

Objective: To examine the causes and effects of the Dust Bowl.
USHC 6.3

Do Now: 1) Read the following section from John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*.

“Carloads, caravans, homeless and hungry:...They streamed over the mountains, hungry and restless,...restless as ants, scurrying to find work to do – to lift, to push, to pull, to pick, to cut – anything, any burden to bear, for food. The kids are hungry. We got no place to live. Like ants scurrying for work, for food, and most all for land.

We ain't foreign. Seven generations back Americans, and beyond that Irish, Scotch, English, German. One of our folks in the Revolution, an' they was lots of our folks in the Civil War – both sides. Americans.”




2) How many examples of tragedy can you identify?
Name them.

The Dust Bowl

DUST STORM DAMAGE, 1930-1940

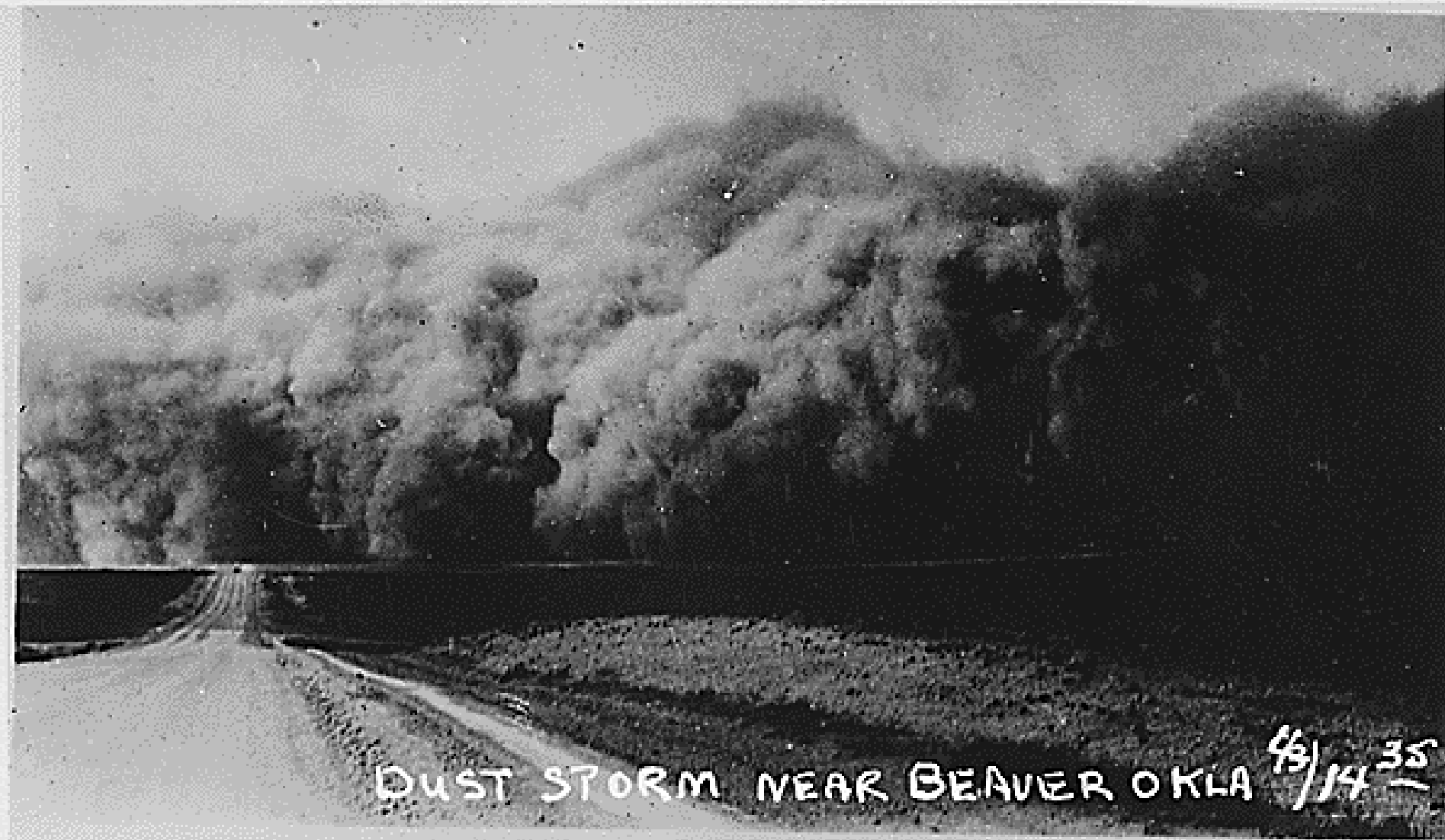
- During the 1930's, the Great Plains suffered from deadly dust storms.



