

**American Exodus: The Okies' Exploration,  
Encounter, and Exchange in the  
San Joaquin Valley**

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*"They's gonna come somepin outa all these folks goin' wes' – outa all their farms lef' lonely. They's gonna come a thing that's gonna change the whole country."*

*John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath*

When John Steinbeck penned *The Grapes of Wrath*, he sparked a conversation among Americans; compelling them to discuss the harsh conditions Southwesterners encountered when they fled the Dust Bowl states and explored the fertile farmlands of the West. Steinbeck's captivating story of the Joad family is what sparked our interest in the migration of Southwesterners to California. These migrants, labeled "Okies" by native Californians, played an important role in the Great Depression and generated both controversy and sympathy. Although the "Okie" presence was necessary to agriculture, they were often unwelcome by local communities. However, with the help of both the local and federal government, these migrants were able to overcome adversity and engage in a cultural, social, and political exchange which is still evident today.

Our research began with a search for secondary sources. We watched Ken Burns' documentary on the Dust Bowl and checked out several books for background information. Our most important secondary source was *American Exodus* by James Gregory, which we found to be the most detailed and up-to-date. We also watched *The Grapes of Wrath*, the film adaptation of John Steinbeck's popular work. However, the highlight of our research was a visit to the remnants of an FSA (Farm Security Administration) labor camp in California's San Joaquin Valley. There, we were given a first-hand look at what life was like for a migrant worker during the 1930s. The Odyssey project at CSU Bakersfield and the Library of Congress, *Voices From the Dust Bowl* collection, provided us with many of the primary sources to further our research.

We choose the performance category because we love bringing history to life. Our topic fit a performance well because it is essentially a human drama, which is best told through

characters. We were also able to show our project through multiple perspectives such as a family leaving their home in Texas and native Californians who feared the newcomers. To create a more realistic experience, we incorporated many of the primary sources into our script and set.

Our topic is closely entwined with all three aspects of this year's theme. After losing their homes and way of life, through drought, famine, and enormous dust storms, the Southwesterners explored new possibilities by moving west. When they arrived in California, they encountered discrimination, low wages, and poor living conditions that threatened their very survival. Native Californians began to raise questions about who should be allowed in the state and where they should live. These encounters, however, eventually led to an exchange between Californians and "Okies". Californians provided the "Okies" with job opportunities, medical and nutritional knowledge, and education for their children. From the "Okies", California received a new subculture, country music, conservative political views, and southwestern religions which forever changed the ethos of the San Joaquin Valley and California.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources

#### Books

McWilliams, Carey. *Factories in the Field; the Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1939. Print.

This book helped us to get a better understanding of the situation of farming in California, and it provided us with statistics and information on how many farmers moved to California that were forced to work for large farm organizations.

Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Viking, 1939. Print.

This is John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize winning novel that brought the struggles of the "Okies" to the national public. Although it is a fictional, Steinbeck based the story on his experience in FSA camps while he was writing *The Harvest Gypsies*. We used this book in our research as an example of what some people were doing to bring awareness of the plight of the 'Okies'. Reactions to the book were also important to our research because many people in the San Joaquin Valley did not like the book.

Steinbeck, John. *The Harvest Gypsies: On the Road to the Grapes of Wrath*. Berkeley: Heyday, 1938. Print.

This book, written by John Steinbeck, gave us valuable quotes and descriptions about the ditch-bank camps that we later incorporated into our narrative. Steinbeck's writing gave a first-hand account of the poverty and desperation of the Okies when they first arrived in California. The writings were originally published in the *San Francisco News* as a weekly column. John Steinbeck used the research in this book to later write *The Grapes of Wrath*.

#### Digital Images

California, The Cornucopia of the World. 1892. Oakland Museum of California, Oakland.

This was a poster that advertised California as the "Cornucopia of the World." It ironically boasted of room for millions of immigrants -- with over 43 million open acres of land -- when in actuality, migrants who arrived were treated with upmost disrespect. We used this poster as the backdrop for part of our set.

Farm Security Administration Emblem. Digital image. Library of Congress. 1937. Web. 24 Feb. 2016.

This is the Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration Emblem that we display during our performance. We wanted to use this sign in our performance to show the audience who these government camps were being sponsored by.

#### Film/Video

*The Grapes of Wrath*. Dir. John Ford. Perf. Henry Fonda. Twentieth Century-Fox, 1940. DVD.

This movie was an adaptation of John Steinbeck's book, and served as a source of propaganda for the United States while the Okies were migrating to California. The movie served as another introduction to the topic, and helped us find the narrative that we wanted to tell (through the migrants' points of view).

*The Plow That Broke the Plains*. Dir. Pare Lorentz. National Archives and Records Administration, 1937. *Fedflix*. Web. 5 Apr. 2016.

This is a U.S. government video which follows the history of the Great Plains from the early settlers through the Dust Bowl migration. This video creates a narrative which blames the over-use of the land by man as the main reason for the destruction of the agricultural industry in this area. We watched this video because we wanted to get an idea of the message the U.S. government created for the public.

## Interviews

Barnes, Lois Smith. "Interview with Lois Smith Barnes." Interview by Michael Neely. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

This was an interview with a Mrs. Lois Barnes, a woman who migrated to California in her youth. We used this interview to get a first person glimpse at what the southwestern migrants went through on their journey to California, and what they experienced when they got there.

