

# ESSENTIAL LENS

ANALYZING PHOTOGRAPHS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



**Disaster and Government Response:  
The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl,  
and the New Deal**

# Disaster and Government Response: The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and the New Deal

*Note: These activities are designed to be interdisciplinary, and will provide opportunities to integrate the social studies and English/language arts curriculum.*

## Standards

### National History Standard (NCHS)

U.S. History Era 8, Standard 1: The causes of the Great Depression and how it affected American society

U.S. History Era 8, Standard 2: How the New Deal addressed the Great Depression, transformed American federalism, and initiated the welfare state

### Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 and 10.2: The ability to use evidence from primary and secondary sources to support opinions in writing and in oral presentations, and summarizing, analyzing and addressing opposing opinions in writing

## Prerequisite Knowledge

- Understand American history up to the United States' significant involvement in World War II (1942).
- Understand the hardships brought about by the drought in the plains of the United States, and the location and ravages of what is referred to as the "Dust Bowl" period in the 1930s.
- Understand the hardships brought about by the economic depression that hit the United States in the 1930s following the stock market crash in 1929.
- Articulate the intentions the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal, and have a general idea about New Deal programs.
- Have a general understanding of the Farm Security Administration, and its efforts to relocate farmers, workers, and sharecroppers to more fertile farmlands.
- Understand that this period marked the emergence of picture magazines and print material where widespread audiences could encounter the photographs.

## Curriculum Snapshot

- 1930s Dust Bowl and the Greenbelt Plan of Roosevelt's New Deal

## Grade Level

High school

## Classroom Connections

U.S. History, Geography, American Literature, English Language Arts, Earth Science



## Introduction

Following the stock market crash in October 1929, the United States was thrown into an economic depression. During the more than 12 years that followed, many plans were developed to assist the economy as well as the plights of the people. President Herbert Hoover believed that minimal government intervention would allow for the country to overcome this “passing incident in our national lives.” His message of patience and self-determination did not bring relief to the economic crisis: about 25 percent of wage-earning workers (more than 15 million Americans) were unemployed in the early 1930s. In 1932, Americans elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt as president, and he pledged a different approach than Hoover. FDR intended to have the federal government intervene in unprecedented ways with a series of stimulus strategies heralded as “the New Deal.” For the rest of the decade, the Roosevelt Administration developed programs under the First New Deal (1933–34) and the Second New Deal (1935–38) and created a new role for government in American life. Today, the success of the programs started as part of the New Deal is still a hotly debated topic. It is not often credited with ending the Depression, but it did provide economic relief for millions of Americans. Today, many New Deal programs are still in place, such as:

- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)
- Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC)
- Federal Housing Administration (FHA)
- Social Security System
- Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

This period in American history provides an opportunity to compare the challenges facing the rural west with the challenges facing the urban east.

In 1936, the U.S. Department of Agriculture oversaw the newly formed Resettlement Administration and the beginning of the “Greenbelt Towns” project. New towns were seen as a solution to the urban blight brought on by the extensive unemployment in larger cities. Greenbelt towns were conceptualized to be constructed outside urban areas, but surrounded by parks and preserved land tracts. Some historians suggest that as many as 3,000 towns were envisioned. This was trimmed to studying 100 cities, and eventually narrowing to 25, and then to spaces near three urban centers: Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Washington, DC. The towns of Greendale, Wisconsin; Greenhills, Ohio; and Greenbelt, Maryland, were literally created out of nothing to provide affordable housing near schools and business. The intention was to relocate urban workers who were struggling during the Depression into these towns.

## Essential Questions

- What constitutes community and home?
- What is the human impact on the environment?
- How is our identity formed by our labor?
- Do jobs and employment define a person?

Also during the 1930s, at the same time as the Depression, the Great Plains region of the United States experienced an extended and destructive drought. The drought had a significant and destructive effect because of policies that reached back for decades. In 1862, the United States Congress passed the Homestead Act, and many Americans from the East moved into the plains to become farmers and ranchers. The farmers replaced the prairie grass with dry land wheat, and the ranchers had their cattle graze on the grass that was not replaced. Over time, with increasing demands for wheat, more farming occurred and damage to the prairie lands began to be long-term and significant. In 1930, a decade-long drought began, and the winds began to create dust storms on the farmed and overgrazed prairies. They literally began to be blown away. Some accounts and photographs record giant clouds of dust that would cover the sky and sun. This dust covered everything and reshaped the terrain. The “Dust Bowl” was a term referring to 19 states in the central and south central United States that felt the brunt of the drought upon land that was mismanaged. Farm families had little choice other than to head west and try to find work. The same Resettlement Administration that was coordinating the Greenbelt Project and attempting to address rural poverty was also overseeing the farm workers and displaced sharecroppers who were forced to leave the stricken prairies of the Dust Bowl in search of work.

This historical era is commonly taught in high school social studies and history courses. The National Center for History in the Schools identifies this period in U.S. History as Era 8, Standard 1 (The causes of the Great Depression and how it affected American society) and Standard 2 (How the New Deal addressed the Great Depression, transformed American federalism, and initiated the welfare state). Related works of literature, such as *The Grapes of Wrath* and other texts, are sometimes used either in a social studies/U.S. history course, or in English language arts or American literature classes.

The photography of the Dust Bowl and Depression era is vast and rich, with images that were often commissioned by the Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration (FSA). FSA Director Roy Stryker approved the commissioning and collecting of more than 270,000 photographs. It was a very specific and focused part of the FSA. FSA photographs “exploited the convention of the documentary style—such as black-and-white prints and uncontrolled lighting—that signified topicality, social concern and social truth” (Stange, 1992, p. 130). These photographs were commissioned from a large group of photographers who worked in rural and urban areas across the country, and were intended to provide the urban and suburban population of America with images that would evoke humanitarian responses to the plight of those facing adversity from the economic and environmental crises of the 1930s.

**In 1930, a decade-long drought began, and the winds began to create dust storms on the farmed and overgrazed prairies.**

This photo collection is not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, it provides several specific photographs and ways to use them in the study of particular topics. This is meant to serve as a model for creating collections of photographs to use with your curriculum. Resources listed in the bibliography at the end of this collection will help you do this.

## Key Learning Targets

### Students will:

- Discuss how the concepts of “home” and “work” were promoted both by the federal government and individuals during the 1930s.
- Identify and analyze the different needs of the country during the 1930s, ranging from migrant farmers to slum neighborhoods in large urban centers.
- Identify and analyze strategies that the federal (United States) government used in response to the economic crisis of the Depression and the agricultural disaster of the Dust Bowl.
- Explain how the Greenbelt Projects came into being, and the underlying philosophy of this project in developing cooperative communities for low-income working families.
- Recognize the role photographs play in helping shape opinion and ideas.
- When shown examples of photographs taken of migrant farmers and displaced workers, explain how an image can be used to present a particular message.

## ACTIVITY 1

### Activating Students' Prior Knowledge

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Ask students what photos or images come to mind when they hear the term “the Dust Bowl.” Have students tell what they have read about it, what they have seen in terms of photographs or movies, and how/where they have heard about the Dust Bowl. As a follow-up, ask them to identify on a map where they think the Dust Bowl was located. This will allow you to get a general assessment of students’ prior knowledge of this era and the location of the Dust Bowl.

Next, ask students to write five words that they think of when hearing about the Great Depression or the 1930s in the United States. Have students share their ideas with a partner, and then have them share them with the class. If common terms or phrases emerge, probe them about where they heard of the Depression and what they know. Ask them to describe any photographs that they have seen that depict the Depression. You might probe them to determine if they were in black and white, what people were wearing, what the expressions on their faces were, what was in the background, what is the setting (urban/city or rural/country), and so on. Collect the cards and read over them for more information on what students know. This could also be turned into a poster and displayed in room, and then students could return to the ideas generated in this exercise and think about how their ideas have changed after they participated in the unit.

## ACTIVITY 2

# Migrant Mother: Selecting the Most Impactful Photograph

### Learning Targets

- I can identify how different elements in a photograph help portray a message to the viewer.
- I can explain how photographs provoke or elicit an emotional response in the viewer.
- I can explain why “Migrant Mother” was distributed across the United States to help build understanding of the plight facing farm workers and to build public support for New Deal programs.
- I can describe the challenges facing farmers, sharecroppers, and migrant workers during the 1930s Dust Bowl.

### Background

The United States federal government documented the Depression and used photographs to reveal the plight of the poor and homeless to the country. As stated earlier, the photography of the Dust Bowl and Depression era is vast and rich, with images that were often commissioned by the Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration (FSA). FSA Director Roy Stryker promoted the collecting of more than 270,000 images that were commissioned from a large group of photographers who worked in rural and urban areas across the country. The images intended to provide the urban and suburban population of America with visual depictions to evoke humanitarian responses to the plight of those facing adversity from the economic and environmental crises of the 1930s. Many images of sharecroppers, displaced farm families, and migrant workers were used by the government to increase public attention.

In 1935, Dorothea Lange, a photographer for the Resettlement Administration (part of Roosevelt’s New Deal) was hired to provide photographs of how the Depression was affecting farmers in the West. Her role was as a documentary photographer, and her images also began to challenge the political forces in favor of and against the New Deal.

One of Lange’s most well-known photos was taken while she photographed migrant farm workers. The picture, titled “Migrant Mother,” was taken in the late winter or early spring of 1936, and captured the plight of a woman named Florence Owens Thompson and her children in Nipomo, California. In 1960 Lange provided the following account of this experience:

### Photographs for This Activity (Appendix, pgs. 28-32)

8014, 8015, 8016, 8017,  
8018

I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. I do not remember how I explained my presence or my camera to her, but I do remember she asked me no questions. I made five exposures, working closer and closer from the same direction. I did not ask her name or her history. She told me her age, that she was thirty-two. She said that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields, and birds that the children killed. She had just sold the tires from her car to buy food. There she sat in that lean-to tent with her children huddled around her, and seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was a sort of equality about it. (Popular Photography, Feb. 1960)  
See References and Further Reading.

We do not know the order in which these photographs were taken, since they are 4" x 5" individual negatives rather than 35mm film strips, which provide a record of the sequence of continuous exposures. However, Lange indicates in the above statement she moved closer as she continued to photograph. If that is true, then we have a good idea of the general order. We do know that one was selected, likely as a joint decision between Lange and representatives of the Resettlement Administration.