-  Dust Bowl States
-  Area with most severe dust storm damage
-  Other areas damaged by dust storms

Causes of the Dust Bowl:

- Overgrazing by cattle and plowing by farmers destroyed the grasses that once held down the soil.



DUST STORM NEAR BEAVER OKLA 4/14 35

- The loose soil, a drought, and high winds helped to cause the Dust Bowl.



Dust Storms: "Kodak view of a dust storm" Baca Co., Colorado, Easter Sunday 1935



Dust Storms; "One of South Dakota's Black Blizzards, 1934"



*Farmer and
sons, dust
storm,
Cimarron
County,
Oklahoma,
1936.*

*Photographer:
Arthur
Rothstein.*

Imogene Glover: The Roof Falls In



One night when I was sleeping in a little room, my mother and dad were in the big room with my baby sister in bed. And the ceiling started falling in with the dust so heavy on it. It literally covered up the bed, but when they -- they got out okay, 'cause Daddy yelled at Mother. He could hear it comin' down and he said, "Grab that kid, Mom." And he took her -- they all got outside as soon as they knew that the ceiling was fallin' in as a result of the dust sifting in. And I think I told someone the dust was just like face powder. It was so heavy and thick. It wasn't like sand. It was just real heavy, like face powder. Only it was real dark, almost black.



Melt White: Black Sunday - It's on a Sunday afternoon about six o'clock. And we was gittin' prepared to go to church and went to church in a team and wagon. And I'd gone

out to kinda tend the chickens and stuff and back in the north it was just a little bank, oh, like about eight or ten feet high. We had one of those headers out on each end, you know. And I did a few things there around the chickens and everything and went back in the house and I said, "Dad, we ain't goin' to be able to go to church tonight." And he said, "Why?" And that's how fast it's travelin'. And we was livin' in an old house that was 14 feet wide, 36 foot long, just one room, board and batten with a washed roof on it. It kept gittin' worse and worse and wind blowin' harder and harder and it kept gittin' darker and darker. And the old house was just a-vibratin' like it was gonna blow away. And I started

tryin' to see my hand. And I kept bringin' my hand up closer and closer and closer and closer and closer and I finally touched the end of my nose and I still couldn't see my hand. That's how black it was. And we burned kerosene lamps and Dad lit an old kerosene lamp, set it on the kitchen table and it was just across the room from me, about -- about 14 feet. And I could just barely see that lamp flame across the room. That's how dark it was and it was six o'clock in the afternoon. It was the 14th of April, 1935. The sun was still up, but it was totally black and that was blackest, worst dust storm, sand storm we had durin' the whole time. A lot of people died. A lot of children, especially, died of dust pneumonia. They'd take little kids and cover 'em with sheets and sprinkle water on the sheets to filter the dust out. But we had to haul water. We had a team and we had water barrels. We hauled stock water and household water both...

...And we didn't have the water to use for that, so we just had to suffer through it. And lots of mornin's we'd get up and strain our drinkin' water like people strain milk, through a cloth, to strain the debris out of it. But then, of course, a lotta grit went through and settled to the bottom of the bucket, but you had have drinkin' water. And when you got you a little dipper of water, you drink it. You didn't take a sip and throw it away, because it was a very precious thing to us because we had to haul it.

Effects of the Dust Bowl:

- Farmers could barely make a living, causing many to leave their homes for the west.



*Farm foreclosure sale.
(Circa 1933)*



Farm foreclosure sale in Iowa. (Circa 1933)

- Many farmers became migrant farmers as they moved from region to region looking for work.



Farm Security Administration: Families on the road with all their possessions packed into their trucks, migrating and looking for work. (Circa 1935)



*Farm Security
Administration:*

*farmers whose
topsoil blew
away joined the
sod caravans of
"Okies" on
Route 66 to
California.
(Circa 1935)*



*Farm Security
Administration:
Migrant worker on
California highway.
(Circa 1935)*



Toward Los Angeles, California. 1937. (Dorothea Lange.)

Perhaps 2.5 million people abandoned their homes in the South and the Great Plains during the Great Depression and went on the road.

