is for the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, California. They have enthusiastically accepted this recording to be part of the research library of Steinbeck's work. This is, I think, a fitting tribute to an exceptional teacher, so I am grateful for their interest.

Lastly, to Mr. Gibbs, my sincere personal thanks for supporting this project and for being such a congenial and cooperative artist. Your "kids" very much appreciate that you re-created and preserved *Of Mice and Men* for us. You have a special place in all of our hearts where the best memories are held dear.

**Linda M. (Tyson) Font , Class of '68**

**"You can't go home again..."** This was the warning that Mr. Gibbs had given Linda when he agreed to participate in this project -- and she in turn passed it on to me when I offered my services as producer of this book on tape. I supposed he was advising against any expectations that his reading of *Of Mice And Men* in a recording studio today would somehow measure up to our memories of his reading it in our classroom over thirty years ago. I took a moment to weigh this notion, flashed back to his English class in the late sixties, and realized with some dismay that he might be right.

As I drifted back, the mists of memory yielded up a romantic version of what reality had probably been. I saw us all as Charles



Schultz might have drawn us – cute, but with our teenage neuroses worn on our sleeves. Mary, Alexis, David, Mike – everyone – settling in, hopelessly seeking a comfortable position in those rigid all-in-one-desk-and-chair contraptions. And there I was too, wishing I could be cool in my first pair of flared trousers and a button down shirt, betrayed by my Clark Kent glasses and high school insecurities.

The bell – Mr. Gibbs strode in. After a few minutes of administrative housekeeping peppered with his sarcastic teasing, playful puns and wry asides, he perched on a tall swivel stool with a green leatherette seat and back. As he reached for his dog-eared paperback on the music stand, we fell silent and waited.

And then, that confident, unforgettable voice: "Of Mice And Men... by John Steinbeck." A healthy pause... "Chapter One."

What followed, I now know with absolute certainty, has never left me and never will. A timeless story by a great writer, to be sure. Lessons about human needs, human compassion, human cruelty. But also, most importantly, a gift of self-expression and, I believe, real love and affection, from a teacher to his students.

For me, during the joyful experience of making this recording, the warning that you can't go home again has dissolved. What Mr. Gibbs gave me decades ago, as I recently had the occasion to acknowledge to him, has led me to the very fulfilling work I do today as a producer and writer. The memories are vivid and deeply treasured, their present influence and manifestations are unmistakable. I could not be more grateful to Linda and to Mr. Gibbs for the opportunity to become aware of how blessed I was then, and am now.

For you, my fellow alumni, I hope this book on tape may be satisfying for what it is and for what it may stimulate you to remember and relive. May we all be inspired to use our talents, as our teacher has, to encourage the self-expression and growth of those

around us.

And for you, Mr. Gibbs, even though the process turned out to be more than just sitting down and reading the book into a microphone one time, I hope you had fun and are proud of the end result. But above all else, I hope you have a greater sense of the contribution you made to your students, and the admiration and love we feel for you.

**Joe Fab (Fabiszewski) , Class of '69**







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- Back cover photos; courtesy of Joe Fab



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**(left to right)**  
**Linda M. Font,**  
**executive producer;**  
**Vincent G. Gibbs;**  
**Joe Fab, producer;**  
**Bruce Kane, engineer.**  
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▶  
**Vincent G. Gibbs during**  
**a recording session for**  
***Of Mice And Men,***  
**on September 6, 2000,**  
**at the studios of**  
**Sterling Productions**  
**in Sterling, Virginia.**  
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