

GRAPES OF WRATH ESSAY

-Fill out movie viewing sheet as you watch the movie. This will be very important for the assignment you will be doing.

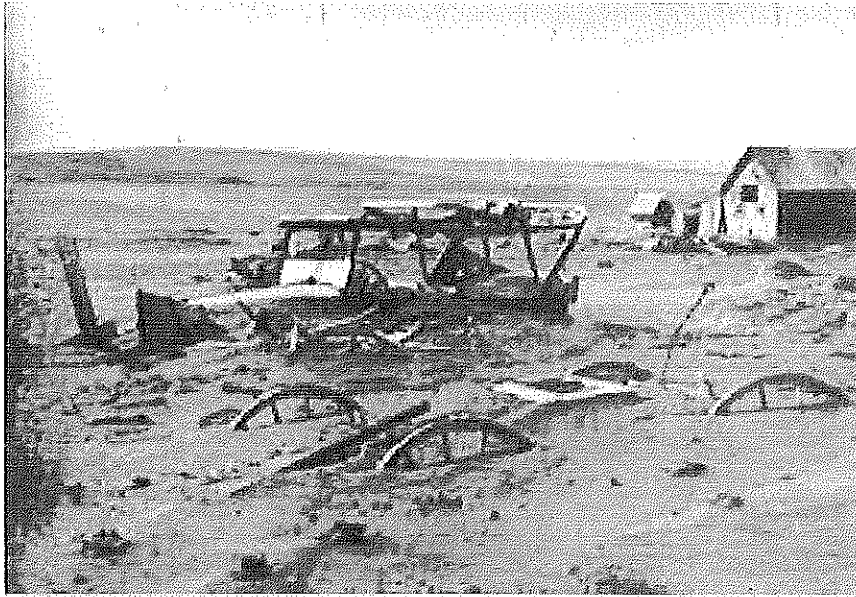
- You will be writing an essay on the movie that discusses the theme(s) and historical significance of the movie
- at least one direct quote from the movie (from the provided list)
- a reference to the reading selection about the dust bowl
- a reference to some of Woody Guthrie's lyrics
- a reference to a photo(s)
- use your own knowledge of the era from notes/textbook

NO OTHER OUTSIDE RESEARCH IS ALLOWED. YOU MAY ONLY USE THE MATERIALS PROVIDED TO COMPLETE THE ESSAY. ANY USE OF OUTSIDE MATERIALS WILL RESULT IN A ZERO FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.

Make sure to have a strong thesis in your introduction. Each body paragraph should deal with a specific theme, or all three an overall theme, in the movie. Your conclusion should discuss the historical significance of the movie (what we can learn about American history from watching it). Essay needs to be typed, 12 point font, Times New Roman, Double Spaced

IMPORTANT- If you are absent any day during the viewing of the movie, it is your responsibility to view what you missed over break.