While "Migrant Mother" is well known, what is far less known is that Lange took six or seven pictures, five of which still exist. Lange posed Ms. Florence Thompson in different positions and used some of her seven children to create a series of compelling images. She asked Thompson to shift the position of the child in her arms to get the greatest emotional effect. Linda Gordon's biography of Lange describes this as follows:

Lange asked the mother and children to move into several different positions. She began with a mid-distance shot. Then she backed up for one shot, then came closer for others. She moved aside a pile of dirty clothes (she would never embarrass her subjects). She then moved closer yet, focusing on three younger children and sidelining the teenage daughter out of the later pictures altogether...she offered the photographs to the press. The San Francisco News published two of them on March 10, 1936. In response, contributions of \$200,000 poured in for the destitute farmworkers stuck in Nipomo. (Gordon, 2009, p. 237)

~~One was eventually selected to represent this scene to the nation.<sup>1</sup>~~

<sup>1</sup>Florence Thompson's identity came out many years later, as did the fact that she described herself as a "full-blooded Cherokee." Some speculate that if her ethnic background was known in the 1930s, then the picture might never have been distributed. Many years later, in the 1950s, Thompson saw her photograph literally everywhere. It was reproduced in every newspaper, in every magazine, and people starting using it for advertisements. Thompson thought that Dorothea Lange made money off of this photograph, and did not realize that it was owned by the federal government. She wrote a letter to a newspaper. The letter reached Lange, and they were able to interact with each other. Lange had no control over the distribution of this photograph or any of her photographs. Ironically, Lange's photograph did actually come back in a certain way to help Florence Thompson: Thompson cleaned houses near the end of her life, and the trailer-home in which she lived was destroyed by fire. At this point, people knew who she was, and a news article reported the fire. Tens of thousands of dollars were donated for her to rebuild her home after the fire.

## Questions to Consider

- Why did the United States government think photographs would be effective in communicating certain ideas and information about living conditions throughout the United States?
- How do photographs create an emotional reaction or response?
- Who is the audience for Dorothea Lange photographs?
- What position of the children and the mother creates the greatest emotional effect?

## Begin the Activity

Provide students with the five photographs of “Migrant Mother.” (They could be projected or printed.) Brainstorm with the students possible reasons that Dorothea Lange was hired by the Resettlement Administration to create these types of photographs. List these on the board. The list might include reasons such as: to show others to know about the hardships, to document this time in history, to show America to see what was happening with farm workers, or to show people who were struggling economically that others were also struggling.

Ask students to focus their thinking on two main ideas:

1. Lange was hired by the federal government to make known the difficulties of sharecroppers, displaced families, and migrant workers.
2. In the days before the Internet and digital photography, these pictures provided many Americans with their only insight into the setting. In addition, photographers took many pictures in hopes of having one be appropriate for portraying the setting and context they wanted to present to viewers.

Following this introduction about these photographs, have the students examine all five of Lange’s photographs, but do so one at a time. If we try to match Lange’s approach (she took a mid-distance photo, and then came closer), present images in this order: **8015, 8018, 8016, 8017, 8014**

Discuss what message they think is conveyed by each photograph. As you show each photograph, ask students to reflect on what they already said about the previous images. Have them write down the strengths and weaknesses for how each photograph shows the challenges facing sharecroppers, displaced families, and migrant workers in 1936. Prompt students to go beyond simple statements (such as “shows a lot of dirtiness”) and use their prior knowledge about the Dust Bowl to justify their comments (such as “their clothes show the dirt that was always around during the Dust Bowl”).

As students look at each photograph, prompt them to reflect on their reactions of what they see by considering questions such as: Does one image provoke a stronger emotional response than another does? If so, why? What themes or details does Lange retain throughout the sequence of photographs? Do you have a different emotional response when the photograph is of a group versus when it is more of a close-up?

After the students have examined each photograph, place them in groups of three and have each group discuss and then decide on one picture that they would want the federal government to use. Have the groups provide a short paragraph “argument” supporting the selection of this image, and then post the paragraph and the picture in the front of the room.

Lead a brief discussion about common ideas around the selected photographs. Ask questions such as: What are some reasons we all agreed on? What are some

photographic elements we all thought were important?

Show Lange's "Migrant Mother" photograph and announce that this is the one actually selected. Ask students if they can understand why it was selected. Post the "Questions to Consider" from above on the board, and have students explain their answers either to a partner and then to the class, or during a whole-class discussion.

You might want to allow time for the students to say what they think of the image, and to articulate the emotional response it creates. Follow up with questions such as:

- Why we are drawn to this image of a single woman?
- Would it be the same if there were a father figure present?
- Are the ages of the children important?
- Why is it effective that the older child is removed from the frame?
- Why are audiences still drawn to this image today?

### **Alternate Approach:**

Another option for examining these five photographs is to begin with the famous image first, hear reactions from students, and then engage in a discussion about the photo. Then work back by showing the other frames and asking students to reflect back on what they already said, and what they see or do not see in the ensuing images. Whether you follow this approach or the approach described above, it is most effective to discuss the photographs one at a time. Controlling how the photographs are introduced to the students offers them the opportunity to reflect and study more closely.

## ACTIVITY 3

### Creating a Town

#### Learning Targets

- I can explain the reasons that the Greenbelt Project was started.
- I can describe what the Resettlement Administration was and why it oversaw the Greenbelt Project.
- I can describe the physical space of Greenbelt, Maryland, and how it was designed to promote a sense of civic pride, community, and cooperation.
- I can identify important institutions in a community, and explain why these are important for supporting the citizens in a town or city.

#### Background

As the Great Depression reached into the mid-1930s, the Roosevelt Administration continued to roll out New Deal programs. A well-known program was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The Corps was a work relief program, specifically targeting unemployed and unmarried men who were 18 to 25 years old. The CCC was one of the most popular New Deal programs and provided unskilled, manual-labor jobs working on conservation and development of government-owned property. Building bridges, fire towers, and even trails required a lot of skilled labor, and the program helped thousands of CCC young men to obtain and maintain skilled jobs. The men selected were from families who were unemployed and impoverished. The workers were provided with room and board and were paid \$30 a month. Of that amount, they were required to send \$25 home to their families and keep \$5 for personal use.

While helping families needing money, the CCC also led to a national effort to protect and manage the nation's natural resources. Many of the CCC's national projects are still in place in most states, for example national parks like the Crater Lake in Oregon, the Everglades in Florida, and portions of the Grand Canyon. Implicitly, the CCC also led to a greater public awareness and appreciation of the outdoors and the nation's natural resources, and the continued need for a carefully planned, comprehensive national program for the protection and development of natural resources. The CCC legacy website lists the following impact and successes of the Corps:

- They completed projects in 48 states and in Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. More than 2,650 camps operated in all states: California had more than 150. Delaware had three.

#### Photographs for This Activity (Appendix, pgs. 33-37)

8021, 8023, 8024, 8039,  
8040

- CCC enrollees were performing more than 100 kinds of work.
- 505,782 occupied these camps. Other categories, such as officers, supervisors, education advisors, and administrators swelled the total to more than 600,000 persons.
- The group planted nearly 3 billion trees to help reforest America.
- They constructed more than 800 parks nationwide and upgraded most state parks.
- They updated forest-fire-fighting methods, including building 3,470 fire towers, and 97,000 miles of fire roads.<sup>2</sup>

The Greenbelt Towns project was a similar approach to help ease the economic despair from the Depression. Similar to the CCC, the Greenbelt Towns project was popular, considered to be a New Deal success, and still present in America today. Where the CCC was big and spread across America's states and territories, the Greenbelt project focused on the development of three towns. Townspeople were selected not because they were from unemployed families, but because they were from families with low-income jobs who wanted to move out of urban centers and form a brand new community.

This activity focuses on one town from this project: Greenbelt, Maryland. All three towns are still in existence today, and the towns in Wisconsin and Ohio could be examined as extensions to this learning activity. The following excerpts from the Greenbelt Museum website provide a helpful overview of the concept of greenbelt towns:

Rexford Guy Tugwell, a former economics professor at Columbia University developed the "greenbelt town" program for the Resettlement Administration. Tugwell wanted to establish cooperative communities where the built environment would reinforce community spirit and cooperation among its residents. The greenbelt towns combined the best aspects of a rural life: lakes, woods, and open spaces with the best aspects of an urban life: recreational facilities, theaters and shops.

Construction for Greenbelt started in the fall of 1935. Workers arrived at the site before the town plans were completed so the workers started by clearing land for a lake. The homes built for Greenbelt included apartment buildings, row houses, and a few free-standing prefabricated homes. By 1937, 885 units were nearing completion. The Resettlement Administration received more than 5,000 applications from families interested in moving into Greenbelt.

Applicants had to be married couples, earn between \$800 and \$2200 per year, and the husband had to be employed to be considered for residency in the new community. The town was integrated religiously—63 percent were Protestant, 30 percent Roman Catholic, and 7 percent Jewish—but the residents all were white.

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Greenbelt was one of the first publicly funded, planned communities in the United States. Tugwell wanted Greenbelt to be successful. He knew the town would be scrutinized by politicians making sure government funds were being used appropriately. Therefore, Tugwell had Greenbelt's first residents carefully screened. Dr. Wendall Lund, a sociologist/historian was put in charge of choosing Greenbelt's first residents. Each qualified family was interviewed and selected based on their willingness to participate in this new community. The government chose young couples who would embrace the cooperative ideals they were trying to establish. (<http://greenbeltmuseum.org/history>)

The Resettlement Administration had three purposes:

- Provide financial assistance for “marginal farms through small loans, with the addition of technical and education aid programs.”
- Move rural families from unproductive land to more fertile areas.
- Build “suburban towns, providing housing for poor urban dwellers outside city centers, where cheap land made the project economically feasible.”<sup>3</sup>

While the first two purposes fit with the migrant and farm workers adversely affected by the Depression-era Dust Bowl catastrophe, the third purpose led to the greenbelt communities. Rexford Tugwell, the man charged with forming these towns, envisioned that he would go to the outskirts of a large city, “pick up cheap land, build a whole community and entice people into it. Then go back into the cities and tear down the slums and make parks of them” (Tugwell diary notes, 1935).<sup>4</sup> The town of Greenbelt was designed to have central parks and greenways, separation of walking paths from vehicle traffic (including pedestrian underpasses, homes built facing away from streets, and cul-de-sacs), and central stores and meeting places. Greenbelt was not to just be a place, but it was also designed to feel like a neighborhood unit and promote social and economic cooperation. For example, in the first year of its existence, the townspeople formed 35 community organizations (such as Boy Scouts, Men's Athletic Club, Mother's Club, Singles Club, Camera Club, and Girl Scouts). Two thousand workers were employed to build the town, including the creation of a lake, which was dug by hand to allow for employing the maximum number of workers with jobs.