Belezzuoli, Ethel Oleta Wever. "Interview with Ethel Belezzuoli." Interview by Stacey Jagels. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

This interview with Ethel Oleta Wever Belezzuoli gave us another first-person perspective on the Okie migration to California, and also provided a good account of what the Okies left behind when they left their homes.

Butler, Earl. "Interview with Earl Butler." Interview by Judith Gannon. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

Earl Butler was a migrant to California. His interview gave us a primary viewpoint on the rumors and propaganda that was spread about California having a wealth of jobs, and described what life was really like once the Southwesterners reached California.

Clipper, Terry Bennett. "Interview with Terry Bennett Clipper." Interview by Judith Gannon. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

This interview with Terry Clipper gave us an insight to the Southwesterners' relationships with Californian growers, and the wage lowering tactics used by the growers to force Southwesterners to work cheaply.

Collins, Talmage Lee. "Interview with Talmage Lee Collins." Interview by Michael Neely. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

Talmage Lee Collins, a migrant from Arkansas, moved to California with his family. This interview detailed the seasonal work the Southwestern migrants had to deal with, and provided a clear glimpse of the Southwesterners' migrations within the San Joaquin Valley to find work.

Combs, Edgar. "Interview with Edgar Combs." Interview by Judith Gannon. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

This interview was unique, as Edgar Combs was actually from Virginia. His family were small town farmers, and they moved to Washington when he was very young. They eventually moved to California, where Combs became a local grower and witnessed the Okie migration. He provided a unique perspective on the migration, as he was a grower, and also spoke about Okie labor strikes in the fields.

Crane, Edgar Romine. "Interview with Edgar Romine Crane." Interview by Judith Gannon. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 29 Nov. 2015.

Edgar Romine Crane was a southwestern migrant from Texas. He moved to the San Joaquin Valley with his family when he was twenty, where they began working in local fields. Crane provided a different philosophy on the nature of the migration, commenting on how the farmers paid the Okies well as long as they were financially stable. He was also in a band, and talked a lot about his pride in Okie music in California.

Criswell, Vera Ruth Woodall. "Interview with Vera Ruth Woodall Criswell." Interview by Stacey Jagels. *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield, 2015. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

Vera Criswell migrated from Seymour, Texas, and settled in the San Joaquin Valley. She was very shy, but had a great memory, and offered a lot of information to the Odyssey project. The most interesting part of her interview was her remembrance of school, and how she was very self-conscious about her accent and tried to learn "Californian grammar".

Garrison, Sharon. "Interview with Sharon Garrison." Personal interview. 22 Nov. 2015.

Sharon Garrison was our contact for our visit to the Sunset FSA camp in Arvin, California. While she was giving us a tour of the four remaining FSA buildings we found out that she actually lived in the camp when she was a child. We interviewed Mrs. Garrison about her experiences in the camp and what she remembered about living there. Her memories were surprisingly positive. She has fond memories of growing up there and that the people living there "were like family." She was the one who gave us the idea to make a cotton sack in our performance. As she was showing us artifacts in the activities building, she mentioned that the cotton sack on display was hers.

McElhaney, Billie. "Billie McElhaney Interview." Personal interview. 31 Jan. 2016.

Mrs. Billie McElhaney was a native Californian child when the migrants began entering California in the 1930s. She gave us helpful insight on Okie children, such as their dialect, the clothes they wore, and the jobs their parents held in the community.

Mitchell, Transcriber: Barbara. "Interview with Loye Lucille Martin Holmes." *Interview Between Loye Lucille Martin Holmes Place of Birth: Wayside Oklahoma: Judith Gannon* (1981). *Oral History Interviews*. CSU Bakersfield. Web. 23 Jan. 2016.

This interview gave us a different perspective on how some migrant families adapted differently than others to the journey into California. The Holmes family encountered

marital problems due to the stress of the migration. Mrs. Holmes largely blames these issues on the new roles needed to be filled in the family during this time.

Rose, Dorothy Louise Price. "Interview with Rose." Interview by Stacey Jagels. *CSU Bakersfield: California Odyssey*. CSU Bakersfield, 7 Apr. 1981. Web. 24 Jan. 2016. This interview between Dorothy Rose and Stacey Jagels served as a basis for some of our lines for the child. Dorothy was a child when she moved to California and her experiences provided us with information about the conditions under which they moved, and what it was like when they arrived. She also wrote poetry during her time as an "Okie" child, and described what she went through at school.

Self, Jim. "Jim Self Interview." Personal interview. 22 Nov. 2015. We met with Mr. Jim Self to interview him of his experiences as a migrant. He traveled to California when he was a child, and had interesting information about his travels. He also showed us pictures of his family that we were able to use to further our research. This was a special interview for us because his is Sydney's grandpa. Before we started this project, Sydney did not know that her grandfather was from Oklahoma or that he had actually lived in the Porterville FSA camp.

## Magazine Articles

Beals, Carleton. "Migs: America's Shantytown on Wheels." *Forum* Jan. 1938: 10-15. Print. This magazine article written in 1938 is a combination of facts, stereotypes, and first-hand witness to the migrant shantytowns that popped-up during the 1930s. It was interesting to see the perspective of a person visiting the shantytowns and the impression it made on the author. Beals, compares the people in the migrant towns to the first settlers of the West, but also uses stereotypes that denigrate them.

