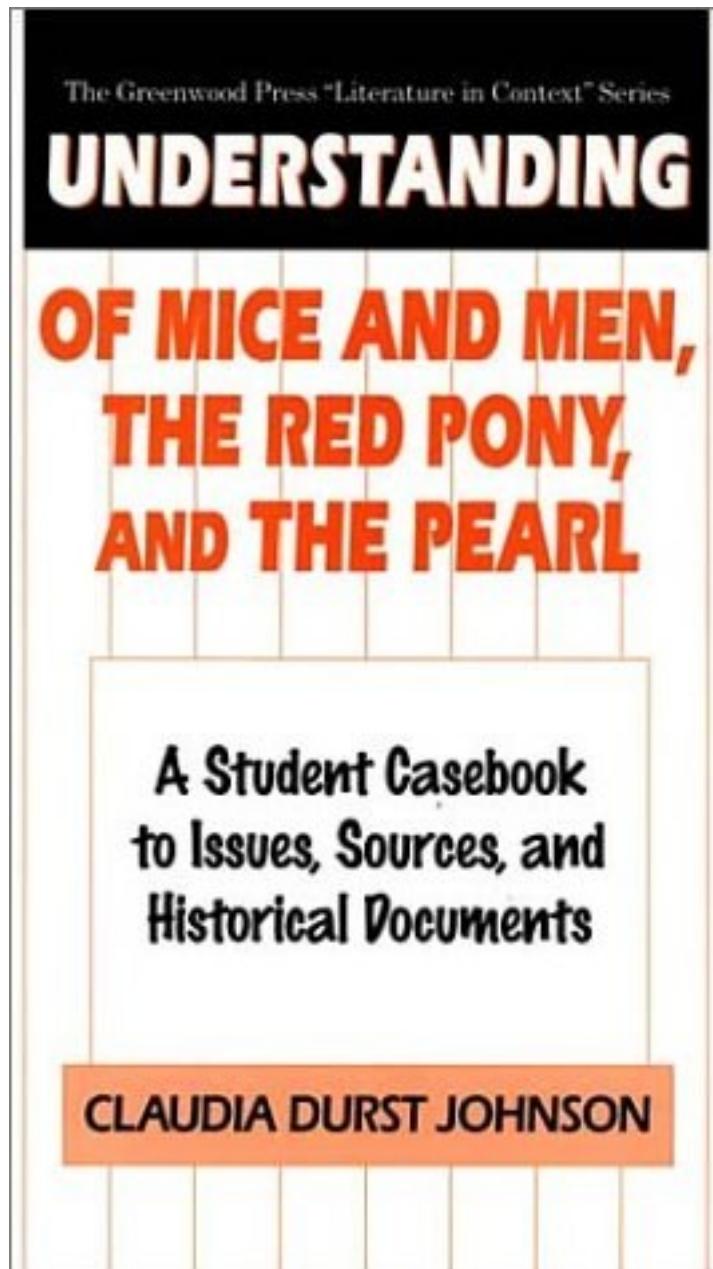


Understanding "Of Mice and Men", "The Red Pony" and "The Pearl"



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著者:Johnson, Claudia D.

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Although works of fiction, John Steinbeck's novellas *Of Mice and Men*, *The Red Pony*, and *The Pearl* are a window on the history of the times and places they portray. Learning about the historical, social, economic, and regional background of each novella is essential to a full understanding of it. This interdisciplinary collection of rich collateral materials features a variety of primary documents that shed light on each of these novellas - the pioneer days and life on the Western frontier, the early history of California, the gold rush, the plight of the migrant worker during the Great Depression, problems of the homeless and the hopeless, and oppression in Mexico in the early 20th century. Documents include memoirs of mountain men and pioneers, books of travel, sociological studies, a political treatise, a journal, reports of U.S. commissions, a comic memoir, and an interview with a Salvation Army general who worked with the downtrodden during the 1930s. Most of these materials are not available in printed form anywhere else. Each section of this casebook contains study questions, topics for research papers and class discussions, and lists of further reading for examining the issues raised by the novellas.

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