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<sup>2</sup>Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy, [http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC\\_Brief\\_History.html](http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC_Brief_History.html)

<sup>3</sup>Knepper, 2001, p. 14

<sup>4</sup>Knepper, 2001, p. 14

## Questions to Consider

- Why did the federal government decide to build entire towns in the middle of empty fields?
- Is it the role of the government to direct citizens about how to live cooperatively in a community and to oversee the distribution of money earned by local businesses?
- Could a community such as Greenbelt, Maryland, be built near your home? Would you want to live there? Would it thrive and grow?

## Begin the Activity

Have the students take a look at the aerial images of Greenbelt, Maryland, as you tell them that this was a planned community to assist poor workers during the 1930s. Remind students that to be part of this town, people had to agree to living in a planned community. The three guiding principles of Greenbelt were:

1. The physical space promoted community.
2. The townspeople valued being part of a community where they engaged with one another.
3. The economy of the town was built by cooperative businesses that redistributed profits among the town members.

Ask students how aerial photographs function: How can they be used to inspect or survey an area? How do they compare to maps? How do these historical photographs compare to current aerial photos? (You may even bring in a current image of Greenbelt from an online source to compare “then” and “now.”)

View images of the town, and have students consider how to build a community from scratch. Explain to the students that 75 years ago Greenbelt did not exist: it was an empty field.

How it grew into a community allows us to consider what critical elements are needed for a town to survive and the townspeople to thrive. Divide students into groups of two or three and provide the following prompt:

Greenbelt was an experiment in both the physical and social planning that preceded its construction. It provided low-income housing for 885 residences (about 5,700 people). Look again at the aerial photographs, and notice how the homes were grouped in “superblocks,” with walkways that linked the homes to the town center without crossing a major street. Pedestrian and vehicle traffic were intentionally separated. Shops were built to promote a community feel.

- Would you like to be part of this town? Why or why not?
- Greenbelt had limited ethnic and racial diversity. Although the town had a mix of religious faiths—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish—African Americans (and Latinos and Asian Americans) were not deemed eligible. How might ethnic diversity be established in a new town today?
- How should a town give people a sense of belonging or identity? (This is often referred to as “civic identity.”)

- \* How would you lay out a town for low-income families to promote civic identity?
- \* What institutions would you have (schools, hospitals, police departments, government offices, etc.) and why?
- \* What businesses would a town of 5,000 people need?
- Draw a map of an imaginary town that incorporates all of the important features that your group believes should be in a town designed for assisting poor working-class families. Provide a page description of these features of an “ideal town.”

After the students complete their towns, explain that Greenbelt was also unique for its cooperative businesses. The Greenbelt Consumer Services, Inc. was a co-op that operated a grocery store, drug store/pharmacy, variety store, barber shop and beauty parlor, gas station, movie theater, and tobacco store. Co-ops are owned by a group of people (in this case, the townspeople) rather than a private, profit-bearing business. They rely its members to provide some of the labor of running it. Ask students what they think of co-operative businesses. They will likely have questions about this “business model.” Encourage the students to write down their questions for the final step of this activity.

Have the students visit the history page of the official website for Greenbelt: <http://greenbeltmuseum.org/history>.

- How similar is their town to the actual town of Greenbelt? Why are there differences?
- What is their assessment of Greenbelt today? Is it still carrying out its original intent to assist the lives of low-income families?

## ACTIVITY 4

# Maintaining “Home”

### Learning Targets

- I can identify attributes of a home and the importance of this concept in people’s lives.
- I can explain how home is a place where culture and traditions are promoted.
- I can describe how identity is connected to home both today and during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

### Background

Many family and cultural traditions are maintained in homes. The concept of “home” plays an important part in people’s lives. Students will be able to share different traditions that their families recognize in their homes, and these traditions will be varied and diverse. The homes of migrant and displaced workers during the 1930s provide an opportunity to explore two ideas related to homes: 1) families maintained traditions in their homes, and 2) families maintained a physical space as a home, even in economically difficult settings. In photographs of migrant workers we see traditions such as playing musical instruments in the home. We also see that the homes have tablecloths or decorations, even though the family lives in a tent. The consistent message these images give is that, despite people being extensively uprooted and moved because of the Depression or the Dust Bowl, effort and importance once was placed on maintaining a sense of “home” for families.

Makeda Best, a historian of photography at the California College of the Arts, uses the photo titled “Migrant family from Arkansas playing hill-billy songs” by Dorothea Lange to show how a home is maintained and how home traditions are kept, even in a rudimentary tent structure.

Best provides a detailed description of this image that ties home, history, and the plight of the migrant worker together:

The young girl is here with presumably her brothers, they are playing music, they seem engrossed in what they are doing. The girl is dressed nicely, the boys are wearing work clothes, they have muddy boots. If we look at the space, it appears quite cramped, the photographer is only a few feet from the trio — so the composition is compressed. On the left, one of the boys is partially cropped out of the image. In the background we see another large instrument on a shelf. Notice the pattern created by the shadows of the beams of wood used to hold up the tent. If we look at the back of the image, we realize they are seated in a tent, and from the bed the boy sits on and

### Photographs for This Activity (Appendix, pgs. 38-46)

8008, 8030, 8035, 8037,  
8038, 8041, 8045, 8046,  
8047

*NOTE: Handout for this  
Activity (Appendix pg. 47)*

the towel hanging from the beam on the left of the image, it appears they probably live in this tent. If we look at the title, we understand that they are from Arkansas and they are living in some sort of camp in California. From the date, 1939, we know that these are some of the many families who were forced to leave their homes in search of other means to survive and live because of a severe drought that destroyed the region's farm-based economy. We see in this image people trying to carry on their life and their culture, even though they have been uprooted and are living in desperate circumstances.

In addition to the physical aspects of home (the structure, the furniture) and the tangible elements in a home (the traditions, the food), home life creates many emotions. People do not always come from supportive homes, and—at times—homes can be dangerous or abusive. Recognizing all of that, the main focus of this activity is that when the devastation from the Dust Bowl and the Depression hit families, home was one area that gave some stability and social anchors. The Farm Security Administration provided images where the concept of home could be seen to turn public opinion in favor of the progressive federal welfare state the New Deal initiatives were producing.

## Begin the Activity

In this activity, students will consider what makes a home and how this idea is important to people (today and back in time). Provide the handout “Home” (provided in the Appendix, pg. 47) to students. (This information is also provided in the previous background information section.)

*Note: As an alternate to students sharing with the class, have students bring to school images related to their tradition and display them on a poster. This will allow students to “see” the diversity present with classmates and to discover each other’s life stories through this process.*

Explain to students that the homes of migrant and displaced workers during the 1930s were often shacks or tents. Families maintained a physical space as a home, even in economically difficult settings. In photographs of migrant workers, we see traditions such as playing musical instruments in the home. We also see that the homes have tablecloths or decorations, even though the family was living in a tent. The consistent message that these images give is that, despite being extensively uprooted and moved because of the Depression or the Dust Bowl, effort and importance was placed on maintaining a sense of “home” for families.

## Questions to Consider

- Why is home an important concept to people?
- How do photographs create an emotional reaction/response to the idea of home?
- How is a home maintained when people are faced with losing the physical place/structure/location in which they live?

Have students look at picture **8008**, and tell them that music was one way that the idea of a home was kept, even when migrant workers were literally homeless. Have students look at this image and then point out what they see that makes this seem like a home. Students might share their ideas with a partner, and then share with the class. Dr. Best's description in the "background section" above this activity can serve as a guide for students' ideas and thinking with this photograph.

Have students look at images **8030, 8035, 8037, 8038, 8041, 8045, 8046, 8047** and describe the nature of the homes they see. Ask them to explain what they see in each photograph that represents "home."

Have students look at the images, and then engage in a selection process from the following prompt:

The Farm Security Administration (FSA) was a New Deal program that oversaw programs to help sharecroppers, very poor farmers, and migrant workers by moving them from poor farmlands to larger group farms that were more productive. This was expensive and needed the public support of Americans. The FSA hired many photographers to take pictures of impoverished farmers in the 1930s Dust Bowl to help raise awareness of the ravages of the drought in the plains and the Depression, and to build public support for relocating farmers and sharecroppers. These photographers were often sent out with directions and scripts to find and photograph particular images and scenes in order to send a particular message to the American people. Of the following images, which ones do you think would be the best to influence public opinion in favor of this government program?

What types of photographs would have been the most effective at showing the following:

- The plight of the farmer was bleak, and the federal government needed to intervene to help them survive.
- The government placement of farmers from poor farmlands to productive group farms allowed the farmers and sharecroppers to have some semblance of a home.

Select at least two photographs for each, and be ready to explain your selection. Note that these photos will be used again in the next activity: Captions and Photographs.

## ACTIVITY 5

# Captions and Photographs

### Learning Targets

- I can explain how photographs and captions/descriptions of these images can help shape perceptions of reality.
- I can describe how the Farm Securities Administration assigned captions to help build support for New Deal spending, specifically spending for relocating farmers and migrant workers.
- I can recognize the amount of knowledge needed about a photograph to accurately write a caption or description

### Background

The FSA required its photographers to write captions for their photographs. The rule under which they worked was that you were not allowed to take peoples' names, but you were expected to document the place, the time, and the year. Some photographers, such as Dorothea Lange, were compelled by the background and stories of the people in their photographs. Lange wanted her photographs to be seen through the lives of individuals, and wanted the photographs to help tell the story of a sharecropper or a migrant farm worker. As a result, she would have somewhat longer captions describing her photographs.