Canter, Ester A. "California 'Renovates' the Dust Bowler." *Hygeia* May 1940: 420-23. *CSU Bakersfield: The Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016. This is an article that we found through the Odyssey Project about the health and hygiene of the migrants living in FSA camps. The article is written by a camp nurse who stereotypes the migrants and being superstitious, shiftless and illiterate. She talks about teaching the migrants personal hygiene and preventative medicine, but she is very condescending in her attitude toward them. This was the typical feeling of most native Californians at the time.

"Dustbowlers Worry California." *Business Week* 24 Sept. 1938: 33-34. *CSU Bakersfield: Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016. Finding this article was exciting to us because it was one of the first articles we found that referenced the California Citizens Association (which we mention in our performance). The business community in Kern County was worried about the 'Dustbowlers' becoming residents of California and then accessing relief payments, then sending that money back to their home states to fund more migrants coming to California. The CCA is petitioning congress to send back "idle Dustbowlers" to their home states; warn new migrants that they will not receive relief payments.

*Okies--A National Problem* 10 Feb. 1940: 16-17. *CSU Bakersfield: The Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

After the film version of *The Grapes of Wrath* was released, many people blamed California for the poor treatment of the Okie migrants. This article is the state Chamber of Commerce arguing that the problem requires national, rather than state, resources.

Reichard, Alice. "California's Adult Children." *Country Gentleman* Feb. 1940: 34-35. *CSU Bakersfield: The Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

This opinion article written by a schoolteacher describes the migrant families as "footloose, jobless" slackers. She complains about her overcrowded classroom is full of the children of migrant laborers who are of "low moral character". She believes that the migrants are lazy, illiterate, and ungrateful and recommends that the state stop supporting them.

Todd, Charles L. "Trampling Out the Vintage: Farm Security Camps Provide the Imperial Valley Migrants with a Home and a Hope." *Common Sense* July 1939: 7-9. *Library of Congress*. Web. 17 Nov. 2015.

This article, written by FSA worker Charles L. Todd is about the positive influence the FSA had in the Imperial Valley. This propaganda was created to convince the nation and Californians that the FSA camps were worth the money that the federal government was spending.

Todd, Charles L. "The 'Okies' Search for a Lost Frontier." *New York Times Magazine* 27 Aug. 1939: 17-19. *Library of Congress: Voices From the Dust Bowl*. Web. Nov. 2015.

This is another article written by Charles L. Todd (an FSA employee). In this article Todd explains why the 'Okies' are traveling to California and describes how the Californians are reacting to the 'Okies' arrival. He is also trying to make the point that the FSA camps are worth the federal money spent on them. This article gave us insight into how the migrants and the native Californians felt at this time as Mr. Todd uses quotes from both. This article is where we got the phrase "Land of milk and honey" that we used in our performance.

## **Historic Site Visitation**

Arvin Sunset Camp. 22 Nov. 2015. Visitation to the Historic Sunset Camp. Arvin, California.

We were fortunate to visit and have a tour of the Arvin Sunset Camp (Weedpatch Camp). This is the camp that John Steinbeck visited in 1938 which inspired him write *The Grapes of Wrath*. Today there are four of the original buildings remaining. All have been restored to their original condition. We acquired many ideas from the camp buildings, and our tour guide, for our performance. This was the first time we saw the California poster that is used as a background in our performance. This visitation allowed us to imagine what it was like to live in one of the FSA camps.

## Music/Audio

Bryant, Jack. *Sunny Cal*. Charles Todd, 1940. *Library of Congress*. Web. 10 Oct. 2015.

This song "Sunny Cal" was written and performed by Jack Bryant in 1940 at the Firebaugh FSA camp. We found this song on the Library of Congress website as part of their Voices from the Dust Bowl collection. We used this song in the camp section of our performance right before FDR's Day of Infamy speech.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt. *Day of Infamy Radio Address*. 1941. *National Archives*. Web. 17 Dec. 2015.

This is the radio address of FDR after the attacks on Pearl Harbor. Everything changed for the Okies once the US became involved in WWII. We used this recording at the end of our performance to show the turning point in the migrants lives.

Guthrie, Woody. *This Land Is Your Land*. Folkways Records, 1944. *Smithsonian Folkways*. Web. 16 Apr. 2016.

Woody Guthrie was from Texan and was influenced by what he saw in the central valley during the Great Depression. Guthrie wrote an entire album, *Songs From the Dust Bowl*, inspired by the migrants who journeyed from the southwest to California. This Land is Your Land was written in 1940, but not published until 1944. We use an instrumental version of this song at the end of our performance because we felt it represented the success of the Okie migrants.

Guthrie, Woody. *Dust Bowl Refugee*. Smithsonian Folkways, 1940. *Smithsonian Folkways*. Web. 16 Apr. 2016.

This song by Woody Guthrie is part of an album inspired by the migrant Okies. Guthrie considered himself an Okie and felt compelled to write music about their experiences in the late 1930s. We use this song at the beginning of our performance to introduce our topic and theme.

Sullivan, Mary. *Sunny California*. Charles L. Todd, 1941. *Library of Congress*. Web. 17 Nov. 2015.

