



# Ayn Rand's Life

## Highlights and Sidelights

Harry Binswanger

*Father, Zinovy Zakharovich, born November 8, 1869, in Brest-Litovsk, Russia*  
*Mother, Anna Borisovna, born October 16, 1880 in St. Petersburg, Russia*  
*Husband; Frank O'Connor born September 22, 1897, in Lorain, Ohio*  
*Ayn Rand born February 2, 1905, in St. Petersburg, Russia*

### YEAR AGE EVENTS

1907	.....2	.....First memories; sister Natasha born	
1910	.....5	.....Second sister, Nora, born	
1911	.....6	.....Teaches herself to read; discovers "tiddlywink" music; finds her first image of a heroine	
1912	.....7	.....Finds second image of a heroine: Daisy; starts school	
1913	.....8	.....Discovers exciting fiction: story of detective and jewel thief; begins inventing her own stories and movie scenarios	
1914	.....9	.....Summer trip to Vienna and Switzerland; discovers her first hero, Cyrus, in <i>The Mysterious Valley</i> ; decides to be a writer	
1915	.....10	.....Begins writing novels	
1917	.....12	.....Begins "thinking in principles"; Kerensky Revolution; discovers <i>Ivanhoe</i> ; summer trip to Finland; Communist Revolution	
1918	.....13	.....Discovers writings of <i>Victor Hugo</i> ; family leaves Petrograd for Crimea via Ukraine; attacked en route by bandits	
1921	.....16	.....Graduation from high school; first paid job: teaching soldiers to read and write; returns to Petrograd; enters U. of Leningrad; takes Ancient Greek philosophy class from N. O. Lossky	
1922	.....17	.....Meets Leo, her first love	
1924	.....19	.....Graduation from University of Leningrad; works as a museum guide, Sundays, only until departure for America; enrolls in State Institute for Cinema Arts November 15	
1925	.....20	.....Continues at cinema school; studies English; travels to Riga, Latvia, for visa; gets visa December 26	
1926	.....21	.....January 26: leaves Russia for America; celebrates 21st birthday in Berlin; February 6 in Paris; February 10, takes French Line ship, De Grasse from Le Havre; arrives in New York on February 18; after a few days, on to Chicago; late August through early September: travels to Hollywood; lives at Hollywood Studio Club; second day in town meets Cecil B. DeMille; visits set of <i>King of Kings</i> , works as an extra; meets Frank O'Connor; then can't locate him	
1927	.....22	.....Finds Frank after 9 months	



