

The Whole World of Tolstoy

Leo Tolstoy Is Quitting Facebook

On the 101st anniversary of his death, a look back through Count Leo Tolstoy's epic Facebook posts dating from his joining the social network in 1847 to his departure from Facebook at the Astapovo railway station in November 1911.

Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy joined Facebook.

Ivan Turgenev added Tolstoy as a friend.

Turgenev wrote on Tolstoy's wall: Welcome Count! What made you break down after all the monde of *belles lettres* has already come and gone across these pages?

Tolstoy commented on Turgenev's comment: Schopenhauer joined.

Turgenev sent Tolstoy a personal message: A confidential warning—Facebook is a catastrophic time-suck for Slavophile and Westernizer alike. Continue and you will never write a really big one. By the way—LOVED *The Cossacks*. Best thing in the Russian language, EVER!

Tolstoy is reading Turgenev's collected work.

Tolstoy—he's a whole world...

M. Gorky

Tolstoy thinks Turgenev's writing is putrid and indulgent.

Tolstoy has posted an event: Duel with Turgenev.

Turgenev is attending the event: Duel with Turgenev.

Tolstoy has canceled the event: Duel with Turgenev.

Tolstoy is bored and depressed and embarrassed about the whole duel thing.

Tolstoy is 34 years old!

Tolstoy is too aged and ugly to marry.

Sofia Andreyevna Behrs joined Facebook.

Sofia Andreyevna became a fan of Tolstoy.

Tolstoy became a fan of Sofia Andreyevna.

Sofia Andreyevna added Tolstoy as a friend.

Tolstoy wrote on Sofia Andreyevna's wall: Aren't you kind of young to be friending an old count like me?

Tolstoy is in a relationship with Sofia Andreyevna.

Tolstoy and Sofia Andreyevna are married.

Tolstoy and Sofia Andreyevna have seven children.

Tolstoy is proud that despite Turgenev's warnings he has written a VERY big book AND maintained his friend network on Facebook.

Tolstoy has decided to call his very big book *War and Peace*.

Sofia Andreyevna finds that a little presumptuous.

Tolstoy is thinking that Sofia Andreyevna should get off Facebook and finish copying out part three of *War and Peace*.

Tolstoy and Sofia Andreyevna have 12 children.

Anton Chekhov became a fan of Tolstoy.

Chekhov and Tolstoy are friends.

Sofia Andreyevna is copying out the second draft of *War and Peace*.

Tolstoy is reading an interesting article about a woman who threw herself under a train.

Tolstoy has a new idea for a novel.

Sofia Andreyevna is hoping that Tolstoy is not writing another big one.

Tolstoy assures Sofia Andreyevna that it is, in fact, "another big one."

Sofia Andreyevna is pregnant.

Tolstoy finished *Anna Karenina*.

Sofia Andreyevna is copying *Anna Karenina*.

Tolstoy is bored and depressed.

Tolstoy joined the group Free the Serfs!

Chekhov wrote on Tolstoy's wall: Serfs?

Tolstoy commented on Chekhov's comment: Yes, I have taken an interest in the moral education of those who are closest to the land.

The buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina is a fan of Tolstoy.

Tolstoy wrote on the buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina's wall: Thanks for coming to the opening day of my serf school!

The buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina has changed her relationship status: It's complicated.

The buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina has posted the photo album: My Son Looks Just Like His Father!

Tolstoy wrote on the buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina's wall: You are not using Facebook's photo posting functionality in a correct manner.

Tolstoy has no idea who sired the child of the buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina.

Tolstoy is shocked to learn that his entire friend network can read what he's written on the wall of the buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina.

Tolstoy has terminated the buxom serf wench Akinsya Basykina's Internet access by crushing the Yasnaya Polyana educational serf node with a sledgehammer.

Tolstoy is starting to think that Turgenev was right about Facebook—huge time-suck.

Chekhov is expectorating phlegm due to complications stemming from tuberculosis.

Chekhov joined the Tuberculosis Support Group.

Tolstoy is bored and depressed.

Tolstoy joined the group Ancient Greek for Beginners.

Tolstoy joined the group Esperanto—the Universal Language.

Tolstoy joined the group Vegetarians of the Steppe.

Tolstoy joined the group Anarchism Might be the Answer.

Tolstoy is hating the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Patriarch of Moscow has excommunicated Tolstoy.

Sofia Andreyevna is copying out *Resurrection* and is thinking Tolstoy has lost some of his chops as a writer.

Tolstoy started the Nonviolent Resistance Group.

Mohandas K. Gandhi became a fan of Tolstoy.

Tolstoy is wondering who the hell this Gandhi fellow is.

Rudyard Kipling wrote on Tolstoy's wall: Gandhi is an Hindu of small stature and a formidable barrister.

Tolstoy and Mohandas K. Gandhi are friends.

Vladimir Chertkov started the group I'm a Tolstoyan!

Tolstoy demands I'm a Tolstoyan! be deleted from Facebook.

The Facebook Team wrote that only group creators can delete groups from Facebook.

Tolstoy is hating himself and wondering why anyone would want to be a Tolstoyan.

Sofia Andreyevna is copying out the special collector's edition of *Anna Karenina*.

Tolstoy is renouncing all corporal pleasures and wants Sofia Andreyevna to do the same.

Sofia Andreyevna is thinking Tolstoy can shove it where the Creator cannot find it.

Tolstoy wants Sofia Andreyevna to sell all of her earthly possessions.

Sofia Andreyevna thinks that *Anna Karenina* doesn't really hold up on the 70th reading.

Chekhov is dead.

Tolstoy is renouncing everything.

Tolstoy is renouncing Facebook.

The Facebook Team says Tolstoy cannot be removed from Facebook.

Tolstoy thinks the Facebook Team is morally degenerate.

Sofia Andreyevna is reflecting back on her life and thinking Facebook has been a tremendous solace.

Tolstoy has left for the railways station.

Paul Greenberg

(First published on The Huffington Post, November 29, 2011; reprinted with permission)

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“Use Tolstoy to find your way...”

“I wouldn’t pet her if I were you,” the driver’s companion advised when we got in.

I recalled her remark as I carefully slid out of the backseat of the dusty Niva, avoiding as best I could disturbing the sleepy spaniel who had greeted Tom Newlin and me with a low, menacing growl, but who had otherwise lain impassively wedged between us and our packs as we bounced along the lane.

I had just finished explaining to the driver and his friend how we had ended up lost on some back-country road, a few miles from the tiny village of Rusyatino, in a sparsely populated northern part of the Tula Oblast. By now, I had performed the spiel a few dozen times, so my delivery was so quick and polished that I could recite it in a single long breath: We were two American professors, scholars and admirers of Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, walking from Moscow to Tula, following the historical path of Tolstoy, who during the 1880s liked to walk the two hundred kilometers from his Moscow home in the Khamovniki district of Moscow to Yasnaya Polyana, his ancestral home ten miles south of Tula.