This song was written and sung by Mary Sullivan, a resident of the Shafter FSA camp in 1941. This recording was made by an FSA worker, Todd L Charles, who traveled throughout the San Joaquin Valley recording interviews and the music of migrants living there. This song tells the story of Mary's family coming out to California and what they encountered when they arrived. We sing two verses of this song in our performance as we are driving out to California.

## Newsletters

Covered Wagon News (14 Dec. 1940). Library of Congress: Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Workers Collection. Web. 11 Apr. 2016.

This is a camp newsletter created by the residents of the Shafter FSA camp. This edition was very interesting to us because it was the Christmas issue and featured the seasonal activities that were on in the camp. It was also informative because it also had minutes

from the most recent camp meeting and listed numbers of families and residents currently living at the camp. This newsletter gave us a unique insight into the lives of the migrants living in the camps.

The Hub (26 July 1940). Library of Congress: Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Workers Collection. Web. 14 Feb. 2016.

This document is a newsletter created by the residents of the Visalia FSA camp. We wanted to show what California had given to the Okies besides jobs. In this newsletter there are articles about local sports teams, Sunday school, pre-school, upcoming meetings, as well as health care information. The residents of the FSA camps took great pride in the autonomy of their camps and produced these newsletters as a way to communicate with everyone in the camp. We used a copy of this July 1940 issue of the Hub in our performance.

The Hub (25 Apr. 1942). Library of Congress: Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Workers Collection. Web. 11 Apr. 2016.

This is a newsletter created by the camp residents of the Tulare FSA camp. This volume was interesting because it was printed after the US became involved in WWII. The front cover advertises a "Food Drive for Victory" contest. Most of this issue is devoted to the proper maintenance of the camp and each unit. It was this issue that we saw the article announcing the health class for women which we mention in our performance.

## Newspaper Articles

"Another Migration." *The Bakersfield Californian* 30 Oct. 1941, Editorial. *NewspaperARCHIVE [EBSCO]*. Web. 16 Mar. 2016.

This 1941 editorial article in the Bakersfield Californian talks about a new migration of people coming out to California for the new defense industry jobs. The writer feels that the migration will not impact California as much as the first "Dust Bowl" migration, but that these people should be warned before they come out that these jobs will only be temporary.

"Black Friday Meets Its Master." *Garden City Daily Telegram*. Kansas Memory, 10 Apr. 1935. Web. 27 May 2016.

Several articles about life in the Dust Bowl can be found on the front page of this newspaper from Garden City, including two articles on "raging dusters" (dust storms,) one on the winter wheat crop, and a short article discussing community meetings to distribute financial aid under the "soil erosion program." This edition of the Garden City Daily Telegram includes segments about other newsworthy events occurring around the state of Kansas.

"Congress Must Solve the Migrant Problem." *Fresno Bee* [Fresno] 23 Oct. 1940: 1. *CSU Bakersfield: Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

This is another article where residents of California express the opinion that the federal government should provide more funds and solutions for the "migrant problem" in the San Joaquin Valley. Citizens feel the burden of caring for the migrants has been placed

on their local governments and taxes and they should not have to pay for a problem that began in another state.

"DR. STONE SPEAKS TO FRESNO LIONS Health Director Says Migrant Is "Unmoral, Lazy"." *Madera Tribune* [Madera] 14 Sept. 1938. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*. Web. 5 Apr. 2016.

This is a review of a lecture delivered by Dr. Lee A. Stone to the Fresno Lions Club. Dr. Stone spoke about the "migrant problem" in the Central Valley, describing them as "Unmoral, Lazy, Shiftless, non-assimable and unmoral". This article confirmed the stereotypes that the Okies faces when they moved to California.

"Farmers Back Ban On Book In KC." *The Bakersfield Californian* [Bakersfield] 21 Aug. 1939: 2. *CSU Bakersfield: Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

This article describes banning of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* in Kern County. Farmers there felt that the book did not give credit to the things the county was doing to help the migrants and portrayed the people unfairly. It was interesting to see that the book was banned and also burned as a "photo op" in Bakersfield. This helped us understand the emotions and feelings of the farmers living in the San Joaquin Valley.

Hubbard, J. R. "Dust Bowl Soil Is Now the Same as Chinese Desert." *Topeka Capital*. Kansas Memory, 9 Aug. 1936. Web. 27 May 2016.

This article in the *Topeka Capital* discusses some of the causes of soil erosion and diminished soil moisture, as well as ways to counteract these forces. Both engineers and scientists have been developing techniques to counteract the negative effects of the farming trends in use since World War I. The dry, drought-like state of the Midwest was one if the many causes of the mass migration to the western United States in the 1930s.

"Kern County's Battle." *The Bakersfield Californian*. Proquest, 2008. Web. 14 Feb. 2016.

This article talks about the struggle Bakersfield is having with the 'Okies' who have migrated to Kern County. The article mentions the California Citizens' Association, a group of citizens who wanted to remove the migrants from California and send them back to their home states. We used a sample CCA meeting in our performance to show how native Californians felt about the 'Okies'.

"Kern County Growth in 1938." *The Bakersfield Californian* [Bakersfield] 2 Jan. 1939: 22. *Newspapers.com*. Web. 14 Apr. 2016.

This was a year in review article about how Bakersfield grew in 1938. It was interesting to us because the article calls attention to a picture of a car with a "Oklahoma license plate" and refers to the car as belonging to one of the many migrants looking for work. It also includes a picture of Thomas McManus, leader of the California Citizens Association, with "an adding machine tape which totals the number of migrants pouring into California daily".