Linda Gordon, the author of a biography on Lange, suggested that sometimes Lange made what she called "general captions" when she was photographing either a lot of images of one family, or a lot of images of a whole group of people that would be characteristic of the whole. These captions were long and detailed. She did not do it while she was photographing, but would ask people questions about their lives, take some photographs, and then go to her notebook and record all of the background and detail she could recall. Often she would capture what they said verbatim. Some of the famous phrases that are associated with Lange come directly from the people she photographed. For example, "we've been tracted out," came from her interactions from one person in the Dust Bowl, and became part of the caption. In North Carolina, with tobacco workers, Lange wrote one general caption that is a thousand words long. It was four pages and described the process of growing tobacco from the moment of planting all the way through to the moment of drying it in a tobacco shed. Some photographers believe that you get better photographs if you have a completely fresh and untutored eye. Lange, to the contrary, believed that you took better photographs when you really knew a lot about the peoples' lives at work.

The captions that the FSA photographers provided were edited to help direct the viewer to a particular image. See Activity 5 photo captions.

### Photographs for This Activity (Appendix, pgs. 48-51)

8057, 8058, 8059, 8060

### Questions to Consider

- Why do photographers provide a caption for the pictures they take?
- How can background information enhance understanding of a photograph?
- Why is it important to know the context of a photograph (e.g., when it was taken, where it was taken, why the photographer took it, etc.)?

## Begin the Activity

Have the students take the two images they selected for the previous activity (Activity 4: Maintaining Home) and have them think about a caption they might write for each. The photos provided in this activity are examples of captions that provide more details, context, and background, than those from the previous activity (**8057, 8058, 8059, 8060**). This is not something we can do simply, however, without first knowing more information. What questions need to be answered about each photograph to write a caption? For example, if you were to write a new caption for the “Migrant family from Arkansas playing hill-billy songs” photograph, you might ask: Where was this was taken? Who lived in the tent? Who were the children? Who owned the musical instruments?

With a partner, have students identify the key questions they would want answered if they were to provide a caption for each image, and then brainstorm the key words they would use to conduct an online search to find answers to those questions. Have them try to find as much information as they are able about one of the photographs by searching online for answers to the questions. If they are able to find enough information, have them provide a caption for the photograph that would be historically accurate, but also help get the message of the FSA out to the public.

## ACTIVITY 6

# Belongings from Home

### Learning Targets

- I can understand the difficulties facing displaced farmers who had to leave most of their possessions, communities, and way of life behind when they were forced to leave their homes.
- I can analyze photographs and begin to draw conclusions about what items were saved and what items were left when farm-working families had to relocate.
- By identifying which aspects of home were re-created/preserved after being displaced, I can understand what the people valued.

Consider the photographs from this activity of relocated farmers who had to leave much of their old home and life behind when they were moved to a new farm area. Many did not leave by choice, but the drought and failed crops forced them to move away in hopes of more fertile lands. Most had to travel across many of the United States, if not all of the prairie lands, to find any work at all.

### Begin the Activity

The people in these photographs were left with the difficult challenge of deciding what aspects of their home they would take with them and what aspects they would leave behind. Make copies of photographs **8006, 8013, 8032, 8043, 8044, and 8065**, or have them ready to display on a monitor. Students can be in groups looking at all of the six photographs at the same time, or they can be in six groups looking at each photograph one at a time, and rotating until each group has had time with each image. The purpose is to allow students to spend time examining each image and answer questions such as:

- What items do you see in the photographs?
- What is missing or left behind?
- What emotion(s) do you feel from this photograph?

With a partner, have students talk through their thoughts about the following scenario:

Imagine that you had to pack up your personal belongings into a minivan. The van also has to hold your family. You have too little space for all of your belongings. What would you do? How would you begin the process of selecting what to take? List the 10 most important items that you want to take. How similar or different do you think this list is from what a parent might select? What items would you have on a “only if space is available” list?

### Photographs for This Activity (Appendix, pgs. 52-57)

**8006, 8013, 8032, 8043,  
8044, 8065**

This was a very real scenario in the 1930s. Students should know that—on top of limited space—farmers were not often welcomed to come to a new place because they were seen as causing more competition for the already scarce resources available.

## Extension Activities

### 1: Literature Connection: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Related works of literature, such as *Grapes of Wrath* and other texts, are sometimes used in social studies, U.S. history, English language arts, or American literature courses. The following excerpt can be read aloud to the students, and then supplemented and examined with the subsequent activity:

Excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath* (Chapter 5), originally published 1939 (Note: this excerpt will be enough for this activity, but for deeper integration of literature, you are encouraged to read the entire section from the book.)

*And The squatting men looked down again. What do you want us to do? We can't take less share of the crop — we're half starved now. The kids are hungry all the time. We go not clothes, torn an' ragged. If all the neighbors weren't the same, we'd be ashamed to go to meeting. And at last the owner men came to the point. The tenant system won't work, any more. One man on a tractor can take the place of fourteen families. Pay him a wage and take all the crop. We have to do it. We don't like to do it. But the monster's sick. Something's happened to the monster. But you'll kill the land with cotton.*

*We know. We've got to take the cotton quick before the land dies. Then we'll see the land. Lots of families in the East would like to own a piece of land. The tenant men looked up alarmed. But what'll happen to us? How'll we eat? You'll have to get off the land. The plows'll go through the dooryard. And now the squatting men stood up angrily. Grampa took up the land, and he had to kill the Indians and drive them away. And Pa was born here, and he killed weeds and snakes. Then a bad year came and he had to borrow a little money. An' we was born here. There in the door — our children born here. And Pa had to borrow money. The bank owned the land then, but we stayed and we got a little bit of what we raised.*

*We know that — all that. It's not us, it's the bank. A bank isn't like a man. Or an owner with fifty thousand acres, he isn't like a man either. That's the monster.*

Link to longer *The Grapes of Wrath* excerpt, from chapter 5:  
<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/dunnweb/rprnts.grapesofwrath.html>

Following the reading, talk with students about the background of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Why did Steinbeck write it? What was the plot? Ask students to engage with one or more of the following tasks:

- The excerpt discusses “the monster”: What is the monster? What is the monster today?
- Find a picture in the collection that echoes a theme that you identified in this excerpt. How did you identify that theme? Why does the photograph represent that theme?

## 2: Social Studies Connection: Photos, Greenbelts, and Suburbs

Maren Stange’s book *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America 1890–1950*, states that many of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographs showed people who were “shorn of social and cultural vigor and interest, not only by framing and composition but also by text, caption, and graphic arrangements” (Stange, 1992, p. 129). These people became “symbols of life” in the urban centers, the drought-stricken plains, the fledgling greenbelt towns, and in other regions of the country that were either suffering during the Depression or being assisted by the federal government. The Resettlement Administration (RA) began the efforts to relocate struggling urban and rural families to communities and farms that were developed by the federal government. The RA was folded into the Farm Security Administration after about a year. The focus on urban resettlement was shrunk to the Greenbelt towns, and the FSA turned its focus on rural farmers — mainly in the West. Moving farmers into existing communities was met with resistance because resources were short across the nation. Any influx of new people was seen as a drain on already scarce resources. Additionally, the creation by the government of new towns that would be populated with working poor families was perceived by many as being un-American and a distinct move from capitalism to socialism.

With this as background information, have students think about the planned communities that mushroomed after 1945: Levittown, Pennsylvania, and— even more carefully planned along the lines of the greenbelt towns—Reston, Virginia, and Columbia, Maryland. These were created to help with a population “boom” as World War II ended, and land developers saw an opportunity to create a new place to live: the suburbs.

Have students consider the “pros” and “cons” of suburban living.

- What are the advantages of having a town developed by the government and of having a suburb developed by a contractor?
- Why do towns and cities form in the first place? What are students’ conclusions about the creation and development of town and cities?
- What place, if any, does the government have in creating a town today?

### 3: Social Studies Connection: How Photos Were Selected

As mentioned in the introductions of earlier activities, the photographers hired by the FSA were often given scripts and directions to photograph particular groups of people in an effort to correct misconceptions and sway public opinion. The photographers took many photographs that were not shown to the public because they sent a message that was different than was deemed as important. The complexities of social structures had an effect on the selection process. Images were cropped and adjusted. The United States was still largely segregated along racial lines. Historians suggest that 30% to 40% of the images taken by the famous photographer Dorothea Lange were of African Americans, but very few were ever shown to the public.

Gender, and assumptions about family structures and family roles, were also important issues being considered during this period. Photographers paid close attention to how men and women were portrayed and how they were portrayed together. In some cases, men were cut out of family or domestic photographs: a single woman would appeal to middle class viewers, while the presence of an able-bodied man would not create the empathy or compassion that was hoped to be developed by the photographs.

Have students consider why this was the case. Would it be similar or different today?

Additionally, the effects of the Depression were different in rural and urban settings, as well as in the different regions of the United States. The tensions around racial, geographic, gender, and lifestyle lines helped direct the imagery produced by the government-employed photographers. Add to this the emerging use of color photography, and it is easy to imagine the complex decisions that were made when selecting the photographs that would be distributed to the public to help describe the troubles facing the poor, unemployed American in the cities, on the farms, in the West, the East, and the South. If the students can imagine the tensions “pulling” at someone making decisions about which photographs to select, have them consider what criteria they would have created for the selection process. Have them also consider how they could represent all of the citizens in the United States. Encourage them to come up with criteria appropriate for use today, and not to impose their criteria on the people in the 1930s. This should also create a discussion about a theme suggested by the National Council for the Social Studies: “Time, Continuity, and Change.” How have the criteria for selecting photos about people in the United States facing challenges stayed the same since the 1930s? How are they different?

### Essential Lens Video Connections

- Watch *A Closer Look* to learn more about analyzing photographs.
- Watch the *Lives* video to view a middle school teacher conducting a modified activity from this collection, as well as an interview with historian and author Linda Gordon, and photographers Chandra McCormick and Keith Calhoun.