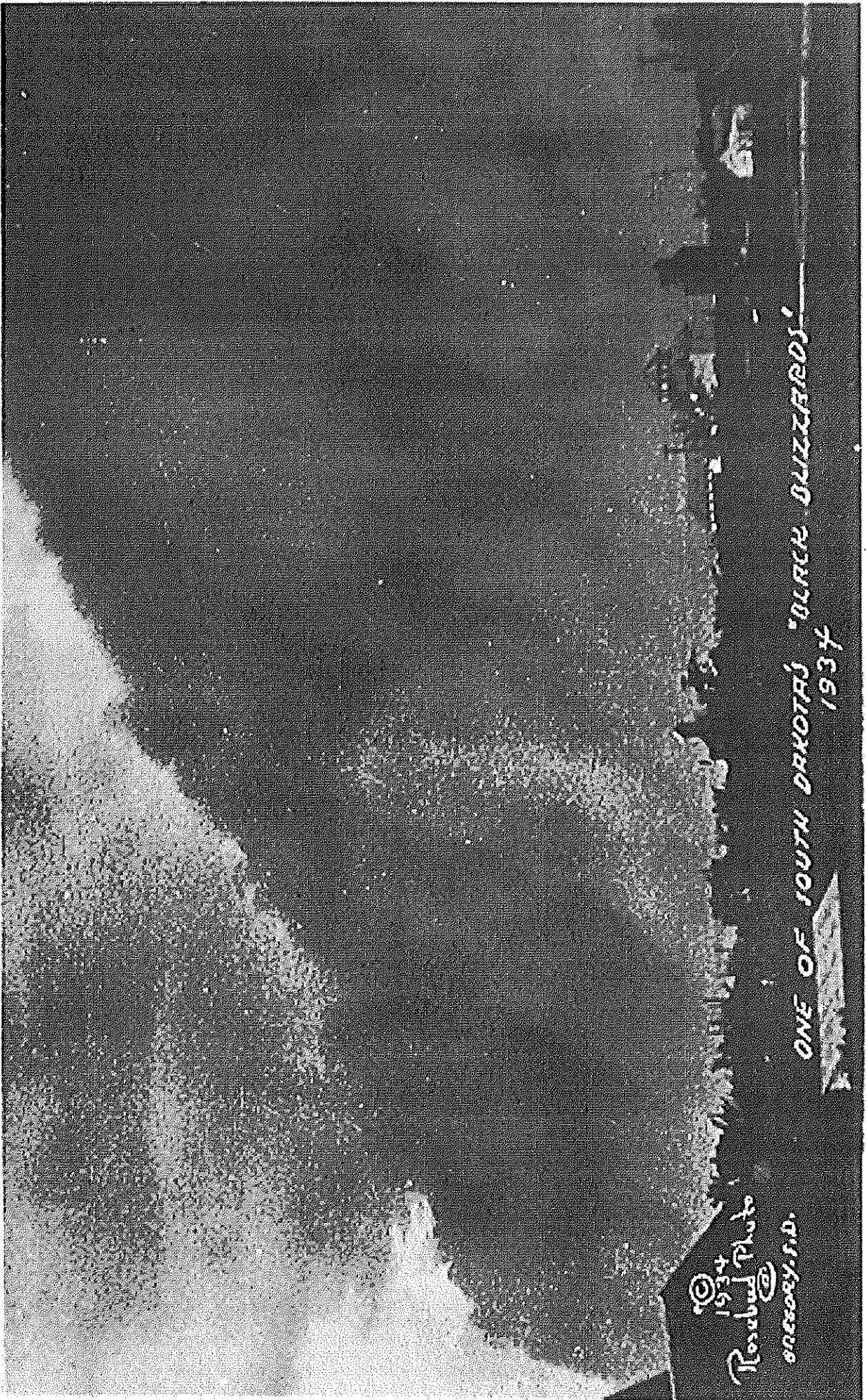




Dust Bowl Blues

Words and Music by Woody Guthrie

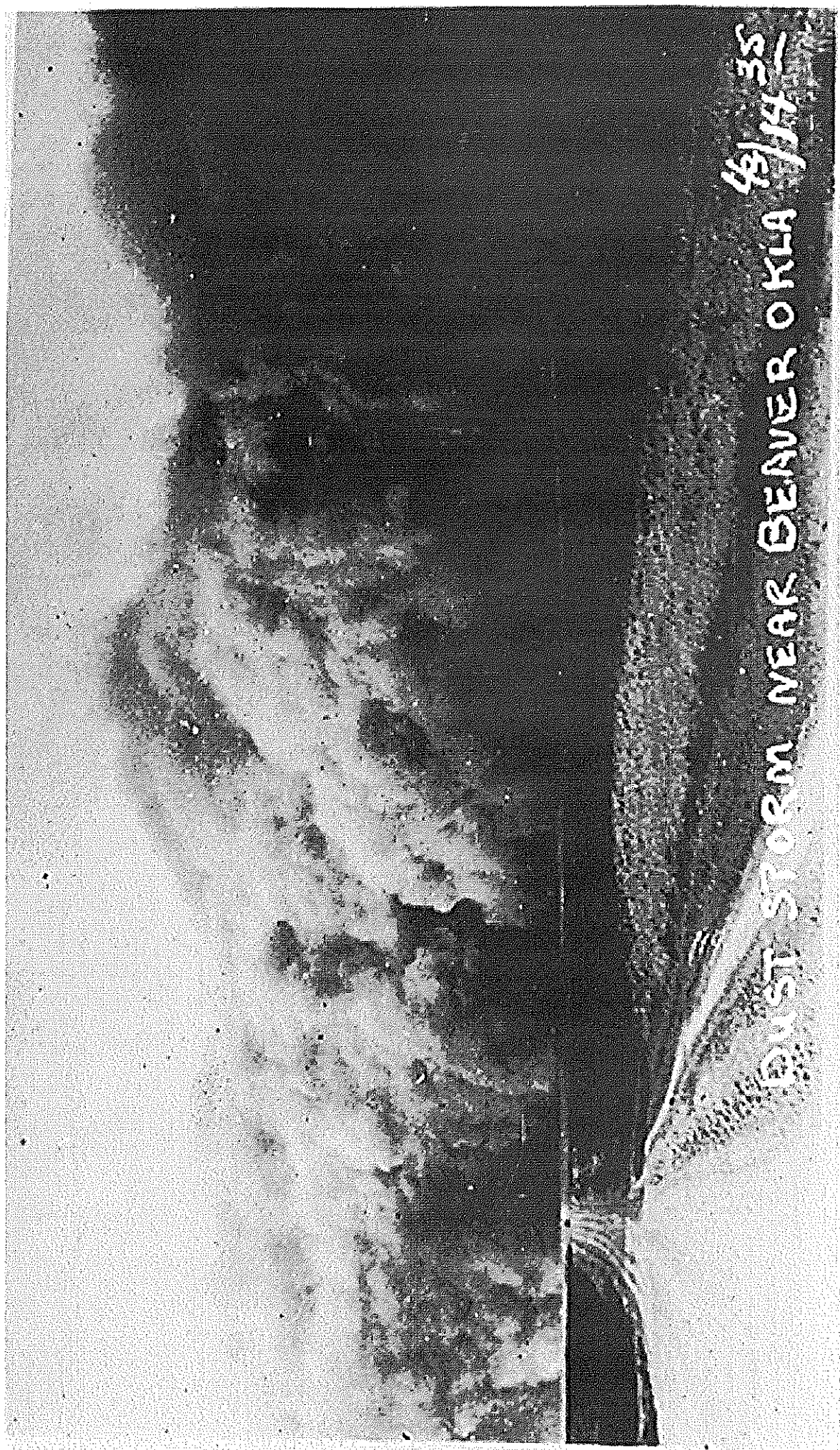
I just blowed in, and I got them dust bowl blues,
I just blowed in, and I got them dust bowl blues,
I just blowed in, and I'll blow back out again.
I guess you've heard about ev'ry kind of blues,
I guess you've heard about ev'ry kind of blues,
But when the dust gets high, you can't even see the sky.
I've seen the dust so black that I couldn't see a thing,
I've seen the dust so black that I couldn't see a thing,
And the wind so cold, boy, it nearly cut your water off.
I seen the wind so high that it blowed my fences down,
I've seen the wind so high that it blowed my fences down,
Buried my tractor six feet underground.
Well, it turned my farm into a pile of sand,
Yes, it turned my farm into a pile of sand,
I had to hit that road with a bottle in my hand.
I spent ten years down in that old dust bowl,
I spent ten years down in that old dust bowl,
When you get that dust pneumony, boy, it's time to go.
I had a gal, and she was young and sweet,
I had a gal, and she was young and sweet,
But a dust storm buried her sixteen hundred feet.
She was a good gal, long, tall and stout,
Yes, she was a good gal, long, tall and stout,
I had to get a steam shovel just to dig my darlin' out.
These dusty blues are the dustiest ones I know,
These dusty blues are the dustiest ones I know,
Buried head over heels in the black old dust,
I had to pack up and go.
An' I just blowed in, an' I'll soon blow out again.



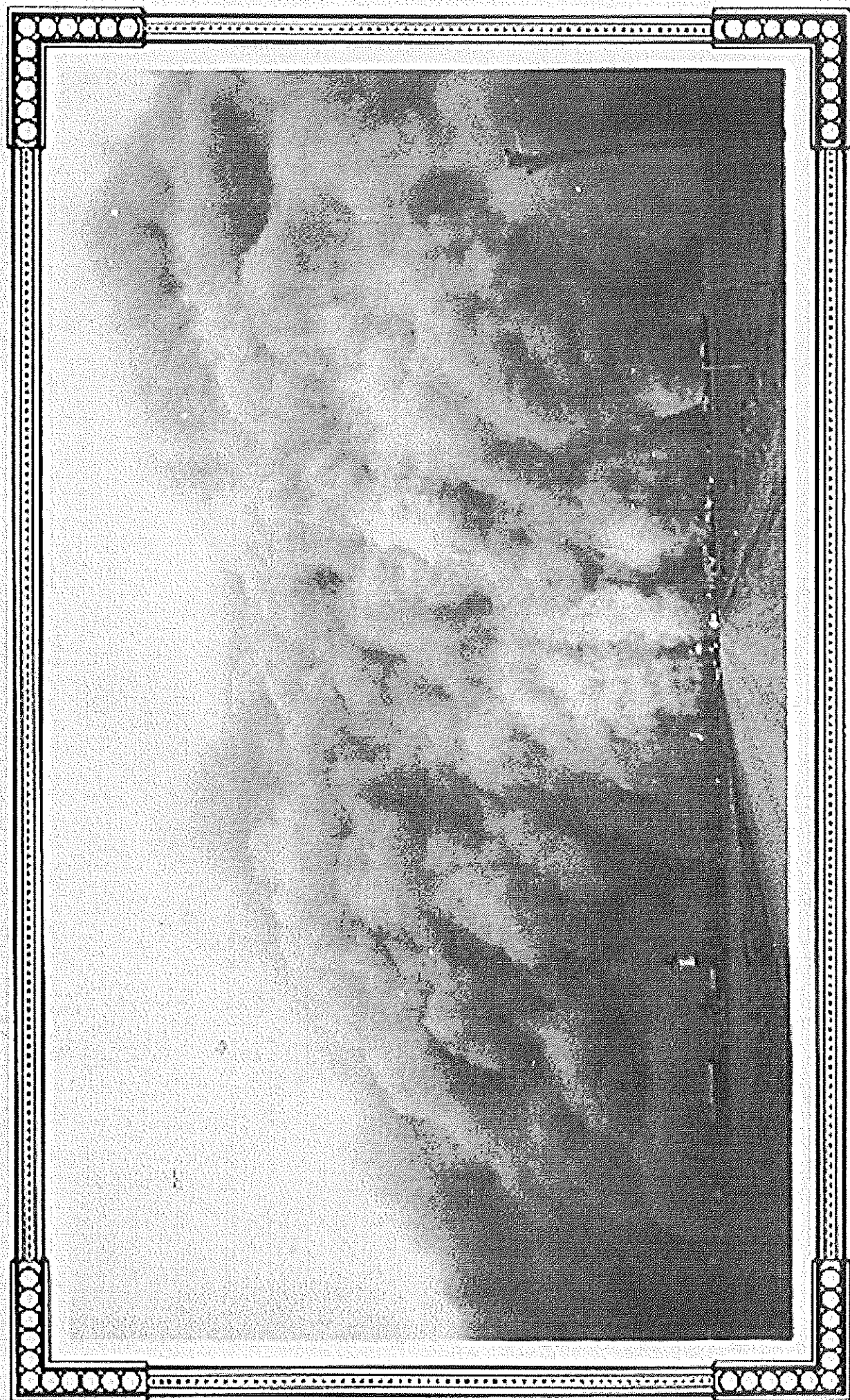
© 1934
Rosbud Photo
Company, S.D.

ONE OF SOUTH DAKOTA'S "DARK BAZZARDS!"
1934





DUST STORM NEAR BEAVER OKLA 4/14 35



16

Black Sunday

THE DAY BEGAN as smooth and light as the inside of an alabaster bowl. After a siege of black and white, after a monotonous jumble of grit-filled clouds had menaced people on the High Plains for seasons on end, the second Sunday in April was an answered prayer. Sunrise was pink with streaks of turquoise, a theatrical start. The air was clear. The horizon stretched to infinity once again, the sky scrubbed. There was no wind. The sun infused every gray corner with a spring glow. Nesters crawled out of their dugouts and shanties, their two-room frame houses and mud-packed brick abodes, like soldiers after a long battle. For once, they did not have to put on goggles or attach the sponge masks or lubricate their nostrils before going outside. They stretched their legs and breathed deep, blinking at the purity of a prairie morning, the smell of tomorrow again in the air. The land around them was tossed about and dusted over, as lifeless as the pockmarked fields of France after years of trench warfare. Trees were skeletal. Gardens were burned and limp, electrocuted by static from the spate of recent dusters. Still, the day had enough promise to remind people why they had dug homes into the skin of the southern plains, and some dared to entertain a thought on this morning: perhaps the worst was over.