"Migrant Problem of State Revealed Decline in Number Coming West Is Seen." *Madera Tribune* [Madera] 2 Feb. 1939. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*. Web. 5 Apr. 2016.

This article references statistics released by the FSA that the number of migrants to California decreased between the years of 1937-1939. The article attributes the decline of migrants to the lack of work available and many are going back home.

"No Room for Undesirables." *Shafter Progress* [Shafter] 9 Aug. 1935: 8. Print.

This article describes the public's feelings that the San Joaquin Valley is being over-run by migrants and that local governments cannot support them. The article also expresses concern for a health threat the migrants were creating. The general feeling was that Kern County did not want more newcomers.

"THEY'RE SAME OKIES AND ARKIES BUT THEY'RE RICHER ON RETURN." *Madera Tribune* [Madera] 25 Aug. 1945: 1. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*. Web. 5 Apr. 2016.

The newspaper article was published in 1945 and talks about the financial success of the Okies even referring to them as "wealthy Okies". This article confirmed our research that the southwestern migrants had become successful after the US became involved in WWII.

"Town Overrun with Indigents: Some Are Vicious." *Wasco News* [Wasco] 16 Oct. 1931: 5. *CSU Bakersfield: Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

This is one of the earliest articles we were able to find about native Californian's opinion of migrants fleeing to the San Joaquin Valley. The article does not refer to the people as migrants or 'Okies' which was interesting.

"Undesirables." *Bakersfield Californian* [Bakersfield] 28 July 1938, Reader's Viewpoint sec.: 22. *CSU Bakersfield: The Odyssey Project*. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

This is an editorial about the migrant population living in Kern County. This resident feels that the people moving to California from the Dust Bowl states are a burden on the county and that they are people that are not of high morals. The writer believes that these people should be sent back to their native states.

## **Photographs**

Audience Watching Play in Recreation Hall. 1940. Tulare Migrant Camp, Visalia, CA. Library of Congress. *Voices From the Dust Bowl*. Web. 5 Apr. 2016.

We found this picture as a part of the *Voices from the Dust Bowl* collection on the Library of Congress website. This picture shows a large group of migrants waiting for a performance at the Tulare Migrant Camp. We used this photo to get an idea for clothing and hair styles for our performance because it shows both children and adults.

Hemming, Robert. Migrant Camp, Wide Shot. 1940. Tulare County, Porterville. Library of Congress. *Voices From the Dust Bowl*. Web. 5 Apr. 2016.

This wide shot picture of a migrant camp helped us to understand what life in a camp would be like. It shows the tent-cabins that we depict in our performance and gave us a greater understanding why these camps were so much better than live in the ditch-bank camps.

Lange, Dorothea. *Destitute Pea Pickers in California: Mother of Seven*. 1936. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Library of Congress. Web. 23 Nov. 2015.

This photograph is one of the most famous from the Dust Bowl, and shows a mother surrounded by her children, obviously dirty, poor, and suffering. It was one of the first photographs we came across while doing early research, and opened the door to many more photographs we used to find ideas for props, costumes, and backgrounds.

Lange, Dorothea. *Migrant Agricultural Worker's Family*. 1936. Library of Congress, Nipomo, California. *Migrant Agricultural Worker's Family: Farm Security Administration*. Library of Congress. Web. 20 Mar. 2016.

We used this picture to display on our set for our performance. We thought that this picture was a perfect example of both the hardships the Okies faced, and the propaganda put forth by the United States government, especially Dorothea Lange's photographs.

Rothstein, Arthur. *Abandoned Farm in the Dust Bowl Area*. 1936. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Library of Congress. Web. 23 Nov. 2015.

When we found this photo, we were able to better understand the consequences of the Dust Bowl. Seeing this abandoned farm made us realize just how much damage the dust did to farms and families in its path.

Rothstein, Arthur. *Saturday Night Dance*. 1940. Library of Congress. Library of Congress. Web. 23 Nov. 2015.

This photograph mostly provided a basis for our costumes and guided us on what we should be wearing. It also made us realize that despite being discriminated against by some native Californians, most migrants tried to remain positive and had dances, like the one pictured, for fun.

## **Reports**

Webb, John N., and Brown Malcolm. *Migrant Families*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: Works Progress Administration Research, 1938. Library of Congress. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

This report dispels stereotypical misconceptions of migrants as irresponsible, chronic wanderers. This report contains detailed analysis of 5,489 migrant families in 1935. The report concludes that the transient relief problem is national, and that the solution is Federal leadership. This report helped in our research because it debunked many of the stereotypes that native Californians had used to describe migrants.

Underhill, Bertha S. *A Study of 132 Families in California Cotton Camps with Reference to Availability of Medical Care*. Rep. Sacramento: California State Department of Social Welfare, 1937. CSU Bakersfield: Odyssey Project. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

This report provides information collected at farm labor camps in Merced, Madera, and Fresno Counties. It lists family size, income, residence status, previous occupations, and relief received by 132 families. The report shows that most migrants do not receive health care, and those that are residents, do not take advantage of medical services. The author recommends that federal agencies pay for the improvement of the poor conditions which migrant families live.

## Secondary Sources

### Books

Chapelle, Peter La. *Proud to Be an Okie: Cultural Politics, Country Music, and Migration to Southern California*. Berkeley: U of California, 2007. Print.