## References and Further Reading

The key photographers for the Farm Securities Administration and the New Deal are listed below. They were each assigned to a different region of the United States so they would record different people, events, and lives. Each also brought his/her own photographic style and documentation to the assignments. Each name can be searched for more information.

- Arthur Rothstein
- Carl Mydans
- Walker Evans
- Ben Shahn
- Russell Lee
- Marion Post Wolcott
- Gordon Parks
- Dorothea Lange
- John Collier
- Edwin Roskam
- Jack Delano

Library of Congress website about the Farm Security Administration  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/fsa.html>

Greenbelt, Maryland, museum website  
<http://greenbeltmuseum.org/history>

Gordon, Linda. *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009.

Knepper, Cathy D. *Greenbelt, Maryland: A Living Legacy of the New Deal*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, 2001.

Stange, Maren. *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America 1890–1950*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Dorothea Lange quote from *Popular Photography*, Feb. 1960  
[http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/128\\_migm.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/128_migm.html)

## Additional Photographic Collections to Support this Topic

Farm Security Administration Images from the Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/>

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsac>

Dorothea Lange Images from the U.S. National Archives

[http://research.archives.gov/search?expression=dorothea+lange&pg\\_](http://research.archives.gov/search?expression=dorothea+lange&pg_)

[src=brief&data-source=archival-descriptions-with-digital-objects](http://research.archives.gov/search?expression=dorothea+lange&pg_src=brief&data-source=archival-descriptions-with-digital-objects)

Lewis Hine Photographs of the Great Depression from the

U.S National Archives

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/sets/72157630406504922/>

# APPENDIX

## Activity 2

**pgs. 28-32**

8014, 8015, 8016, 8017,  
8018

## Activity 3

**pgs. 33-37**

8021, 8023, 8024, 8039,  
8040

## Activity 4

**pgs. 38-46**

8008, 8030, 8035, 8037,  
8038, 8041, 8045, 8046,  
8047

*NOTE: Handout for this  
Activity (Appendix pg. 47)*

## Activity 5

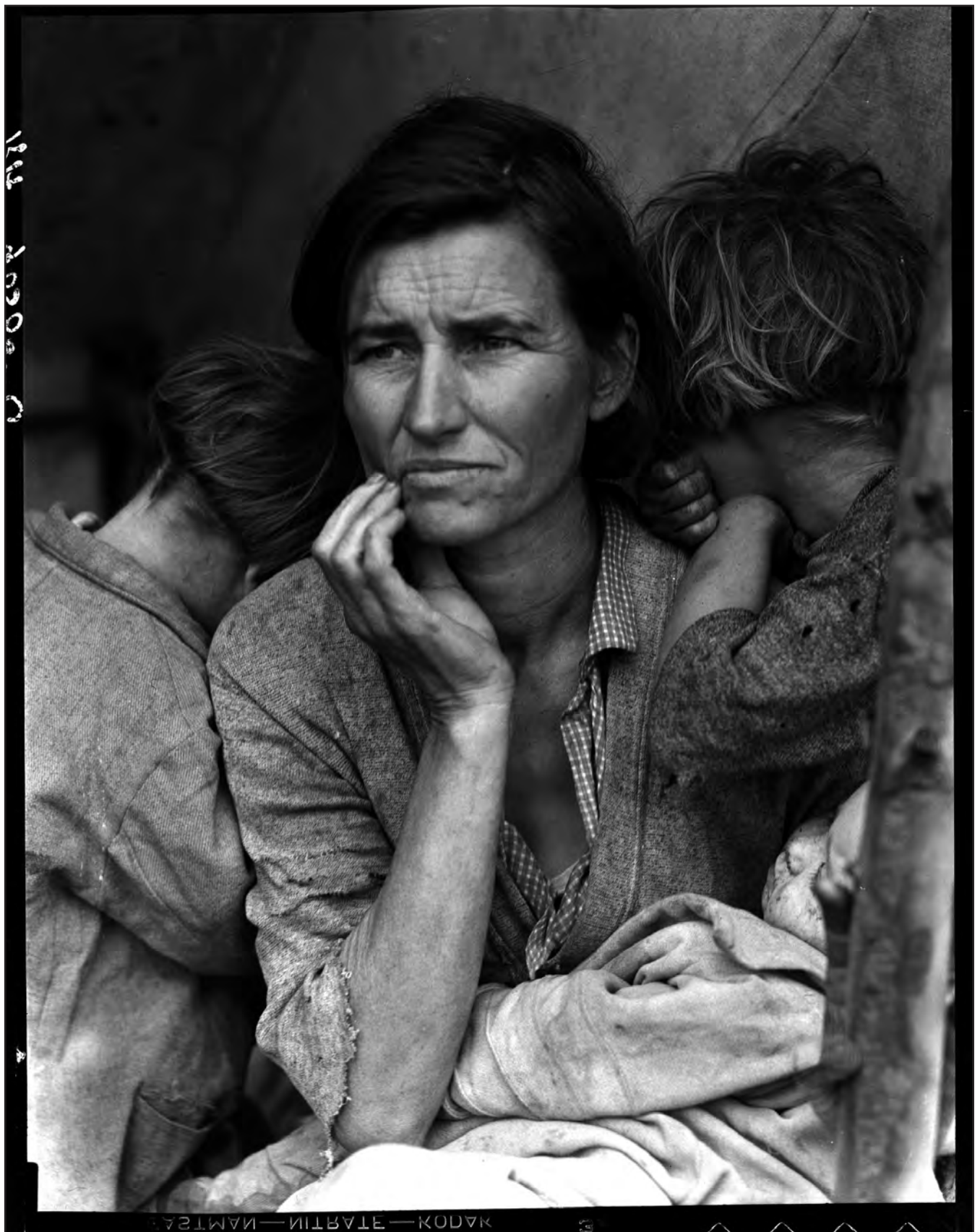
**pgs. 48-51**

8057, 8058, 8059, 8060

## Activity 6

**pgs. 52-57**

8006, 8013, 8032, 8043,  
8044, 8065



**Activity 2 - 8014** - Destitute peapickers in California; a 32 year old mother of seven children. March 1936. Nipomo, California. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-9058-C)

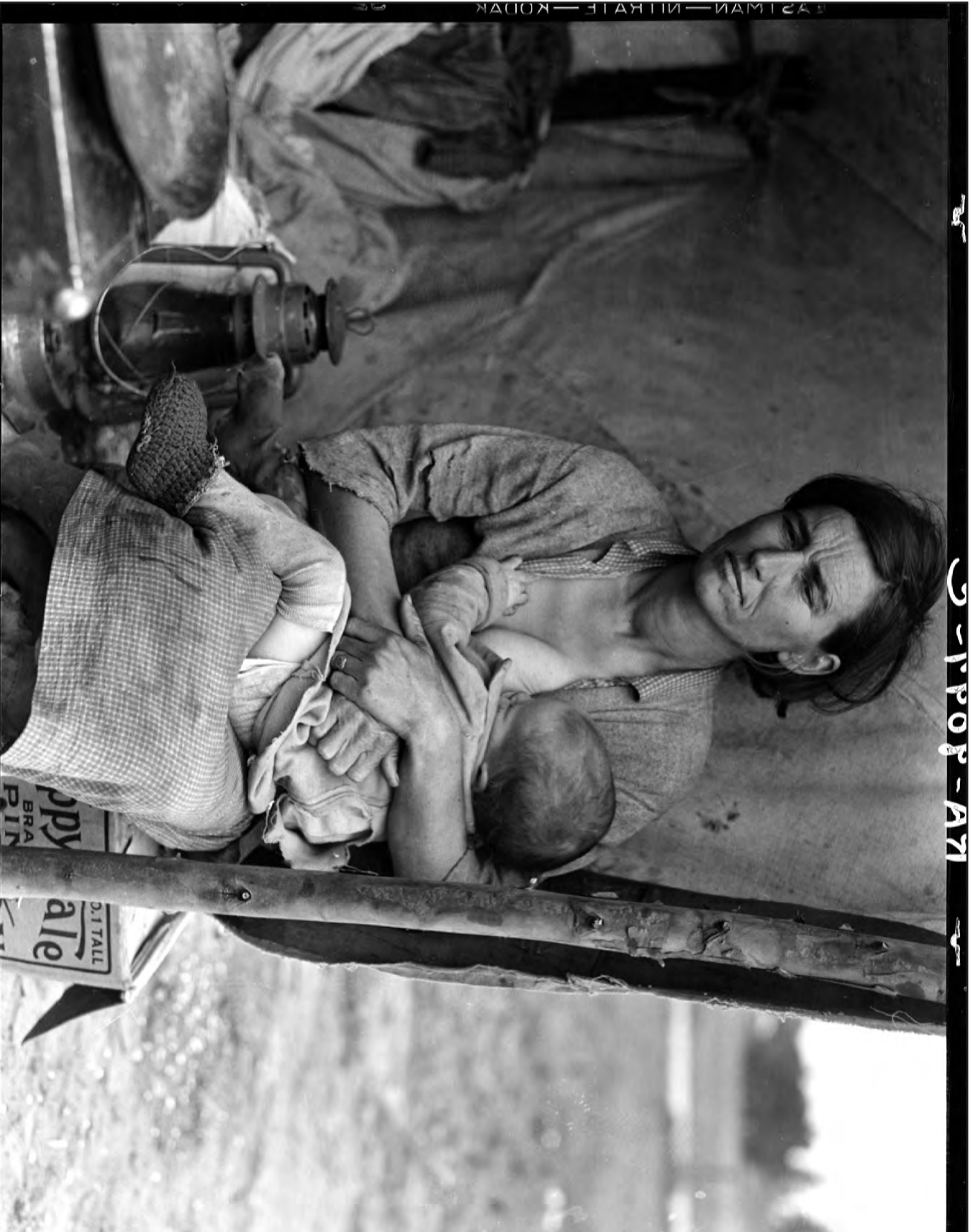
**Activity 2**  
**8015**

Migrant  
agricultural  
worker's family.  
Seven hungry  
children and their  
mother, aged 32.  
The father is a  
native Californian.  
March 1936.  
Nipomo,  
California.  
(Dorothea  
Lange/Library of  
Congress, Prints  
& Photographs  
Division,  
FSA/OWI  
Collection, LC-  
USZ62-58355)