Where to start? Windows were unsealed and opened wide, the heavy, dirt-laden sheets removed. Some windows had been sealed so tightly with wind-hardened dust that they would not budge. It was spirit-lifting to actually let clean air and sunshine inside. Going room

to room with a scoop shovel, it was easy to fill a large garbage can with dirt. Roofs had to be shoveled, ceilings as well. Some ceilings had collapsed. Many were sagging. People cut holes overhead, crawled up, and pushed dust through the opening. Bed sheets, towels, clothes could be washed and allowed to dry in this sun, and they would smell of the plains on its best day. Outside, the cows would get a good scrubbing and drink from holding tanks without taking in grit. The cows looked so worn down, having lost patches of hair to the dust, their skin raw and chapped, their teeth chipped by chewing sandpaper with every meal, their gums inflamed. Chickens were due a run of the yard, fluffing sand out of their feathers. A horse might get its nostrils cleaned and find a stretch where it could gallop without sinking up to its knees in drifting sand.

A "grand and glorious" rabbit drive, as the *Boise City News* called it, was back on after a month-long delay because of dusters. A preacher had warned people they should not club rabbits on the Sabbath, that they would rouse the Lord to anger. But today the weather was flawless, a chance to kill maybe fifty thousand rabbits. And it seemed to some nesters like the perfect way to vent their frustration over a collision of bad days — forty-nine dusters in the last three months, according to the weather bureau.

Roy Butterbaugh, a musician by trade — sax and clarinet — who had bought the *Boise City News* on a lark a few years earlier, thought it was time to leave behind the bonds of this broken earth. He wanted to fly. The dusters had made him claustrophobic. Oh, to stretch out, to get above the dead ground and float in the blue and the sunshine. A friend had a little single-engine airplane at the edge of the town, next to the dirt strip that served as a runway. It did not take much to talk Butterbaugh into going for a spin in the clean air.

Church sounded right. This was Palm Sunday — a week before Easter, the start of the holiest time on the Christian calendar. God had to be in a forgiving mood or else why would the day be so wondrous? With weather like this, No Man's Land needed only a couple of good rainstorms and fields would once again be fertile, said a minister in his Sunday sermon in Boise City. But they had to pray in order for this to happen. Some who wanted to go to church were too embarrassed by

how they looked. Little Jeanne Clark, who had just left the hospital in Lamar after a long bout of dust pneumonia, only had dresses made of sackcloth, with the onion brand names printed on the side. She could not go to church in such a thing; the other children would laugh at her.

In Baca County, Ike Osteen did extra chores around the dugout. After being cooped up so long in the pocket of home, Ike had a burst of energy. The dusters had been so thick through February and March that the half-section looked unfamiliar. He was seventeen now, a young man with an itch to get on with life. He wandered about the 320 acres of Osteen family ground, trying to find a familiar landmark. The orchard was dead and covered. A dune, perhaps six feet high at the top, had formed along the length of the tree line. It looked like a wave frozen in place. He saw prints in the sand from jackrabbits and heard a sound that had just arrived for the first time this withered spring — birdsong. Where would they nest? Maybe find a corner of the barn that had not been dusted. The garden space, where the Osteens had grown lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, and corn for popping, was under a drift grave. Implements and machines were buried. Ike found the tops of cultivator wheels and a horse-drawn buggy used by his late daddy. But only the tops. He thought of digging them out, but he would need more help than he could get from his two sisters and brother in the dugout. And where had all the topsoil gone? What state now held the Osteen farm? In places where dunes had not piled up, Ike found a couple of arrowheads. As he picked at the hardened dirt, he thought it might be an Indian burial ground, laid bare by the winds. He could see the outline of graves, and they made him wonder what the Comanche would do if they rose from the dead and found the buffalo grass gone and the land destroyed.

Using the scoop shovel, Ike cleared away enough sand to reveal the doors into the fruit cellar. His brother hauled water inside for baths. With the windows open on a windless day of perfect clarity, everyone in the dugout could get a good soak without worrying about the water going brown. After it cooled, the bathwater was not wasted. It was used to nurture an elm tree, just about the only thing still alive

on the Osteen homestead. The outhouse was a roof above the sand. Drifts piled nine feet high against the walls. At least the dugout was not completely buried. Over at Roy Beightol's farm, a few miles away, the house had been drowned by dusters, and the family forced to flee. Only the shingles of the roof were visible.

After he had cleared a path from the dugout to the outhouse, Ike turned his attention to the Model-A, which he called Old Henry. After shoring out in a duster, Henry had not been driven for some time. It was all Ike could do to keep it from being buried during the month of March. Ike took a flat contact file to burned spots on the points in the distributor. He wore them down enough so that the engine fired. Now he had a way to get back to school. Of late, because of the difficulty of riding a mule or driving Old Henry to the Walsh High School, Ike had been staying all week in the village; he and his buddy Tex Acre were boarding with his grandma in Walsh. He came home only on weekends. For twelve years, Ike and Tex had been best friends, and the wonder was that they were still in school. All the times the train passed by, carrying their dreams out of Baca County, it had been hard to resist. They had to get through just April and May, and then they



Black Sunday, southern Colorado

would be free. Ike picked up Tex and drove over to Pearl Glover's house to give her a ride back to school as well.

They all agreed: it was the best day of the year. Shirtsleeve weather, temperature in the eighties. The three high school seniors drove with the windows down, the warm air in their faces, the spotless sky overhead. They talked about getting their gym back and resuming practice for the senior play. The Walsh High School gym had been a makeshift hospital for a month now, run by the Red Cross. But with the weather so nice and only the slightest breeze out of the southwest, Ike, Tex, and Pearl expressed hope that their gym would become a theater again.

About eight hundred miles to the north, people in Bismarck, North Dakota, started calling the weather bureau. A high-pressure system had been sitting over the Dakotas, and it was tussling with a cold front that had barreled down from the Yukon. With the clash of warm and cold currents, the air turned violent. Winds screamed over the grasslands, carrying dust so heavy that visibility was less than a hundred yards. The Dakotas had been pummeled by numerous dusts during the Dirty Thirties, but this one was bigger and stronger, packing a tremendous load of sand. In two hours' time, temperatures plunged more than thirty degrees, heralding the cold front's advance. By mid-morning, the windblown soil slid down over South Dakota and was advancing on Nebraska. The weather bureau was flooded with questions:

What happened to the sunlight?

Why is it so dark?

Was this a twister? A series of twisters? Something new and horrible?

Where did it come from? What was the forecast? Where was it going? How long would it last?

Will we get enough air?

What should we do? Flee? Hide?

The weathermen were as confused as the callers. The storm that had moved out of the Dakotas a year earlier and blanketed New York, Washington, and ships at sea gained strength because it rode the jet

stream and its high-level winds to the east. This dustier was moving south with the cold front, but it was darker by far than anything ever seen before on the prairie. Some people compared it to a wall of muddy water, boiling up and then down on the earth. No air reconnaissance had picked it up; the nearest weather bureau measurement plane, used in the daily forecast of 1935, was out of Omaha, hundreds of miles east.

An Associated Press reporter from Denver, Robert Geiger, was traveling toward No Man's Land with photographer Harry Eisenhard on that Sunday morning. The route took them from Denver to the southeast, away from the mountains, over the high, browned prairie, through Arapahoe, Elbert, Lincoln, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Prowers Counties, to Baca. They planned to go on to Boise City, Gypsum, and Dalhart. There had been nothing to indicate a massive duster was on the way, but black blizzards were nearly impossible to forecast. The newsmen were simply looking for more anecdotes about the storms that were killing the southern plains. With black blizzards blowing through almost daily, Geiger's stories were getting good play across the nation. The pictures sent out by the wire service during that winter and early spring told as much, if not more, than Geiger's prose: people with masks and flashlights, navigating the perils of small-town main streets, cars dodging the drifts and haze of a country road, storefronts boarded up, schools closed, cattle lying dead in the dust.