This book gave us a background on the exchange of our topic, specifically what the Okies gave to California. Details such as politics and country music helped provide valuable information on what the Okies' legacy in California was.

Gregory, James N. *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989. Print.

This book was our most important secondary source. The author traces the Okie migrants from their home states in the Southwest to settling points in the California. Most importantly, we felt that this book best described all three aspects of this year's theme: exploration, encounter, and exchange in history because it describes why the Okies left their homes to explore a new way of life in California; it shows the discrimination and harsh living conditions they encountered when they arrived; and it shows how California influenced the Okies, and how the Okies influenced California. From reading this book, we learned that the Okies really changed central California forever.

Haslam, Gerald W. *The Other California: The Great Central Valley in Life and Letters*. Reno: U of Nevada, 1994. Print.

This book was written by a Bakersfield native who describes some of California's history through the Central Valley. We used the chapter titled "What About the Okies?" in our research. The author uses letters and short stories to describe what life was like for the Okies, specifically in Bakersfield.

Meltzer, Milton. *Driven From the Land: The Story of the Dust Bowl*. New York: Benchmark, 2000. Print.

This source was a shorter book with a wide variety of pictures, which we used for reference on some costumes and props. Because of the shortness, we were able to read through it quickly and still get valuable information.

Starr, Kevin. "Give Me Shelter: Soup Kitchens, Migrant Camps, and Other Relief Efforts." *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 223-45. Print.

We used this chapter from the source mainly to gain a better understanding of both the quality of the migrant camps, as well as what it was like for the Okies while they were in California. We also used a very important quote from this book, "Displaced, dispossessed, despised, they [the Okies] had nevertheless prevailed," as the ending to our performance.

Stein, Walter J. *California and the Dust Bowl Migration*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1973. Print.

This book was one of the first books written about the Dust Bowl migration, even before James Gregory's. We used it for more information about life in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl, and the hardships experienced by the droughts and dust storms. It also detailed the long journeys southwesterners embarked on to the west.

Wartzman, Rick. *Obscene in the Extreme: The Burning and Banning of John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2008. Print.

This book is a detailed account of the reaction to the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath* in Bakersfield, California. The book was burned and banned in the town and one librarian spoke out against the ban. This book gave us some insight on how local people reacted to the Okies presence.

### Collection Articles

Fanslow, Robin A. "The Migrant Experience." *American Folklife Center* (1998): Rpt. in *Library of Congress: Voices From the Dust Bowl*. Print.

We found this article in the Library of Congress: Voices From the Dust Bowl collection. This was a good general article about the migrant experience in California as well as descriptions and links of what was available in the collection.

Gavin, Christy. "A School of Their Own: Educating Okie Children in 1930s California." *Dust Bowl Migration Archives* (2011). Rpt. in *California Odyssey Project*. Bakersfield: CSUB, 2011. 1-16. Print.

This article gave us an inside look into the education of Okie children in the Central Valley during the Great Depression. During this time, nearly 400,000 people from the Midwest migrated to California to escape the massive dust storms. Because of the overpopulations, the migrant children were often overlooked and ignored at school, receiving a poor education. Okie children were also ridiculed for their shabby looks, distinguishable "twang", and torn, unfashionable clothing.

Gavin, Christy, and Garth Milam. "California Odyssey: Dust Bowl Migration Archives." *CSU Bakersfield*. CSU Bakersfield, "A "Flat Tired People": The Health of California's Okies during the 1930s."

This article was written by Christy Gavin, one of CSU Bakersfield's head librarians. It gave us a valuable glimpse at the health of Okie migrants living in camps, and how hygiene worked in the camps. It also showed the opposition of Okie settlement by Californians, and detailed how doctors and health specialists claimed that the Okies unhygienic intentionally, and carriers of disease.

### Film/Video

The Dust Bowl: A Film by Ken Burns. Dir. Ken Burns. PBS, 2012. Streaming Video on Amazon.

This film by Ken Burns was one of the first sources we viewed, and helped to jump start our research. We were able to find many quotes, and several historians and authors on the

subject. Finding these historians and authors allowed us to find books and articles on the Dust Bowl and the migrations to California.

## **Interviews**

Gavin, Christy. "Interview with Christy Gavin." Telephone interview. 12 Nov. 2015. Ms. Christy Gavin is one of the head librarians at CSU Bakersfield.

We interviewed her to gain a background of what migrants did once they came to California, and to learn more about the labor camps themselves. She also gave us other sources and articles to look into, and pointed us in the right direction for further research.

"James Gregory Interview." Interview. PBS: The First Measured Century. 2000. Web. 3 Jan. 2016.

This is an interview James Gregory did for the PBS show The First Measured Century. In the interview Professor Gregory talks about some of the myths and misconceptions about the Dust Bowl Migration. We accessed this interview before our own personal interview with Professor Gregory to better prepare for the interview.

## **Journal Articles**

Cannon, Brian Q. "Keep on A-goin: Life and Social Interaction in a New Deal Farm Labor Camp." *Agricultural History Society* 70.1 (1996): 1-32. JSTOR. Agricultural History Society. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.

We were given this article by a librarian at CSU Bakersfield, Christy Gavin, and used it to get a better idea on the problems and advantages of the Arvin camps in Southern California. The article talks about the reasons why people living there did not organize or come together as a community for long periods of time. The reasons for this being because they lived closely together, had many religious differences, and had different political opinions.

