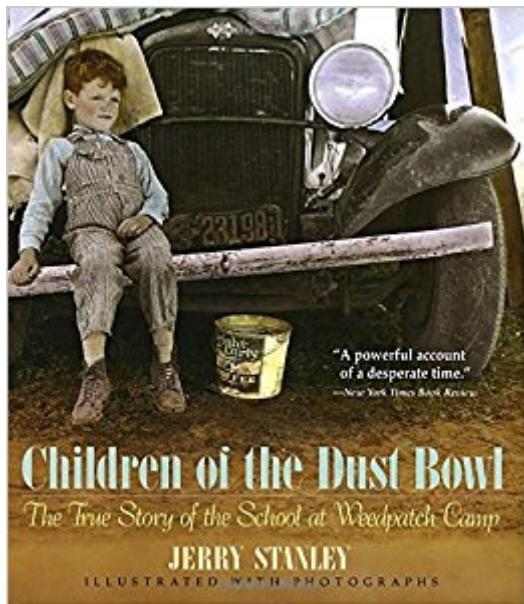


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# Children Of The Dust Bowl: The True Story Of The School At Weedpatch Camp



## **Synopsis**

Illus. with photographs from the Dust Bowl era. This true story took place at the emergency farm-labor camp immortalized in Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath. Ostracized as "dumb Okies," the children of Dust Bowl migrant laborers went without school--until Superintendent Leo Hart and 50 Okie kids built their own school in a nearby field.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 1120L (What's this?)

Paperback: 85 pages

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Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (77 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #42,542 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Emigrants & Immigrants #45 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s #228 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

We don't often think of discrimination being directed against whites in the United States, but that was the case for many "Okies" who migrated to California in the 1920s and 30s. In the community of Weedpatch, CA--a small farm town near Bakersfield--the children of the white migrant farmworkers were not allowed to attend school with the other children in the community. This book tells the story of the man who fought the community and the powers that be in order to start a school for these kids to make sure they got a decent education. His achievements exceeded his ambitions, as the school was a well deserved success. Many of the students went on to greater things, something that would have been hard to imagine before. "Children of the Dust Bowl" was written for kids, but anyone interested in this unique time in our country's history would enjoy it. I had the privilege of being a student of Jerry Stanley's at Cal State Bakersfield, so I am somewhat biased in my praise

for him and his work. This book deserves all of it, though. It is an excellent work in living history and well worth your time

The writing in this book is excellent, flowing evenly from page to page. Many of the photographs within are pure art, having been taken by Russell Lee, Dorothea Lange, and others. These two people are the Pieter Bruegel and Thomas Hart Benton (depicting plain, everyday folk) of American photography. This book relates a small chunk of American history, to be sure, but more than that, it relates universal themes of the human condition. Overall, the book relates the brutal conditions of the dust bowl, the migration over the mountains and desert, taunting and prejudice from settled Californians, and eventual attainment of excellence, as revealed by the construction and maintenance of the Weedpatch School, which eventually became a model school in the community. My 5 1/2 year old enjoyed reading every page, and found particular mirth in the unusual daily chore that the dust bowl children did with their cows. The description of this unusual chore is worth the price of the book. What was this daily chore? One way to find out is to borrow or purchase this book.

Much has been said about this book. All I can say is, "wow" what a book. I shed bittersweet tears as I read this wonderful book. Although I never lived in Weedpatch, I was born in 1935 to migrant Arkies. We lived in the Linnell Camp near Visalia. This story is my life. Oh how I could relate. This book was like a motion picture, that I was in, and I traveled right down the road with it. I don't know if a person could relate if they haven't lived this life, but, I know that this book is so well written and illustrated that surely a person with a heart and caring spirit should be able to follow this book even if they could never imagine the deep down hardships, how the kids and families stuck together, bonded and had a good time. A lot of us could add our names to the long list of Weedpatch kids that became a success; it only takes hope, dreams, a longing for a better tomorrow, and a can do spirit. It is always an added benefit to have a man like Mr. Hart to believe in you. I loved this man and only wish he were still alive so that I could thank him for caring and acting on those cares.

this book is an excellent companion to the historical fiction book "Bud, Not Buddy." By reading aloud sections of Children of the Dustbowl, teachers could build some of the background knowledge that would help children understand how the daily lives of the average person changed as a result of the Great Depression and the 5-year drought in the Midwest. Given the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, this book also offers insight on what can happen when large numbers of people must migrate because of weather-related disasters.

In Jerry Stanley's note to his book The Children of the Dust Bowl, he infers that the usage of "Okie" has two meanings: one being a derogatory term used to abuse, and the other a term associated with a people "determination to accept hardship without showing weakness." This small message epitomizes the mood of his book, as it was the migrants who travelled West in the hopes of arriving to California with a better life, and relates many of the hardships and obstacles they faced along the way. Associated with the author's note is the introduction, which speaks of the publicity and coming to be of John Steinbeck's highly successful yet very controversial novel The Grapes of Wrath, a novel which focuses on one of these Okie families, the Joads, as they make their way amid the prospect of better lives. Stanley gives insight into the reaction from those who were depicted in Steinbeck's novel--those who lived in the southern San Joaquin Valley--as well as those came from the many "Dust Bowl" states. As far as the book itself, it is a testament to this trek west, filled with personal stories and black and white photos depicting the Dust Bowl and its consequences to the southern farmers, the migrant families in their jalopies with all their possessions, their troubles along Mother Road Highway 66 as they head out, the various camps set up for the Okies as they headed west, as well as Weedpatch Camp and school and the activities done there. These pictures capture this era of time during the Depression as well as the story itself. The book concludes with excerpts about the building of Weedpatch School, as well as the adjustments many of the Okies made when they arrived here. Stanley's book is a powerful story, one which localizes the history of those who made the bold trip out to the West. It also serves as a wonderful resource for anyone studying this time period. Recommended!

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