When the big roller crossed into Kansas, it was reported to be two hundred miles wide, with high winds like a tornado turned on its side. In Denver, temperatures dropped twenty-five degrees in an hour, and then the city fell into a haze. The sun was blocked. That was just the western edge of the storm. The front end charged into Kansas carrying soil from four states. Near the town of Hays, where Germans from Russia had settled fifty years earlier, a small boy who had been playing in the fields with a friend dashed for home. He got lost in the midday blackness; confused, he circled back. The next day he was found dead. He had suffocated, half a mile from home.

A telegraph inquiry around 2:30 p.m. came by Morse code from northern Kansas to the railroad depot in Dodge City, Kansas, about 140 miles northeast of Baca County.

"Has the storm hit?"

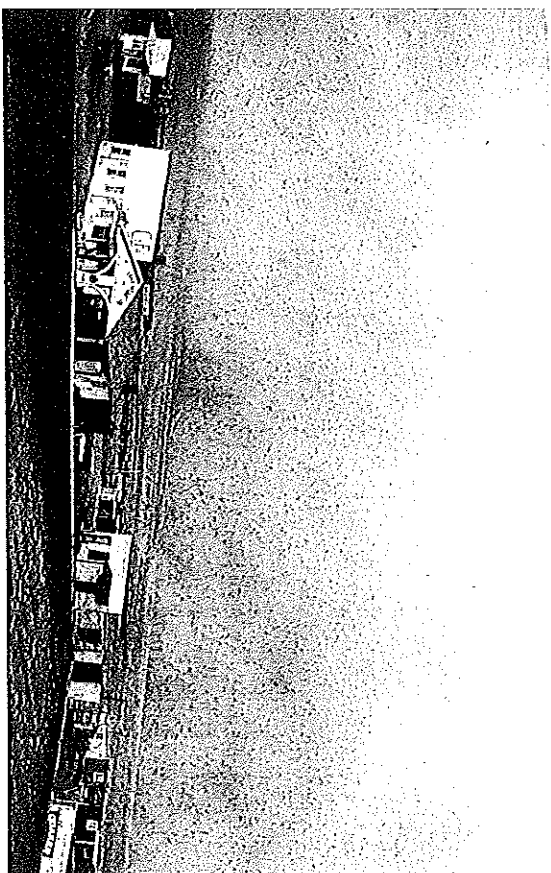
The reply came a few minutes later, tapped from the Dodge City depot.

"My God! Here it comes!"

Dodge City went black. The front edge of the duster looked two thousand feet high. Winds were clocked at sixty-five miles an hour. A few minutes earlier there had been bright sunshine and a temperature of eighty-one degrees, without a wisp of wind. Drivers turned on their headlights but could not see ahead of them, or even see the person sitting next to them. It was like three midnights in a jug, one old nester said. Cars died, their systems shorted out by the static. People fled to tornado shelters, fire stations, gyms, church basements. There was a whiff of panic, not evident in earlier storms, as a fear took hold that the end was near. A woman in Kansas later said she thought of killing her child to spare the baby the cruelty of Armageddon. A weather bureau station agent wrote in his journal that the duster extended east and west for as far as the eye could see. It was lighter at the top, coal black at the ground. As it advanced, it seemed to recirculate, picking up fresh dirt and then slamming it down, in rolling fashion.

Ed Stewart of Elkhart, Kansas, ran outside and mounted his camera at the edge of town, pointing it north. As the biggest duster ever seen rolled into town, he clicked off a series of pictures. In the first frame of the sequence, the storm moves up behind Elkhart. Houses and small outbuildings and a car or two are visible in brilliant sunlight. They are dwarfed by the thick, heavy clouds creeping up behind them. Above the rolling front, the sky is still clear, highlighting the contrast. In the next frame, the clouds turn ink black as they swallow the town. By the middle frames, only telephone poles in the forefront are still visible; they soon disappear. The last pictures show a darkness of deep winter night — hole-in-the-ground black. The AP team, riding just ahead of the duster, was also getting pictures, but their shots were taken farther away from the front. The AP team drove into Baca County and headed for Boise City.

Just below Elkhart, in the northern fringe of No Man's Land, several hundred people were massed in a field for the rabbit drive that had been promoted by the *Boise City News*. They had driven from



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Guymon and Boise City, and many came not out of civic duty but hunger. With cattle gone, no wheat in the ground, chickens running blind and hungry, people in No Man's Land had started to can rabbit meat to store in their cellars, along with the pickled tumbleweed. If meat was sealed tight in the canning jars, it would keep. The rabbit drive drew a huge crowd. People moved the animals along a V against a fence into a pen, where they were clubbed with bats, chains, and wrenches.

Ike Osteen was five miles away from his homestead, with Tex and Pearl, when he noticed rabbits and birds fleeing south. This he had never seen: a desperate migration, the birds screeching by his car, the rabbits in a sprint, all headed in the same direction. It was curious because there still was no wind, and the early afternoon was as luminous as the morning had been. He looked north and east, scanning the horizon of the broken land of Baca County on a rare day when a person could see into forever. Then he saw it, a few minutes past 4 P.M.

"Looks like it's gonna be a booger," he said to Tex.

They drove on another mile before realizing it was more than a booger — it was the mother of all dusters. The birds were now thick

in the sky, the rabbits struggling to find hard ground on which to get some traction. Ike felt the static shoot through the inside of the car.

"Hey!" He touched Tex, and the shock was strong enough to knock him back. He felt like he had grabbed a power line, a live wire. "Pull over," said Tex Acre. "Let's make for that house up ahead."

The Model-A quit on him. They got out of the car and took a quick look at the mountain advancing toward them, black and boiling. The farmhouse, owned by the Elmer Coulter family, was close by. The three teenagers made a dash for the farm. The Coulters were standing out front, watching the roller advance. Mrs. Coulter was on her knees praying.

"Hurry! Get inside!"

Every spike on a barbed-wire fence was glowing with electricity, channeling the energy of the storm. Ike and his friends were a few yards out when the dirt got them. It came quicker than most dusts and was deceptive because no wind was ahead of it. Not a sound, not a breeze, and then it was on top of them. They were slammed to the ground and engulfed by a wall, straight up and down, the dust abrasive and strong, boiling up, twisting. The noise was ferocious, a clanking, scraping sound. They could not tell up from down, one side from the other. Without their dust masks or goggles, Ike and his two schoolmates were blinded, and they struggled to breathe. They crawled forward, clawing at the air, and found the farmhouse door. The Coulters let them in and slammed the door. It was black inside. Elmer Coulter lit a kerosene lamp, but the weak glow only extended a few feet, like a flashlight with dying batteries. They sat on the floor with towels over their heads and mouths. Tex was on one side of Ike and Pearl was on the other. He could hear their voices and feel their hands, but he could not see them. He could not see his own hand in front of his face.

In Boise City that morning, a double funeral was held at St. Paul's Methodist Church. Then it was time to bury two wooden caskets: the tiny one holding baby Ruth Nell, and the bigger one with the body of Loumiza Lucas. Hazel was struggling with her feelings of deep grief on this incongruously beautiful day. God had taken her only child and

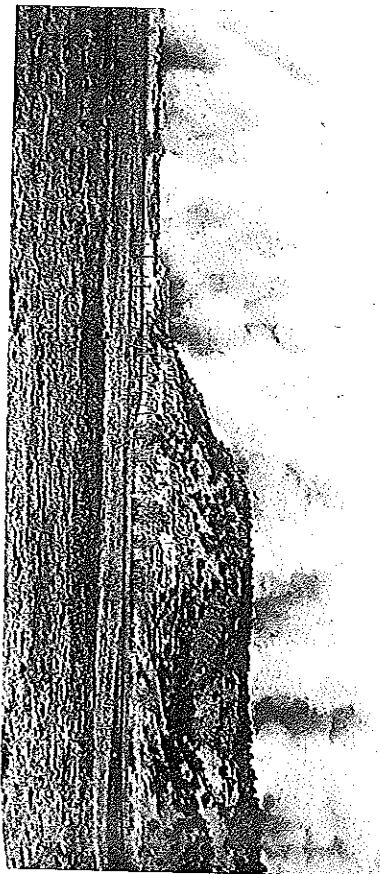
her grandma on the same day. The minister's words helped, somewhat, but Hazel could not force her emotions into a tidy place. She had put on a face of dignity, wearing her white gloves, with hugs and thank-yous to all the relatives. The tears came. She tried not to give in to the despair that owned No Man's Land. The church had been packed, more than two hundred people, not just the extended Lucas clan that lived all over the Oklahoma Panhandle but also much of Boise City, dear friends. Faye Folkers, the brightest student Hazel had taught, was there. She was a senior, same age as Ike, getting ready to graduate if the high school could stay open long enough for her to get a diploma. Sunday was her seventeenth birthday. After the funeral, she was going out with a friend for a drive.