**Activity 2**  
**8016**

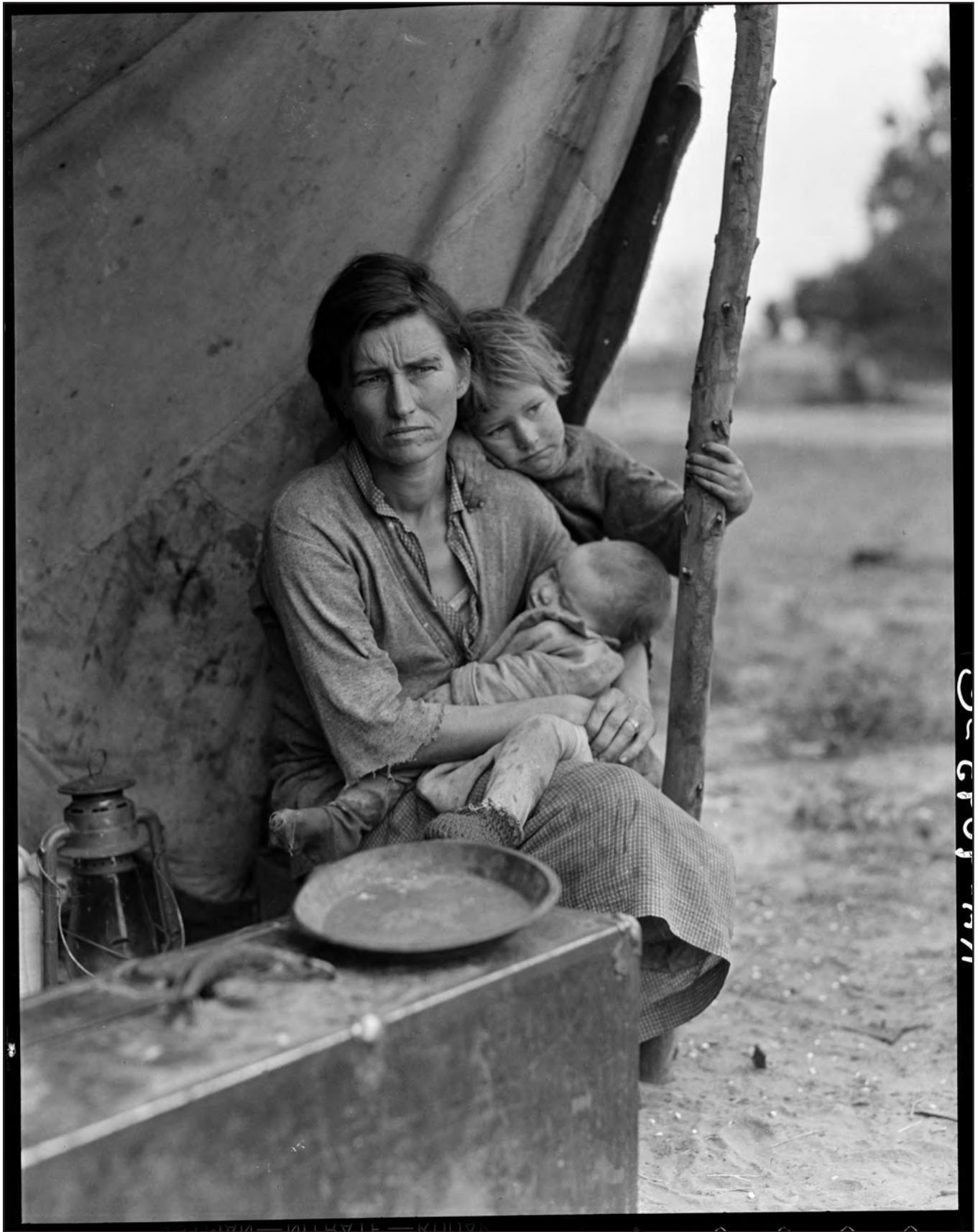
Migrant  
agricultural  
worker's family.  
Seven hungry  
children.  
Mother aged  
32. Father  
is a native  
Californian.  
March 1936.  
Nipomo,  
California.  
(Dorothea  
Lange/Library  
of Congress,  
Prints &  
Photographs  
Division,  
FSA/OWI  
Collection,  
LC-USF34-  
9097-C)



## Activity 2 8017

Migrant agricultural worker's family. Seven hungry children. Mother aged 32, the father is a native Californian. Destitute in a pea pickers 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. March 1936. Nipomo, California.  
(Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-T01-009093-C)





**Activity 2 - 8018** - Migrant agricultural worker's family. Seven children without food. Mother aged 32, father is a native Californian. March 1936. Nipomo, California. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-9095)

**Activity 3**  
**8021**

September  
1939.  
Greenbelt,  
Maryland.  
(Library of  
Congress,  
Prints &  
Photographs  
Division,  
FSA/OWI  
Collection,  
LC-USF344-  
007483-ZB)



Activity 3  
8023

Construction at Greenbelt, Maryland.  
November 1936. (Arthur Rothstein/  
Library of Congress, Prints &  
Photographs Division, FSA/OWI  
Collection, LC-USF34-005632-E)