Migrant family looking for work in the pea fields of California. (Circa 1935)





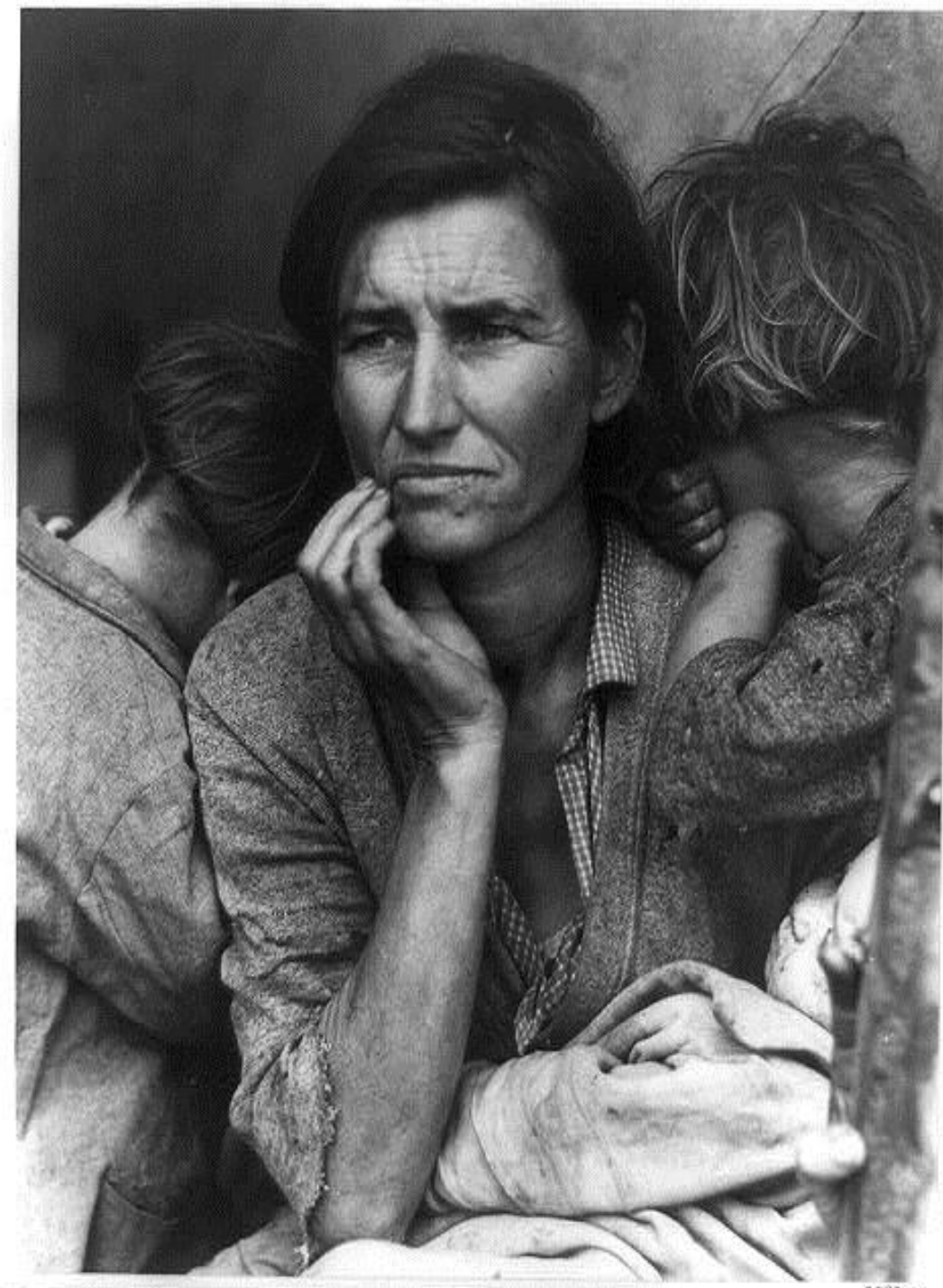
- Migrant farmers from Arkansas became known as Arkies.

*Farm Security Administration:
Arkansas squatter for three years near
Bakefield,
California.
Photo by D.
Lange. (Circa
1935)*



- Migrant farmers from Oklahoma became known as Okies.

Young Oklahoma mother; age 18, penniless, stranded in Imperial Valley, California.



Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother," destitute in a pea picker's camp, because of the failure of the early pea crop. These people had just sold their tent in order to buy food. Most of the 2,500 people in this camp were destitute. By the end of the decade there were still 4 million migrants on the road.