The funeral procession started for Texhoma, a long line of Model-As, Model-Ts, and pickup trucks following the hearse that carried Grandma Lou, all moving southeast in the embrace of the spring sunshine, the wind just a whispery breeze. The plan was to proceed over a dirt road forty miles to Texhoma and bury Lou next to her husband, Jimmy, near the ground they had worked so hard to cultivate, the place where members of the Lucas family became landowners for the first time. Hazel and Charles stayed behind. They had wanted to bury their baby in Boise City, at the little cemetery at the edge of town. They were part of Cimarron County, more than most. Hazel had ridden horses over the land when it still had its grass. She knew most of the families and had taught many of their children. She had fallen in love with Charles at a Boise City track meet. They married in town, moved away and then moved back, started a business. They had no intention of leaving, even if No Man's Land seemed cursed. They wanted to bury their baby here, but the Boise City Cemetery was so drifted — sand covered the crosses and tombstones of departed pioneers — that there was not a decent place to put a body in the ground. Hazel and Charles decided to bury the body of their baby in Enid, where his family lived, and wait until Monday to go east.

The procession was on the road by 3 P.M. The family estimated it would take three hours to get to Texhoma, giving them enough time to bury Grandma Lou an hour before sunset. The hearse carrying the old woman's body and the line of cars moved slowly over a road inter-

mitently covered by drifts and pockmarked with ruts. Every car dragged a metal chain to ground the static, and these tails kicked up dust so that the Lucas funeral procession looked like a line of small clouds moving along a narrow road. After an hour, the caravan of grief came to a halt; a drift on the road blocked further advance. Lucas men with shovels got out and started digging; still dressed in their best clothes.

In the northern part of No Man's Land, Joe Garza was taking advantage of the clear day to find some stray cattle. Born on the Lujan ranch, Joe had learned to break broncos and cajole sheep before he was big enough to get a seat at the ranch dinner table. His world was the open ground of Oklahoma's far corner, the mesas of New Mexico and north into Colorado, riding horses over the old Santa Fe Trail, moving sheep, sleeping under the stars. Joe Garza was thirty-five years old this spring and alone in the world. His father had just died in Clayton. Joe worked for food and a roof over his head, which was portable: a horse-drawn wagon with a small cabin built into it. He knew the High Plains were broken, that nature was dead or had disap-



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peared. The creek near where he had been born, just down the slope from the ranch, was dry. And the grass that had fed Lujan sheep and cattle since the days when only the Comanche dialect or Spanish was spoken was under layers of sand.

On Sunday, Joe and another ranch hand, Ernest, rounded up a few stray head of cattle and shooed them over to a camp the wranglers kept near a creek bed. Along the way, they passed a shepherd from the Lujan ranch, the Guyago boy, moving animals. He was too young to be out here alone, Joe thought. The day was clear enough that Joe had decided to sleep outside, though it would get down near freezing at night. Joe was cooking a pot of pinto beans over the fire, lying on his back, whistling away the Sunday afternoon when he saw birds fly by his camp. They screeched as they headed south, like they were sick or wounded. The cows acted funny as the birds moved by. Joe got up and walked over to the horses, which were tied to a stake. Joe's horse was pawing at the ground, nervous and sniffing like he knew something. His tail flickered and snapped with an electric crackle and the hair on his hide stood up, alive with electricity. Joe had seldom seen the horses so jumpy. He untied the harness and let the horses go. He knew they would come back. The Lujan ranch was the only place for miles where an animal could reliably get water and feed. If the horses wanted to run a bit on this glorious day, let 'em be. He went back to his early afternoon supper, the beans slow cooking over coals.

"Joe . . . look at the sky!"

He turned to the north and saw what looked like the leading edge of a fast-moving cloud. Joe walked up the side of the dry creek bed to get a better look, the spurs on his boots making it hard to move fast. When he got to the top, his heart went into a gallop. An enormous formation faced him — a tidal wave of rolling black — just a quarter mile away. He slid down the embankment and made for the little shelter atop his wagon. In an instant, the dust showered down on them, dirt streaming through the fine openings of the little cabin. Joe and Ernest stuffed rags into the openings and reached to find a kerosene lantern. They lit the flame, but it went out; there was not enough oxygen in the space to keep it alive. Joe lay on his stomach, a shirt over his

head, the air snapping like gunfire, coarse sand swirling. Like other cowboys at the Lujan ranch, Joe was used to the dirt and wind. What scared him now was the blackness, as if the sun had been shot out of the sky. And it was cold.

Joe moved closer to the wall, shivering.

"Listen," he said to Ernest. "You hear that?"

He cupped his ear. It was a high-voiced cry. An animal? Horses didn't sound like that, even when they whinnied in despair. A cow? No bawling cry of a starving hooper ever made that noise. A lamb? Not this bleat.

"I heard a holler," Joe said. "I'm going outside."

"You're gonna get killed."

"I'm going outside."

Joe struck his head out, made a megaphone with his hands and shouted into the black void of the storm. He heard something in return. He shouted again. The voice came back.

"Keep on shoutin'. I'm gonna find ya."

He edged toward the voice, stumbling with his spurs. He fell to the ground, crawled forward. After forty-five minutes, he was close enough that the voice was next to him. He could not see a thing. He reached out and searched with his hands, trying to draw an image by sense of touch.

"Who's that?"

It was the Guyago boy, the shepherd. The child was crying when Joe finally touched him. The boy said he was caught on the naked ground when dust descended on him and knocked him down. He thought he was going to be buried alive. He had crawled along the dirt, yelling, hoping his voice would reach somebody.

"Heeyyyyyyooooohh!" Garza yelled for the other ranch hand, back at the shelter. He hollered for some time, moving slowly in the direction where he thought the wagon would be, holding the boy's hand.

"Heeyyyyyyooooohh! Out heeereer!"

Finally, a voice came back.

"Joel! This way. . ."

Using the voice of Ernest as a guide, Garza and the boy crawled

back to safety. Inside, Ernest had lit the kerosene lamp; there was now enough oxygen to keep the flame going. But they could not see each other's faces.

The funeral procession, about fifty people in all, was six miles out of Boise City, still a ways from the Lucas family plot in Texhoma. They had spread out some to let the dust from the chains dragging behind car axles settle. About 5:15 P.M., they saw the heap of half-mile-high dirt casting a shadow before it was on them, and it was so big, so dark as to scare some in the procession into thinking there must have been an explosion somewhere, that a mountain range had blown its top. The cars were in the flattest part of No Man's Land, a place where a bowling ball on hardpan was at its angle of repose. From this perspective, the mourners got a broad, expansive view of the Black Sunday duster. The wall looked like it ran for several hundred miles, east to west. The top was mostly flat, only slightly jagged at one end. The front was advanced by columns, which billowed ahead of the main storm, as if clearing the ground. The Lucas clan argued over what to do. Some people wanted to turn the caravan around and go back to Boise City. Others, mainly older family members, thought it disrespectful to turn tail on the day of Grandma Lou's burial. As the roller approached, options disappeared. Like a wagon train on the old Santa Fe Trail, the cars in the procession closed ranks with the hearses in the middle and faced south, so the storm would not hit the engines first.

"Who's got water?"

"Next to the radiator."

C.C. Lucas always kept drinking water in canvas bags. They poured water into scarves, shirts, and handkerchiefs, and tied them on. The children were told to crawl under the cars and keep the damp clothes on their faces. Everyone fell to the ground or got inside a car. As the big duster had bullied its way south, it had picked up more power and more density. There was probably no better source of pulverized sand than the arid, wasted wreckage of the High Plains on this afternoon in April. The earth went black. People saw flashes of elec-

tricity around their cars, the only light in the void. When it hit, the duster covered the hearse roof and the tops of vehicles, and blew granular bits against the windows and scoured the road beneath the cars where people were hiding. It was dark for more than an hour.

Around 6:30, the winds diminished enough so a person could stand without getting knocked down. As the coarse air thinned some, people were able to see their hands and then to see another face. But that presented frightening images for the children — the adults scared, with blackened faces, tears muddied.