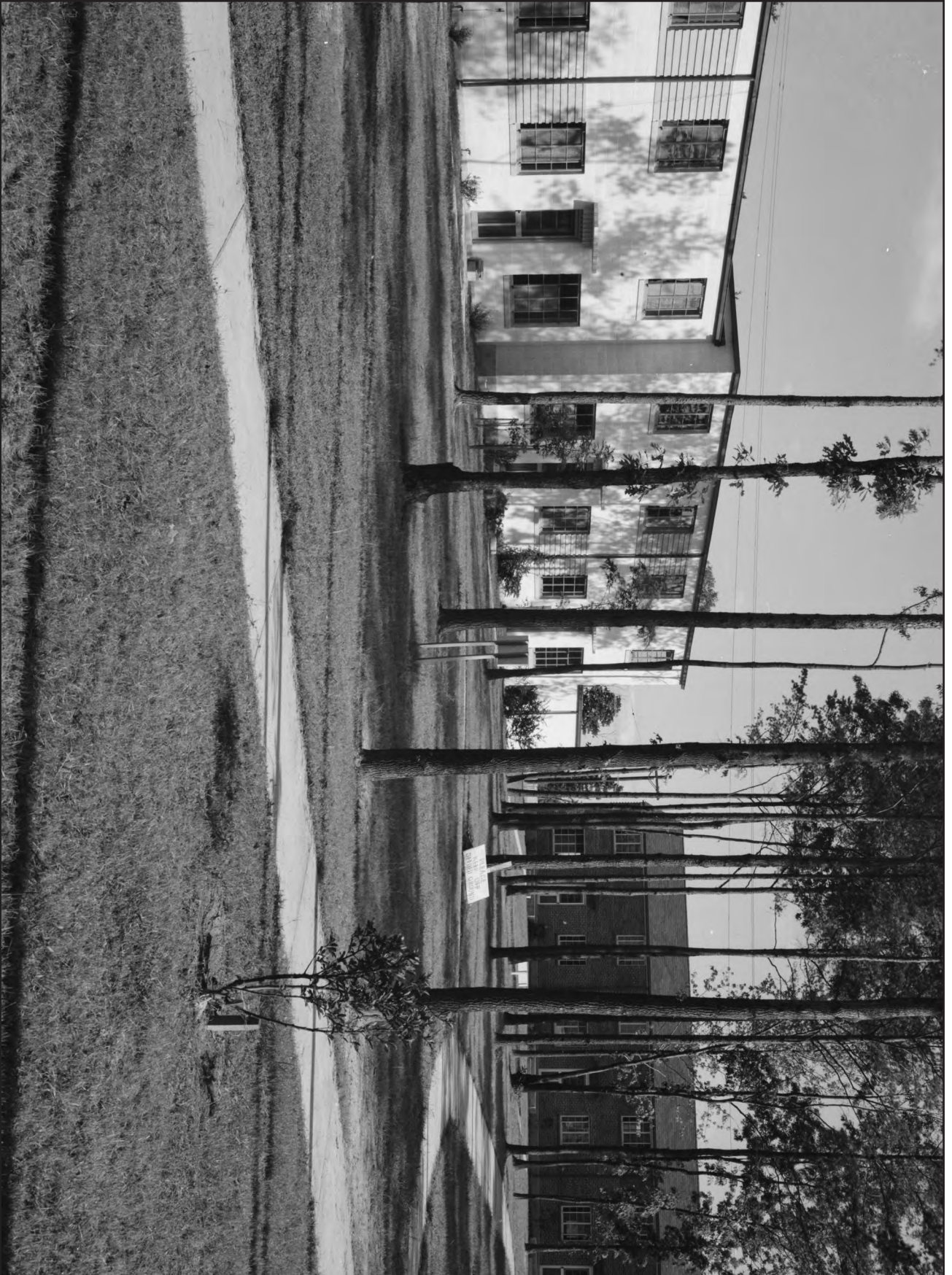


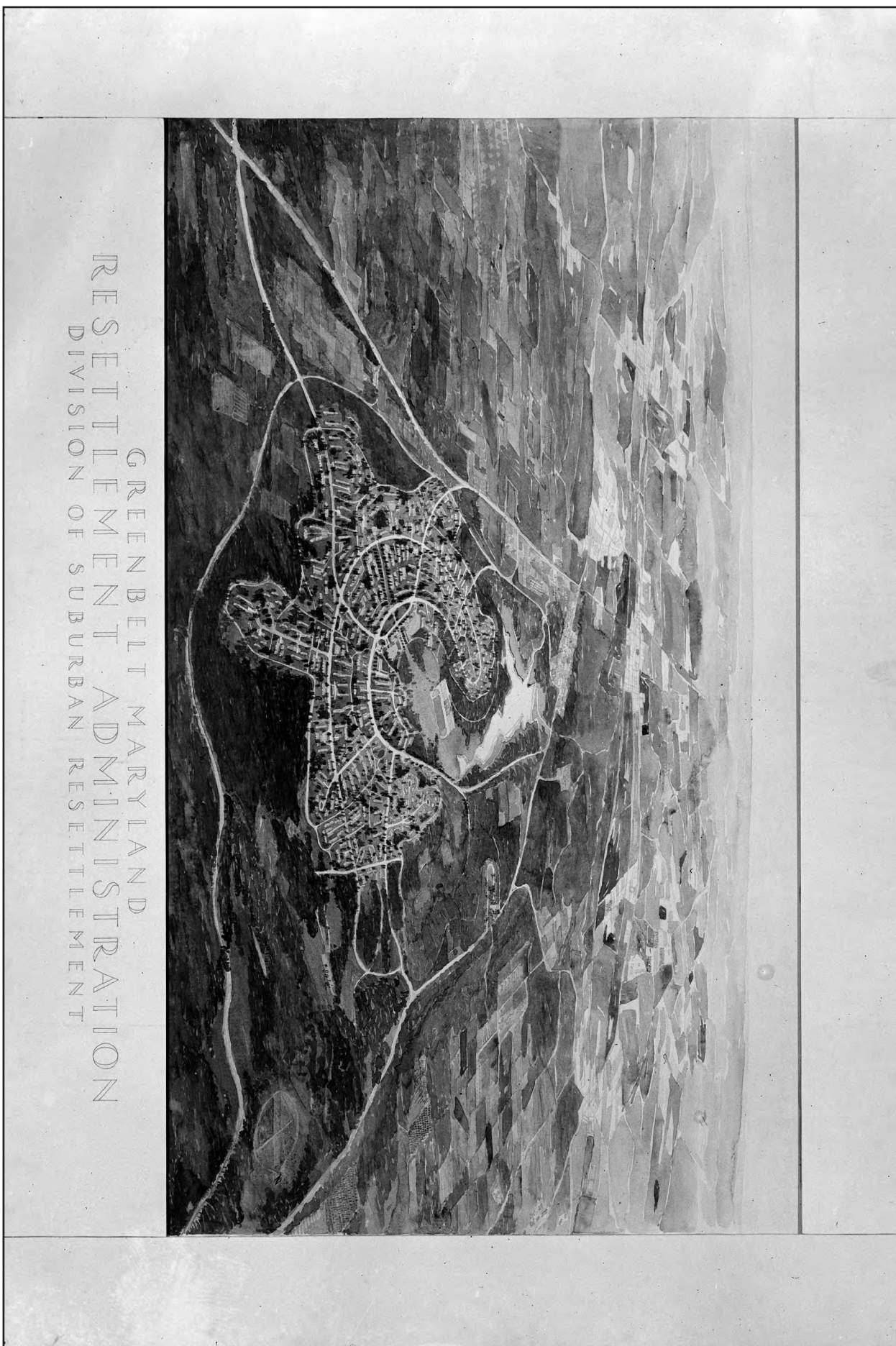
164-2038-E

# WHO WILL LIVE IN GREENBELT TOWNS ?



**Activity 3 - 8024** - Poster by Record Section, Suburban Resettlement Administration. December 1935. (Arthur Rothstein/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-001025-C)







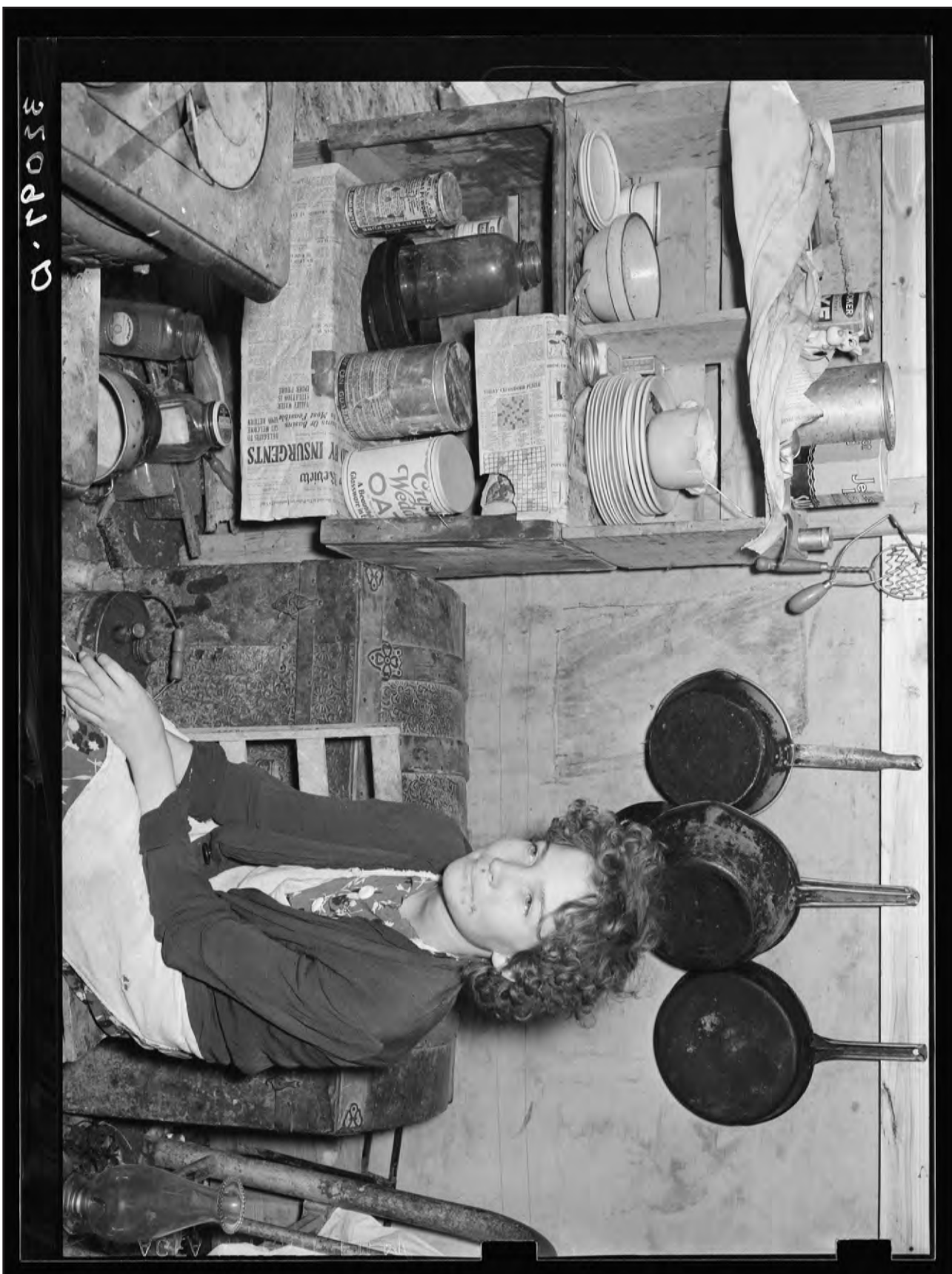
**Activity 4 - 8008** - Migrant family from Arkansas playing hill-billy songs. February 1939. Farm Security Administration emergency migratory camp, Calipatria, California. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-019320-E)



**Activity 4 - 8030** - Farm Security Administration exhibit. 1939. (Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USZ62-122726)



**Activity 4 - 8035** - Tent home of white migrant from Arizona. February 1939. Near Harlingen, Texas. (Russell Lee/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF33-011986-M5)



35081.0

**Activity 4 - 8037** - Daughter of former white labor contractor, now migrant worker, in tent home. February 1939. Westlaco, Texas. (Russell Lee/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-032097-D)

Activity 4  
8038

Son of  
migrant  
family.  
February  
1939, Near  
Harlingen,  
Texas.  
(Russell Lee/  
Library of  
Congress,  
Prints &  
Photographs  
Division,  
FSA/OWI  
Collection,  
LC-USF34-  
032213-D)





**Activity 4 - 8041** - Corner of room of living quarters provided for Negro strawberry pickers. April 1939. Near Independence, Louisiana. (Russell Lee/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-032777-D)



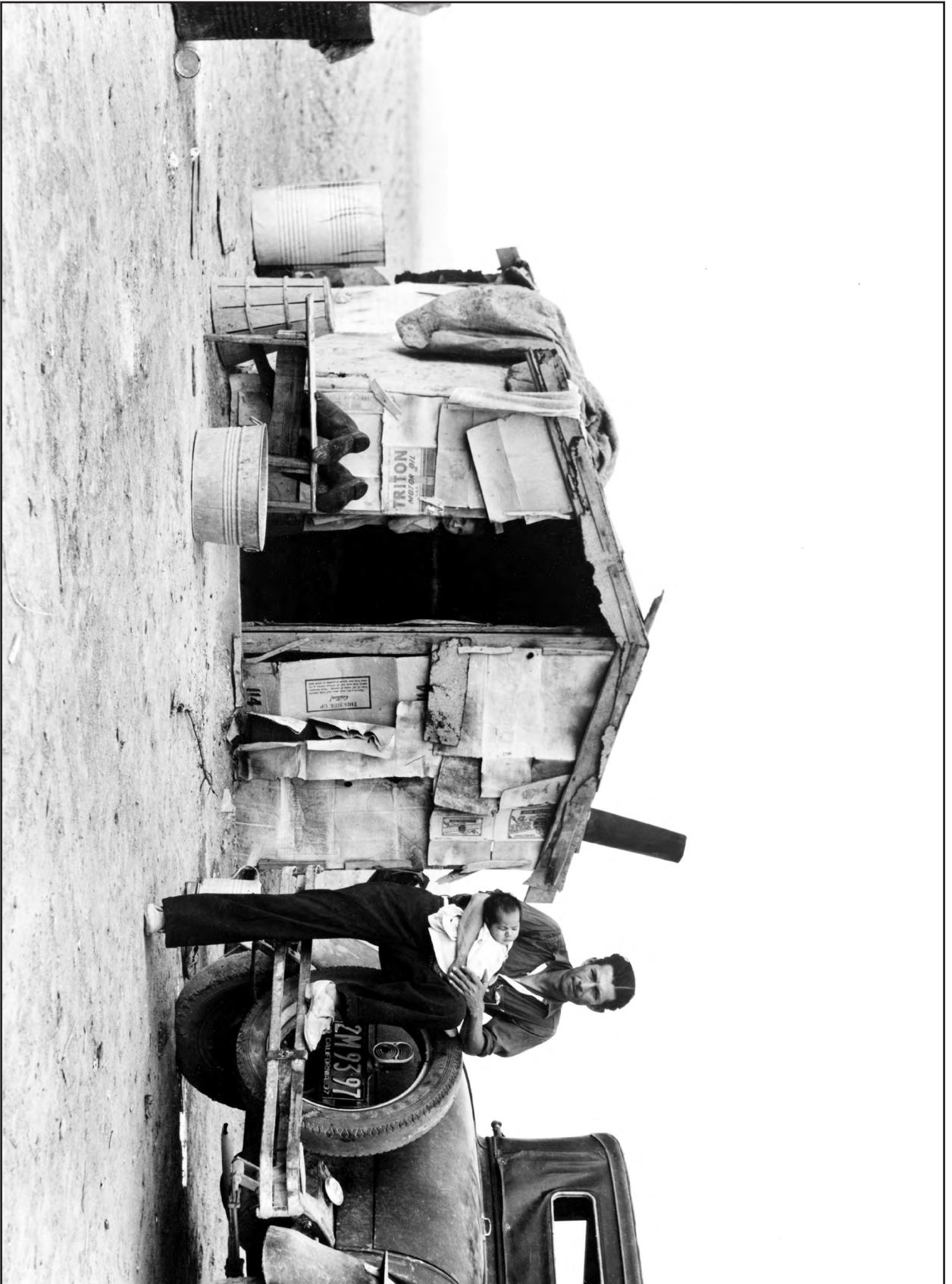
**Activity 4 - 8045** - Mexican woman washing clothes. March 1939. San Antonio, Texas. (Russell Lee/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF33-012069-M5)