Graham, Clarence William. Ed. Barbara Michell. Oral History Program Interview Between INTERVIEWEE: Clarence William Graham Interviewer Michael Neely. CALIFORNIA ODYSSEY The 1930s Migration to the Southern San Joaquin Valley. California State University, Bakersfield, 18, 23 Mar. 1981. Web. 24 Jan. 2016.

The interview with Mr. Graham gave us incite into a first-hand experience of how the migrants felt about the trip to California and how they lived their lives after being kicked out of their homes.

Gregory, J. N. "Dust Bowl Legacies: The Okie Impact on California, 1939-1989." *California History* 68.3 (1989): 74-85. Web. 17 Oct. 2015.

This was the first journal article we read for our topic. We wanted to confirm that our topic, the Dust Bowl migration, was important in history. This article talks about the legacy of the Okie migration and the impact it had on California and the nation.

## Magazine Articles

Kellstedt, Lyman A. "From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism." *Political Science Quarterly* 127.1 (2012): 162. *Student Resources in Context*. Web. 23 Feb. 2016.

This article talks about the effect the Okies had on California's subculture. The author credits the conservative politics and larger number of Evangelical churches in the San Joaquin Valley to the Dust Bowl migrants.

Weisiger, Marsha L. "The Reception of *The Grapes of Wrath* in Oklahoma: A Reappraisal." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Jan. 1993. 2007. Web. 14 Dec. 2015.

This article describes the Okies' reaction to the release of *The Grapes of Wrath*. When the book was originally released, many Okies did not like how they were portrayed. Over time the Okies came to like the way they were portrayed and began to take pride in being an Okie.

## Newspaper Articles

Reeves, Scott. "Okies Are Major Cultural Force in State." *Tracy Press [Tracy]* 19 Apr. 1989, sec. C: 14. Print.

This article backs-up our thesis that the Okies had a profound effect on the culture of the southern San Joaquin Valley. Evidence in the article includes the number of evangelical churches, the creation of country music, and even the popularity of chicken fried steak and Dr. Pepper in Bakersfield.

Yuhas, Alan. "The Grapes of Wrath Is 75 Years Old and More Relevant than Ever." *The Guardian*. 14 Apr. 2014. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.

This opinion article in *The Guardian* explores how John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is still relevant today. The author compares the current drought in California to the drought of the Dust Bowl region, and also compares the "Okie" migrants to current Mexican and Central American migrants working in the California fields today. We found this article while looking for information on how our topic relates to today.

## Websites

Alexander, Taren. "Grapes of Wrath 75th Anniversary Conference." GOW Conference. California State University Bakersfield, Nov. 2014. Web. 05 Feb. 2016.

Because this was a conference for the 75th anniversary of *Grapes of Wrath* (a novel by John Steinbeck on Okie migration into California), the speakers invited all were affected by the novel in some way. This means most of them had something to do with the actual process of the Okie migration, so this source led us on to discover many more powerful primary sources.

Aloi, Daniel. "Depictions of Catastrophe, Poverty in 'The Grapes of Wrath' Relevant Today | Cornell Chronicle." Depictions of Catastrophe, Poverty in 'The Grapes of Wrath' Relevant Today | Cornell Chronicle. Cornell Chronicle, 24 Aug. 2009. Web. 30 May 2016.

This article ties the Okies to modern day situations. It includes a modern day interpretation of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and uses Steinbeck's words that were written almost 90 years ago to interpret modern-day situations in the world of migration. The author shows that the Okies exchange continues today.

"American Experience: TV's Most-watched History Series." Complete Program Transcript . Surviving the Dust Bowl . WGBH American Experience | PBS. Web. 28 Feb. 2016. "Surviving the Dust Bowl" was a program on PBS that gave powerful insight into the sufferings of Southwestern citizens during the Dust Bowl era. We used quotes and sources from the program to extend our research and to better our script.

"California Odyssey: Dust Bowl Migration Archives." California Odyssey. CSU Bakersfield. Web. 05 April 2016.

This website held many more directions towards primary sources that we were able to access for use in our performance, including photographs, interviews, and other articles.

California State University, Bakersfield. "Migrant Child." Oral History Interviews. 2015. Web. 24 Jan. 2016.

The website had several interviews listed with various migrants, or "Okies", who had come into California during the Dust Bowl. Most of the interviews were taken with the migrants several years after the migration. This secondary source revealed to us an impressive amount of primary sources that were incredibly helpful to our performance.

"The Dust Bowl." The Dust Bowl: PBS. PBS, 2012. Web. 15 Nov. 2015.

This was the website that went along with the documentary that Ken Burns made about the Dust Bowl. This was one of our first sources and gave us more basic information about the events that unfolded in the Southwest, and what it was like for the people migrating to California.

"Dust Bowl Migration." Calisphere -. UC Libraries. Web. 3 Nov. 2015.

This website was one of the first we visited in our research. It provided us with a well-written summary of the events occurring during the Dust Bowl Era, as well as photos from the time period that aided us in creating the set and costumes for our project.

"Feature Radio In The 1930s." Radios in the 1930s | History Detectives | PBS. PBS, 2014. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.