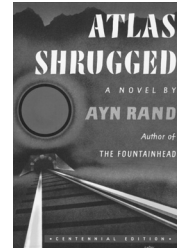
**YEAR    AGE    EVENTS**

- 1928 .....23 .....Works as a waitress, stuffs envelopes, and sells subscriptions to *The Hollywood Citizen*.
- 1929 .....24 .....April 15: marries Frank in Los Angeles: goes to Mexicali and returns to re-enter country as wife of a citizen; June 29: gets “green card”; works in RKO wardrobe department; on weekends, plots and begins writing *We the Living* (*WTL*)
- 1931 .....26 .....Becomes naturalized citizen, March 13; still at RKO; working on *WTL* on weekends
- 1933 .....27 .....Promoted to office head at RKO wardrobe; writes *Red Pawn* and sells to Universal Studios; quits RKO; six weeks at Universal adapting *Red Pawn*; interrupts *WTL* work to write *Penthouse Legend* (a.k.a. *Night of January 16th*)
- 1934 .....29 .....Begins generalized planning for *The Fountainbead*; *WTL* rejected by many publishers; begins efforts to get parents out of Russia; for four weeks, makes \$100 a week “sitting doing nothing” for Paramount, while they consider filming *Red Pawn*; E. E. Clive produces Hollywood Playhouse version of *Night of January 16th*, which opens on October 22; late summer: signs with Al Woods to do *Night of January 16th* on Broadway; November 24 leaves for New York City by car; arrives to find that Woods can’t produce *Night of January 16th* until following year; works synopsising scripts for RKO, then MGM, in New York City; low point of finances; budget: \$11 a week
- 1935 .....30 .....Finds better agent, Ann Watkins, for *WTL*; Philadelphia tryouts for *Night of January 16th*; Macmillan buys *WTL*; *Night of January 16th* opens in September and runs for six months; works on “The Unconquered” (stage version of *WTL*); December: first written notes for *The Fountainbead*
- 1936 .....31 .....Spring: *WTL* released in England, then, on April 7, in United States; gives public talks at Town Hall about Soviet Russia and communism
- 1937 .....32 .....Sometime “in this period,” writes *Ideal*, play; summer: writes *Anthem*; Soviets refuse, irrevocably, to let her parents out; “worst of struggles” to devise plot of *The Fountainbead*; for research, works as clerk in Eli Jacques Khan’s architectural office
- 1939 .....34 .....*The Unconquered* produced by George Abbott; Frank works as understudy for the part of Leo and in “several small parts”
- 1940 .....35 .....Writes “Think Twice”; summer: gets job through Richard Mealand as script reader for Paramount; Mealand had read parts of *The Fountainbead* (Parts I and II finished—January 3); Mealand recommends it to Little, Brown
- 1941 .....36 .....Mealand recommends *The Fountainbead* to Bobbs Merrill; Ayn Rand meets Archie Ogden; December 9: *The Fountainbead* contract signed
- 1942 .....37 .....December 31: delivers manuscript of *The Fountainbead* to Bobbs Merrill
- 1943 .....38 .....April 15: *The Fountainbead* published; late summer or fall: first idea for *Atlas Shrugged*; fall: sells movie rights to *The Fountainbead* for \$50,000—first real money; December: travels back to Hollywood to write preliminary *Fountainbead* screen adaptation; this or following year, signs with Bobbs Merrill to do book on individualism (never completed)
- 1944 .....39 .....Signs with Hal Wallis as a screenwriter; writes first version of *The Fountainbead* screenplay; summer: buys home in San Fernando Valley (10,000 Tampa Blvd.) designed by Richard Neutra for Josef von Sternberg; September: writes screenplay for *Love Letters*