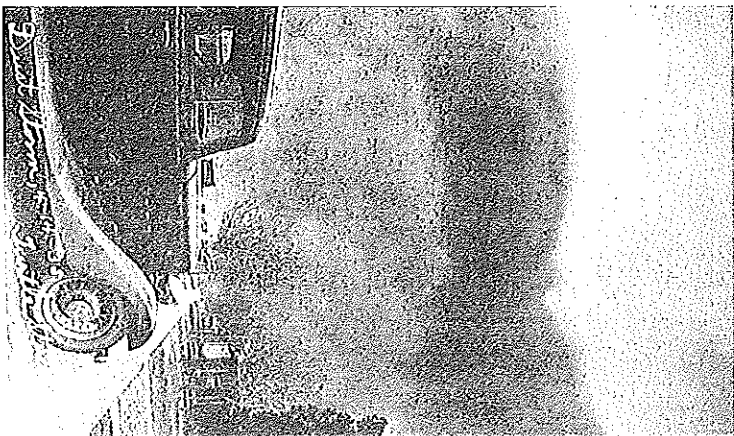
They had to get back to Boise City. To stay out in this open road, with the black blizzard pounding them, could mean death. Headlights were turned on, and cars turned around to face north. Some cars would not start. With no visibility and a deep ditch on either side of the dirt road, it would be difficult to drive back to town, but people in the procession felt they had no choice. Half a dozen men stripped off their coats and joined hands. This flank of Lucas mourners would walk the road as a guide, followed closely by the hearse and the other cars. In this way, they groped their way back to Boise City.

The rabbit drive northeast of town was in midswing when the duster hit. Hundreds of people had herded several thousand rabbits against a fence. They moved closer for the killing, bashing heads with clubs and sticks when “that thing,” as one man called it, lumbered near. Point your finger at it, someone said, and you would poke a hole in it — it was that thick. It’s purple! No, it’s closer to the inside of a dog — the blackest black. People dropped their clubs and scrambled for their cars. See now, this is God’s wrath for killing bunnies on the Sabbath, just like the preacher said. A pickup truck full of teenagers sped for home. It veered off the road, the driver blinded by the storm, and fell into a ditch. The kids huddled under a blanket, waiting for the air to clear. Holding hands, they walked slowly, swatting at the black air, seeking a schoolhouse they had just passed. A hand felt a wall. The school was locked. One boy crawled through a window and opened it. It was cold inside, with the sun gone, the black norther upon them. They broke apart a desk and built a fire in the potbellied stove, waiting for light to return.

At the Folkers homestead, some chickens mistook the dark for nightfall and went inside to roost. Others clucked and jittered in a circle, their eyesight taken by the duster. Gordon and his mother, Katherine, worried about Fred. The old man had gone out with a friend, two miles away on the open land. Katherine and her son crouched low inside their house, unable to get a lantern going. That morning, Katherine had opened all the windows and cleaned the house, top to bottom. It had not been so free of dust in three years. This home, which had been the high point of the Folkers’s progress in No Man’s Land, now seemed a trap, a cave where the ceilings and walls slowly crumbled. The drought had so calcified the wooden window sashes that they had shrunk, opening space for fine dust to get inside. The Folkers had stuffed the cracks but earlier today had removed the towels for cleaning. Black dust showered along the walls and trickled through the ceilings.

The AP team traveled over the state line into Oklahoma, just ahead of the wall of dirt, but it was closing on them. Though wind speeds were estimated at one hundred miles an hour at the roof of the roller and sixty miles at the ground, the duster itself seemed to have slowed a bit, based on government notations of when the storm hit a certain place. By early evening, the formation was moving about forty miles an hour. The newsmen crossed the bridge over the anemic Cimarron River and aimed for Boise City. Just north of town, near the farm of Herman Schneider, they stopped their car. Eisenhard took a picture of the duster as it rose up behind the Schneider farm.

“What a swell picture,” he said.



Black Sunday, Liberal, Kansas, 1935

The shot ran in newspapers all over the world, one of the few news service photographs taken of Black Sunday as it unfolded. Geiger estimated the cloud's height at several thousand feet. And while he initially thought it was black, he wrote in his notes that it appeared to be blue gray as it rolled over Cimarron County. In front of it were columns of dust, which looked like smoke, slightly lighter than the main duster. They got back in the car and sped ahead, trying to outrun the cloud, up to sixty miles an hour on the dirt road. It was not fast enough. They saw the road narrow like a tunnel before it disappeared altogether. Geiger slammed on the brakes and turned on the car lights. They sat in the black. After half an hour, they tried to move forward. Geiger braked again, swerved, trying to avoid a family of five that was standing in the road, looking for help. The car went into the ditch, just missing the people.

They pushed the car out, packed the family inside, and resumed as the blizzard lashed at them. In Boise City, the Crystal Hotel was filling up, and there was no way to see who was who or where to go. People crowded into the lobby, a room where bright-faced suitcase farmers once spent their earnings on the biggest steak on the menu. A crowd of scared, dusted exiles gathered around the weak lights of kerosene lamps. They wanted news. What was going on? Where had this come from? When would it end? What did it mean? Geiger had no answers. He wanted only to get back to Denver in time to get the AP pictures out. His car had shorted out. He offered fifty dollars to anyone who could drive him back to Denver.

Thomas Jefferson Johnson was walking home from the Lucas double funeral when the storm hit. Johnson was tall and tough, a home-steadier who came west in a covered wagon from the Ozarks and established a dugout on a quarter-section. Johnson was just half a block from home when the blizzard overwhelmed him. He fell to the ground, fumbled for something to hold on to, tried to get his bearings. It was worse than either of the twisters he had lived through, worse than hailstorms that destroyed his crops in the past, as if all of No Man's Land was heaved up and collapsed. Felled by the duster, he crawled forward, crossing the road on his belly. Disoriented in the

blackness, he moved on his hands and knees one way, which he thought would lead him to the house. But it led another way, and he never found it. The heavy sand blew up his nose and got into his eyes, burning. He crawled about six blocks away from the house, fumbling over hard ground and drifts, until he found a shed. It felt as if hornets had stung his eyeballs. Heavy sand was lodged under the lids and against the eyes. He rubbed them for relief, but that only wedged the dirt deeper. When Johnson's family found him later in the evening, his eyes were full of black dirt and he said he could not see. He went blind on Black Sunday, and his vision never recovered.

A few doors away from the Johnson house, Hazel Shaw was packing for the next day's burial of her baby when light was snuffed from the house. A four-year-old niece, Carol, was staying with them for the afternoon, playing around the little apartment attached to their funeral home. Hazel reached out blindly, trying to find the child. Every time she touched a doorknob or metal object, she was jolted by electricity.

"Carol . . . ? Carol! Where are you?"

Hazel had not slept since she took her dying child east a week earlier. The dust pneumonia, the struggle for life in the hospital, the mean, swift deaths of the baby and of Grandma Lou, and the funeral this afternoon — it had been one slap of sorrow after the other. Through it all, she had tried not to break down. But now, with her little niece missing, it was too much. She bumped into walls and knocked over dishes trying to find the child, the tears coming as the dust swirled through the house, her face streaked with black. What had she done to deserve this? Charles grabbed a large flashlight and went outside. The flashlight was worthless; the beam was able to penetrate only a few feet in the heavy silt of the black blizzard. He called for the child but heard nothing but the squawk of birds. Charles fell to his belly and shimmied along the street. There was slightly more visibility at ground level; the cloud seemed to hang just above the earth. Using this crawl space, Charles moved along the street, counting his arm lengths as a way to measure distance. When he got to a place that he estimated to be the approximate distance of the niece's house, he turned and crawled up to the door. He jabbered, his voice panicky, searching for faces.

"I . . . we . . . we lost Carol. She's gone! She was playing out front in the yard and then she was gone."

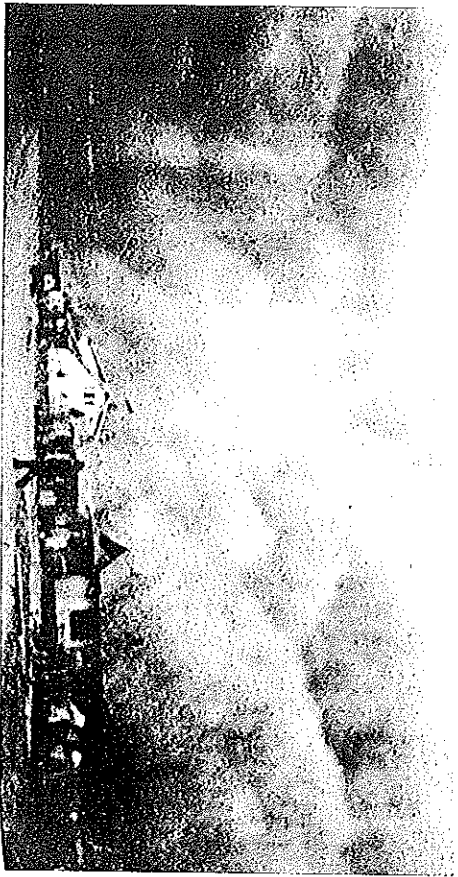
"No. No. It's all right. Is that you, Charles?"