The 1930s were years of prosperity for the radio. By the end of the decade, over 12 million Americans owned a radio. This popular form of entertainment was also found commonly in FSA camps, where the Southwestern migrants lived. This was their quickest form of communication with the outside world.

"Fields of Tears." The Economist. The Economist Newspaper, 18 Dec. 2010. Web. 20 May 2016.

A vast majority of agricultural workers today are Mexican immigrants, a large group of those having come to the United States illegally. The migrants today are in a similar situation as the "Okies" in the 1930s; unaccepted, living day-to-day, and struggling to make a living or a name for themselves. This article told of the perils and struggles of the working migrants as they fight through discrimination and inhabitable conditions following them everywhere they go.

"The FSA, Farm Security Administration Helps Tenant Farmers." The FSA, Farm Security Administration Helps Tenant Farmers. The Nebraska Historical Society. Web. 11 Apr. 2016.

This website created by the Nebraska Historical society had a number of both primary and secondary sources related to the Dust Bowl, the migrants, and the Farm Security Administration. We used these to gain the perspective of another our topic from a different state.

Ganzel, Bill. "FSA Photographers Document the Great Depression." FSA Photographers Document the Great Depression. Living History Farm, 2003. Web. 18 Jan. 2016.

This website contained useful information about the FSA photographers who captured the lives of the migrants through pictures. One particular article discussed the impact of the FSA photo collection and how the quality of the work led more and more people to become educated in the Depression era.

"Grapes of Wrath, Revisited." Grapes of Wrath 75th Anniversary. Visalia Times Delta. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.

This article looked back on the famous novel "The Grapes of Wrath", written by John Steinbeck, and how it influenced life in California in the 1930s. The book was a major source that helped us build and strengthen our performance.

Gregory, James N. "The Dust Bowl Migration: Poverty Stories, Race Stories." The Dust Bowl Migration. University of Washington, 2004. Web. 4 Jan. 2016.

When the Dust Bowl migrants arrived in California, they fell into an even worse situation than they ever had before. This article told of some of the struggles the migrants faced, and how they overcame them.

"The Historic Sunset Camp." Dust Bowl Camp. Web. 23 Oct. 2015.

This website gave us information on the Farm Security Administration's labor camp in Arvin, which we visited in November. This is one of the few original labor camps that are still in existence today, with tours available and guides that gave us additional information on what camp life was like in the 1930s and early 1940s for Dust Bowl migrants.

"History of ROUTE 66." History of ROUTE 66. Chamber of Commerce. Web. 07 Feb. 2016.

When the Okies migrated to California, they traveled on Route 66, a historic highway that stretched from Chicago to California. This website provided pictures, quotes, and

helpful information about the journey the migrants took on the infamous 2,451 mile route.

"How Long Does It Take to Drive Route 66?" How Long Does It Take to Drive Route 66? Historic Route 66, 2011. Web. 12 Feb. 2016.

The Okies traveled on the historic Route 66 on their travels to California. This website gave us useful information on where the route traveled through, how long it took to complete, and many other facts that helped us progress in our research.

Jackson, Ron. "The Evolution of the "Okie" Name." NewsOK.com. NewsOK, 28 Apr. 2009. Web. 30 May 2016.

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the term "Okie". Though first considered a derogatory term, the Okies eventually wore the term as a so-called badge of pride. This article helped us to better understand and address the term Okie within our performance.

Mason, Paul. "In Steinbeck's Footsteps: America's Middle-class Underclass." BBC News. BBC, 2016. Web. 30 May 2016.

This article relates the plight of the California Okies with that of current Mexican migrants. The article helped show the similarities and differences between the two groups, and their current day exploration, encounter, and exchange. Some of the information helped us create our final analysis in the performance.

"Migration Statistics | California Rural Community Data Base." Data - Rural Migration News | Migration Dialogue. University of California, Davis, 8 Jan. 1999. Web. 27 May 2016.

After going through records from the 1930s and on, UC Davis put together a population census of rural cities across the United States. In the California subdivision, the census included the percentage of the population who worked in agriculture, had moved to California from another area, and who lived in a rural area of the state. Since most of the migrants we present in our project fit all of these categories, this source helped us to discover exactly how much of the California population they made up and how they impacted the state's culture.

"Okie Migrations | Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture." Okie Migrations | Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. The Oklahoma Historical Society. Web. 2 Mar. 2016. This website explains the Okie migration, dust bowl and the impact that these people had culturally on California and other states.

"Quote It Now." Dust Bowl Migration Altered California's Politics, Religion, Culture. Web. 30 May 2016.

This article describes the lasting effects of the Okies' exchange on California. It details the Okies' music, Evangelical Protestantism, conservative politics, and culinary style. The article greatly helped us examine the lasting exchange of the Okie migrants on California as a whole.

"Voices From the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940 to 1941." The Library of Congress. The Library of Congress, Web. 21 Nov. 2015.

This source was a collection of audio recordings, songs, pictures, written poems, and many other resources originally created by the people who lived in the FSA camps. We found the songs that we used in our performance from this collection, as well other pictures that we used for reference on costumes, backdrops, etc.

Walbert, Kathryn. "The Value of Oral History." The Value of Oral History. UNC School of Education, 2002. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.

This website gave us a detailed explanation of the value of oral history and what interviews can tell us about the past. We used this article to evaluate several interviews which we read between Okies and historians/journalists.