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- 1945 ..... 40 ..... Pamphleteers brings out *Anthem* (Cassell had published it previously in England); goes back to New York City for a visit; on the way back, visits Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin
- 1946 ..... 41 ..... September 2: begins writing of *Atlas Shrugged*; “Only Path to Tomorrow” published by Reader’s Digest, with their unapproved editing; writes “Notes on the History of American Free Enterprise” and “Textbook of Americanism”; *Anthem* republished by Caxton
- 1947 ..... 42 ..... Travels back East to give HUAC testimony; en route does *Atlas Shrugged* research: drives through Colorado, along route of John Galt line; visits steel mills in Chicago and Johnstown, interviews New York Central railroad people
- 1948 ..... 43 ..... *The Fountainhead* movie production begins; employed by Warner Bros. to write final script
- 1949 ..... 44 ..... April 12: *The Fountainhead* movie preview; summer: movie released; goes back to New York City for premiere
- 1950 ..... 45 ..... Released from Hal Wallis contract; meets the Brandens
- 1951 ..... 46 ..... Meets Leonard Peikoff; October 17: moves back to New York City permanently; works full time on *Atlas Shrugged*
- 1957 ..... 52 ..... March: finishes *Atlas Shrugged*; October 10: *Atlas Shrugged* published
- 1958 ..... 53 ..... Gives private lectures on fiction writing; Nathaniel Branden Lectures (later Nathaniel Branden Institute) begins; helps write “Basic Principles of Objectivism” course, and gives one lecture in, and participates in most Q & A periods, of that course through 1967; makes first notes for a proposed book on Objectivism, focusing on epistemology
- 1959 ..... 54 ..... *WTL* published as a Signet paperback
- 1960 ..... 55 ..... Writes *For the New Intellectual*; begins speaking at colleges: “Faith and Force: The Destroyers of the Modern World” given at Yale, Columbia and Brooklyn College
- 1961 ..... 56 ..... March: *For the New Intellectual* published; tapes nineteen autobiographical interviews; speaks at several major universities, including Johns Hopkins, Brown, North Carolina, Princeton, Columbia and Michigan; gives “The Objectivist Ethics” at the University of Wisconsin; March 26: first Ford Hall Forum (FHF) lecture, “The Intellectual Bankruptcy of Our Age”; *Anthem* published as Signet paperback; December 17: second FHF lecture, “America’s Persecuted Minority: Big Business”
- 1962 ..... 57 ..... Starts *The Objectivist Newsletter*; December 16, FHF: “The Fascist New Frontier”
- 1964 ..... 59 ..... *Playboy* interview (March); April 4, FHF: “Is Atlas Shrugging?”; *The Virtue of Selfishness* published
- 1965 ..... 60 ..... April 18, FHF: “The New Fascism: Rule by Consensus
- 1966 ..... 61 ..... *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* published; April 10, FHF: “Our Cultural Value Deprivation; *The Objectivist Newsletter* becomes *The Objectivist*; writes *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*
- 1967 ..... 62 ..... Appears twice on Johnny Carson’s *The Tonight Show* NBC receives 3,000 letters (only twelve are unfavorable), probably the highest response in the show’s five-year history; April 16, FHF: “The Wreckage of the Consensus”; November 19, FHF: “Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal” (a.k.a. “What Is Capitalism?”)
- 1968 ..... 63 ..... Appears on NBC’s *Today* show; breaks with the Brandens; NBI closes; December 8, FHF: “Of Living Death”



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- 1969 .....64 .....Gives private lectures on nonfiction writing; conducts workshops on Objectivist epistemology for philosophy professionals; November 9, FHF: “Apollo and Dionysus”
- 1970 .....65 .....*The Romantic Manifesto* published; November 1 FHF: “The Anti-Industrial Revolution.”
- 1971 .....66 .....*The New Left: The Anti Industrial Revolution* published; *The Objectivist* closed; *The Ayn Rand Letter* begins; November 4 FHF: “The Moratorium on Brains.”
- 1972 .....67 .....October 22, FHF: “A Nation’s Unity.”
- 1973 .....68 .....October 21, FHF: “Censorship: Local and Express.”
- 1974 .....69 .....West Point speech: “Philosophy: Who Needs It” (March 6); undergoes surgery for lung cancer; October 20 FHF: “Egalitarianism and Inflation.”
- 1976 .....71 .....*The Ayn Rand Letter* closed; April 11 FHF: “The Moral Factor”; attends a state dinner at the White House given by President Ford in honor of Malcolm Fraser, Prime Minister of Australia.
- 1977 .....72 .....April 10: Ford Hall Forum gives honorary luncheon for AR, prior to her speech “Global Balkanization.
- 1978 .....73 .....April 16 FHF: “Cultural Update.”
- 1979 .....74 .....*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (1st ed.) published by Mentor; appears on “Phil Donahue Show”; Frank O’Connor dies, November 7.
- 1980 .....75 .....Second “Phil Donahue Show” appearance.
- 1981 .....76 .....April 26 FHF: “The Age of Mediocrity”; plans *Philosophy: Who Needs It*; travels by private train car to New Orleans to give “The Sanction of the Victims,” her last speech (November 21); Louis Rukeyser TV interview in New Orleans, last public appearance (November 22); begins writing TV miniseries adaptation of *Atlas Shrugged*.
- 1982 .....77 .....January 1 begins second section of projected miniseries for *Atlas* (last writing); in New York Hospital most of February; dies at home of heart failure, March 6.

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