The voices in the dark delivered a flash of good news. Carol was safe. The little girl was with them. She had run home when she saw the cloud creep up on Boise City.

Half a mile away, Roy Butterbaugh, the Boise City newspaper publisher, had just climbed into the seat of the little airplane at the edge of town, his buddy in the pilot's seat. They saw the duster approach and decided not to fly. But as they walked away from the dirt airstrip, the curtain fell on them, and they turned, racing back the other way to the airplane. The blackness caused them to stumble. On the ground, they crawled forward to the plane. They got inside, closed the doors. The plane was latched to the ground by guy wires, but it bucked in the fierce winds, rocking hard.

In the cockpit, the two men were just a few inches apart but could not see each other's face.

Another pilot, the aviator Laura Ingalls, had managed to get aloft before the storm. She was flying over the Texas Panhandle in a Lockheed monoplane, attempting to set a new nonstop flying record for crossing the continent. The plane was sleek with low wings, very



Dust storm approaching Johnson, Kansas, April 14, 1935

fast. Ingalls was approaching the Oklahoma border when she spotted the moving mountain of dirt. It stretched so far she could not see the rear of it, and it looked several hundred miles wide. Even at its top, where the wind should not be able to hold so many coarse dirt particles aloft, the formation was dark, a deep purple, she thought. Ingalls gunned the engine, ascending for cleaner air. She climbed to 23,000 feet. By then it was obvious: no way could she expect to leapfrog over this duster. She turned the plane around and scouted for a place to land, the record on hold.

"It was the most appalling thing I ever saw in all my years of flying," she said later.

The Volga Germans had gone outside after church services, taking in the sun and clean air. Their churches stood, though the paint had been blasted away by the dusters. Their houses, many made of brick and two stories, were monuments to craftsmanship, thrift and order. Above all, the Germans prided themselves on keeping their homes clean. On the Volga, there were laws against unswept sidewalks and unkempt front yards, punishable by lashings in the village square. To have the insides of these New World homes trashed by dusters, to have the walls and ceilings leak dirt, week after week, for years on end, was too much for some of the women. The land around Shattuck on the Oklahoma-Texas border had betrayed them. After four years of drought, the Ehrlichs were out of grain. George Ehrlich, the original settler, had lost his ambition when the grief took hold of him following the death of his little boy, Georgie, on the road near his house. It fell to Willie, his only surviving son, to keep the homestead going. On this Sunday, Willie had his calf out for a walk, looking for grass in a dried-up creek bed. He was wandering the land with his sister and her husband when black columns approached from the northwest.

"You better save that calf," Willie's sister said, pointing to a ravine near a fence line. "Looks like it's gonna be a terrible rain."

They had lived on the High Plains long enough to know that when a swollen, dark cloud formation burst and fell on dry land, the runoff could pump up a slit in the earth. Flash floods took almost as many lives as did prairie fires and twisters.

"That's no rain cloud," Willie said.

He had the calf in his arms when the dirt cloud hammered them. Knocked to the ground, Willie coughed up dirt, hollered for his sister and brother-in-law, and felt around for the animal. He rose to his feet and walked just a few steps before he fell again. The fence line was nearby. Willie found the prickly tumbleweeds balled up along the lengths of cedar and followed the line, figuring it would lead to the barn. Hand over hand, he moved along the fence, splinters jamming his palms and elbows, inching along until he ran out of wood. He was where the barn had to be. He knew every inch of this land. And yet, he reached out in space and touched nothing. Ethlich stumbled along and felt a hay bale — he was in the barn after all. The storm had blown open the door. He huddled in a corner and waited until near midnight, when some shape and shadow returned to the world. He never found his calf.

After they had cleaned all four hundred square feet of their house, giving the two-room shack a shine like it had not seen since they moved in, and after each of the three children had taken a bath, the White family in Dalhart got ready for evening church services. Sure, they wore clothes handed out by the government, and shoes that had been restitched by the Mennonite cobbler brought into town by the relief ladies, but they were clean for once. Bam put on a shirt that smelled of springtime and waxed the tips of his handlebar mustache. Lizzie had been talking for years about moving out of Dalhart, and these last months had nearly broken her. When the wind blew straight for twenty-seven days in March, accompanied by dusters more reliable than rain, Lizzie started to crumble. She cried until the warm, salty mist of her tears muddled with dust, and she talked every day about a place where they could find a pool of cool water, a grove of flowering trees, air that would not throw shards of earth at the family. But they were stuck, like other Last Chancers. Bam was old, in a place where the years could dent a man well before his time was up. What could a gnarled cowboy do in a broken land? He dragged home meat sometimes from the government cattle kills, and he coaxed eggs from hens. He planned to get some corn and hay going.

Their feisty son, Melt White, had just found out from an aunt about the Indian blood in him. At first he tried to deny it to himself. Indians had all been run off the Llano Estacado, and nobody had a nice word for them. The kids at school gave him a bad time about his skin. They called him "Mexican" and "nigger." He knew now he was Indian because his daddy said it was so and that's why they could ride horses better than most, and also why the old man could not handle liquor. Cherokee, Irish, and English on his daddy's side. Apache and Dutch on his mama's side. He'd been told it was a disgrace to be part-Indian, especially Apache — they were the meanest, sorriest tribe in the world, that all they wanted to do was drink and fight, his relatives said. Melt was a teenager and starting to think about getting out.

"I'm just a boiled-up Indian," he told a friend. "I don't belong here."

He wanted to go someplace where he could ride horses like his daddy had done. The family house was a bare huddle of boards and tarpaper: no trees, no lawn, the garden dead from static electricity.

Melt was outside when he looked north and saw a long line of black drawn across the prairie. It seemed like it was a mile high and moved quickly. Just ahead of it, the sun lit up the brown fields of Dallam County and the streets of Dalhart. Birds flew low, in a straight line, next to swarming insects. He ran inside.

"We ain't gonna be able to go to church," said Melt.

"Why's that?" his daddy asked.

"Come outside and have a look."

Bam White needed only half a look. There was no time to give the storm a proper stare. He hurried back inside the house.

"Close them windas!"

They wetted down bed sheets that had just been cleaned and covered the windows. Most dusters blew sideways, the dirt seeping through the walls in horizontal gusts. This one showered from above, the black flour slithering down the walls. In the darkness, while fumbling for the lamp, Bam hit his knees on the edge of the stove. The electric shock hurt worse than the knee slam. Melt touched his nose with his fingers, just to reassure himself that his hands were still connected to his body. He could not see his fingers.

Half a mile away, Doc Dawson had been sitting on the porch swing with his wife. It was truly summertime that afternoon, the temperature in the upper eighties. Every window in the house was open. The blizzard fell on Dalhart about 6:20 P.M. A Rock Island Railroad train that was approaching the terminal came to a sudden halt; the conductor had doubts about continuing in the soup of black. Cars died on the main street in front of the DeSoto Hotel and offices of the *Texan* and the Coon Building. Uncle Dick Coon was getting ready for a Sunday meal. He never saw the food. Drifters who had just finished eating beans at the Dalhart Haven mumbled in confusion. A nine-year-old boy walked in a circle, crying, less than half a block from his house. He screamed: "Help me, please! I've gone blind."

John McCarty was reading a book when the page went black. He felt his way outside, glanced back at his house, three feet away. It was gone. Using a heavy flashlight, he found his way to the newspaper office. A Teletype was sending a story from Kansas about a duster people were calling "The great grand daddy of all dust storms." He reached out to find the window of the building, which looked out onto Demrock. He knew the streetlights had to be on, but he could not see a thing. Heavy black sand settled inside the office. This storm McCarty would not praise. There would be no paean to the might and beauty of nature. Just days earlier, in advising his readers to "grab a root and growl" and hang on for better times, McCarty had predicted that the worst was over. Now he readied a page one headline for tomorrow's paper: "SUMMER DAY TURNED INTO NIGHT-MARE."