**Activity 4 - 8046** - Gabriel Brown and Rochelle French. June 1935. Eatonville, Florida. (Alan Lomax/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-DIG-ppmsc-00372)

**Activity 4**  
**8047**

*Migratory  
Mexican field  
worker's home  
on the edge of a  
frozen pea field.  
Man holding  
baby, behind  
automobile,  
alongside  
of shack.  
March 1937.  
Imperial Valley,  
California.  
(Dorothea  
Lange/Library  
of Congress,  
Prints &  
Photographs  
Division, FSA/  
OWI Collection,  
LC-DIG-fsa-  
8038632)*



## ACTIVITY 4

### “Home” Handout

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Many family and cultural traditions are cultivated and maintained in homes. The idea of “home” plays an important role in people’s lives today and throughout history. What traditions do you have in your family that are followed or carried out in your home? These could be traditions you follow, furniture you have around the house, or even daily routines. Perhaps you have a musical instrument, such as a piano, that someone plays; a special meal that you have on birthdays; or even a routine, such as watching football games on Sunday afternoons. List a couple “home traditions” in your life.

1)

2)

3)

4)

Do these traditions relate to your cultural or religious heritage? Do the traditions relate to your geographic location? How have any of these traditions changed over time or by circumstance?

Be ready to share these with the class, if asked. It’s OK if your traditions are different from others. Traditions will often be varied and diverse because they are unique to each home.

**Activity 5**  
**8057**

Family walking on highway, five children. Started from Idabel, Oklahoma. Bound for Krebs, Oklahoma. Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. In 1936, the father farmed on thirds and fourths at Eagleton, McCurtain County, Oklahoma. Was taken sick with pneumonia and lost farm. Unable to get work on Work Projects Administration and refused county relief in county of fifteen years residence because of temporary residence in another county after his illness. June 1938. Oklahoma. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-018227-C)



3-78181



**Activity 5 - 8058** - Old time professional migratory laborer camping on the outskirts of Perryton, Texas at opening of wheat harvest. With his wife and growing family, he has been on the road since marriage, thirteen years ago. Migrations include ranch land in Texas, cotton and wheat in Texas, cotton and timber in New Mexico, peas and potatoes in Idaho, wheat in Colorado, hops and apples in Yakima Valley, Washington, cotton in Arizona. He wants to buy a little place in Idaho. June 1938. Perryton, Texas. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-018187-E)



**Activity 5 - 8059** - Migratory worker in auto camp. Single man, speaks his mind. "Them WPAs are keeping us from a living. They oughtn' to do it. It ain't fair in no way. The government lays them off (that is in Work Projects Administration — 1939) and they come in because they're locals and take the jobs away from us that never had no forty-four dollars a month. I came out of Pennsylvania, used to be an oil worker. I'm getting along in years now and I seen lots of presidents and lots of systems. Voted for Roosevelt both times and I don't know of any president that ever leaned toward the laboring man like him, but this system they've got here in the fruit is a rotten system the way they work it." August 1939. Yakima Valley, Washington. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-020378-C)



**Activity 5 - 8060** - Depression refugee family from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Arrived in California June 1936. Mother and three half-grown children; no father. "Anybody as wants to work can get by. But if a person loses their faith in the soil like so many of them back there in Oklahoma, then there ain't no hope for them. We're making it all right here, all but for the schooling, 'cause that boy of mine, he wants to go to the University." November 1936. California. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-009871-E)



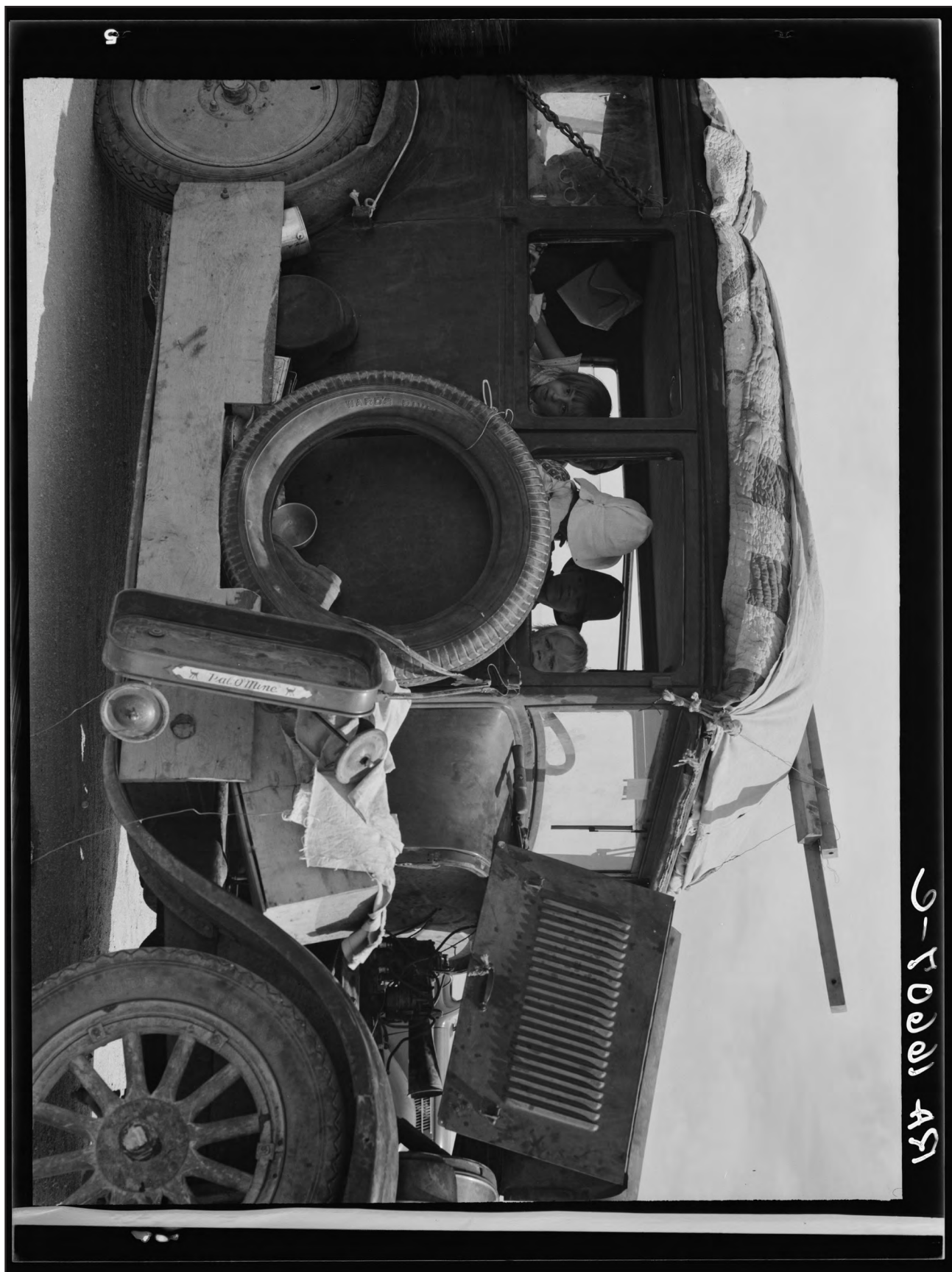
**Activity 6 - 8006** - Getting ready to depart from home in Oklahoma for the trip to California. July 1939. Near Muskogee, Oklahoma. (Russell Lee/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF33-012312-M1)



**Activity 6 - 8013** - Migrant family outfit on U.S. 99 between Bakersfield, California, and the Ridge. February 1939. California. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-019360-E)

**Activity 6**  
**8032**

Migrant drought refugee family stalled on an Arizona highway, between Yuma and Phoenix, on their way to California to work in the harvests. May 1937, Arizona. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-016607-C)



**Activity 6**  
**8043**

Missouri family of five who are seven months from the drought area on U.S. Highway 99. "Broke, baby sick, and car trouble!" February 1937. Tracy (vicinity), California. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-T01-016453-E)





**Activity 6 - 8044** - Migratory family traveling across the desert in search of work in the cotton at Roswell, New Mexico. U.S. Route 70, Arizona. May 1937. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-016718-E)



89-122P-1A9

**Activity 6 - 8065** - Drought refugees from Abilene, Texas, following the crops of California as migratory workers. "The finest people in this world live in Texas but I just can't seem to accomplish nothin' there. Two year drought, then a crop, then two years drought and so on. I got two brothers still trying to make it back there and there they're sitting," said the father. August 1936. California. (Dorothea Lange/Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-DIG-fsa-8b38482)



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