A woman in southern Dallam County called the newspaper in Amarillo to alert them that the biggest duster of all was rolling south.

"I am sitting in my room and I cannot see the telephone," she said. Inside a blackened room in Pampa, Texas, 110 miles southeast of Dalhart, a twenty-two-year-old itinerate folk singer thought up the first line of a song about the world coming to an end. Woody Guthrie was with several people clustered around a single light bulb; the glow was so weak it looked like the end of a cigarette. For the last two years, Guthrie had been wandering around the Texas Panhandle, doing odd jobs, hopping trains. While working at a root beer stand that sold

corn whiskey under the counter, he'd picked up the guitar during idle times and learned how to strum a few chords. As he watched the Black Sunday duster approach, he thought of the Red Sea closing in on the Israelites.

"This is it," said one of the people in the room, citing Scripture. "The end of the world."

Guthrie started humming. He had the first line of a song, "So Long, It's Been Good to Know Ya."

It took an hour for the Black Sunday duster to travel from the border towns to Amarillo. At 7:20 P.M., the biggest city in the Texas Panhandle went dark, and its 42,000 residents choked on the same thick mass that had begun its roll in the Dakotas, clawing the barren plains, charring the sky in five states, producing enough static electricity to power New York, a fury that has never been duplicated.

Mackenzie Moorhouse

Mr. McFarland

APUSH

March 27, 2014

Correspondence of Themes in "The Grapes of Wrath" with History

"The Grapes of Wrath" was originally a novel written by John Steinbeck and was later turned into a film in 1940. The story follows the Joad family as they make their way from Oklahoma to California after being kicked off of their farmland. They face many hardships on the way, including the deaths of the two eldest in the family Grandma and Grandpa Joad. The movie interpretation not only demonstrates the hardships that the Joads had to endure, but what every Okie family had to endure. The storyline ultimately manages to touch on many themes such as religion and family while also remaining historically accurate throughout.

The families in the movie are forced to experience change as they continue to lose their grip on things from possessions to faith. It is quickly understood that there is a juxtaposition of these two themes and that it is necessary for them to remain in place if survival is key. It is demonstrated through Muley, a man whose name can relate to a mule and therefore be a symbol of stubbornness, that if one does not change after sufficient loss, they will face consequences. Muley ended up going mad after his house was torn down, his land taken from him, and his family moved away. Jim Casey explains to Tom, "Tom, you gotta learn like I'm learnin'. I don't know it right yet myself. That's why I can't be a preacher again. Preachers gotta know. I don't know. I ask." (Steinbeck) meaning Casey realized that he couldn't be a

preacher anymore because he lost his preaching abilities. This is an example of being able to change once you experience loss. The way many Okies experienced loss was from having their house torn down and their land taken away. The change that they underwent to make up for their loss was their migration from Oklahoma to California, or "Over the mountains to the old Peach Bowl" (Talking Dust Bowl Blues, Guthrie). Families did not only lose their houses to the government, though. They also lost them to the Dust Bowl, as seen in Woody Guthrie's "Dust Bowl Blues", "But when the dust gets high, you can't even see the sky... Yes, it turned my farm into a pile of sand, I had to hit that road with a bottle in my hand". The Dust Bowl, was depicted in "The Grapes of Wrath" through dry fields and poor farmers which was a good representation even though some aspects were much worse in reality with dust storms so dense and dark that one elderly man could only describe it as looking like "three midnights in a jug" (Egan 204). One thing that every Okie fought to hold onto was family.

Family strength and bond was the one thing that neither the government nor the Dust Bowl could take away. Yes, members of many families passed, but the survivors managed to join together and stay strong. Even in instances where this family strength seems to falter, for example when Connie leaves his wife Rosa Joad and the Joad family to go survive on his own, the family still manages to stay strong and close knit. In the movie, a gasoline attendant makes the remark, "You and me got sense. Them Okies got no sense and no feeling. They ain't. Human being wouldn't live the way they do. Human being couldn't stand to be so miserable" (Steinbeck). First of all, this quote demonstrates the dehumanization of the Okies

that occurs starting from when they are forced to leave their home and running through their life in California. In the movie the Joads first experience a camp for Okies where whole families are forced to live in tiny shacks and law enforcement tracked their every move. They only start to feel more human once they move on to a federal camp for Okies that has everything from bathhouses to Saturday night dances. Secondly, the man stating this quote does not realize that even the most seemingly inhuman circumstances can be made possible if they are conquered together as a family. Ma Joad explains their strength not only as a family but also as middle class people by saying, "Rich fellas come up an' they die, an' their kids aren't no good an' they die out. But we keep a'comin'. We're the people that live. They can't wipe us out; they can't lick us. We'll go on forever, Pa, 'cause we're the people" (Steinbeck). In "The Worst Hard Time" while the giant storm envelopes the Midwest, a funeral procession is making its way to Texhoma so that Loumiza Lucas could be buried with her husband. The storm comes into view and while some members of the procession argue that they should turn around, other family members argued that it would be disrespectful to the recently deceased grandmother if they turned back on the day of her burial. They stayed put and waited over and hour through the storm so that they could lay their family member to rest. The time of the Dust Bowl and the migration of the Okies from the Midwest to California was a time where someone did not want to be without family, because they could only be strong as a whole. Picture 2 contains many symbols relating both to family and the westward movement. In the foreground a family with members of all ages is seen packing their truck and preparing to move out. It is nighttime, which

symbolizes a darkness and sadness associated with having to move away. The family is clustered into the right side of the picture, which symbolizes their bond and togetherness. In the background to the left there is a man sitting on the front steps of the house. He is the one person in the family, usually an elder, who doesn't want to leave his home because, as Grandpa Joad explained, "It's my dirt! Eh-heh! No good, but it's—it's mine, all mine" (Steinbeck), meaning that even though the soil that they lived and farmed on was ruined by the Dust Bowl (an example of which can be seen in Picture 1), it is still the soil that they grew up on and nourished with their own hands for their entire lives. This person usually puts up a fight like Grandpa did but manages to stay with the family in the end.

Something that establishes itself as a major theme throughout the story is religion. In the movie, Jim Casey is a former preacher who is struggling to understand things. The first two initials of his name can be compared with the Messiah in Christianity, Jesus Christ. Casey sacrifices himself for Tom Joad's sins when he turns himself in for assaulting a police officer when really Tom did it. In this story Casey is the symbol for Jesus Christ. The Dust Bowl brought on a time where religion was both strengthened and weakened. For example in "The Worst Hard Time", on a day so nice that "God had to be in a forgiving mood" (Egan 199), people flocked to a rabbit drive even though "a preacher had warned people they should not club rabbits on the Sabbath, that they would rouse the Lord to anger" (Egan 199). Not only was it the Sabbath, but also it was Palm Sunday, a very holy day and time in the Christian Calendar. For others, love and worship for God strengthened during the Dust Bowl. People went to church and prayed for rain

because “No Man’s Land needed only a couple of good rainstorms and fields would once again be fertile, said a minister in his Sunday sermon” (Egan 199). The Okies who moved to California are a symbol for the biblical event of the Israelites leaving Egypt and going to “the land of milk and honey”. California was a symbol for the promised land and instead of milk and honey offered work and money. Both the Israelites and the Okies come to their land and realize that it was not at all what they expected. For the Okies there were no jobs and children were starving. Something that there was plenty of was police officers

The battle between farmers and the government held its prevalence with Okies during the story. In the beginning the government kicked them off of their land and replaced the sharecroppers with machines, 1 CAT tractor working for every 15 families kicked out. Once in California, the Joad family could not stop in a town very long simply because the law enforcement didn’t want campers everywhere. In the first camp they found, Tom Joad found that he could not go for walks at night and officers watched their every move so that a strike wouldn’t break out once wages were cut in half. A police officer killed Jim Casey and another accidentally shot a woman. The camps run by state government were filled with starving children and symbolized a complete loss of hope among refugees. Only after the Joads leave do they find a camp run by the federal government, which treated them like humans and didn’t allow cops enter the camp and govern everybody’s lives.

Steinbeck and the director of “The Grapes of Wrath” both manage to align the themes in the story with themes and historical events that actually occurred. From

the feeling of loss to the strength of family and religious views, the Joads resemble the typical Okies.