

## Steinbeck's Use of Nonfiction Sources

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### LIFE IN THE CAMP

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

*The Arvin Migratory Labor Camp was the first federally operated camp opened by the FSA... The camps were intended to resolve poor sanitation and public health problems, as well as to mitigate the burden placed on state and local infrastructures. The FSA camps also furnished the migrants with a safe space in which to retire from the discrimination that plagued them and in which to practice their culture and rekindle a sense of community. Although each camp had a small staff of administrators, much of the responsibility for daily operations and governance devolved to the campers themselves. Civil activities were carried out through camp councils and camp courts.*

...When they were not working or looking for work, or tending to the civil and domestic operations of the camp, the migrants found time to engage in recreational activities.

From [\*American Memory: The Migrant Experience\*](#)

#### CUTTINGS FROM THE COLLINS REPORT

From Collins's report of February 29, 1936 [*Note: spelling corrected*]

Dancing is the "big event" for Saturday evenings. We enjoy a 100% turnout for this affair...

The new stage and platform are now the social center for the camp activities. Both will be well used throughout the year. When one looks over the people assembled on the platform during these presentations one is amazed at the neatness of dress of the campers. The woman and girls spend as much time "dolling up" for these assemblies as "city folk done do to go to a high hatting shindig and waste their dough" so said one of our campers

From Collins's report of March 7, 1936

A new arrival this week brought us again to the necessity to demonstrate the use of proper sanitary equipment. The woman was filthy. Had been living on a vacant lot for two months. The results were well worth the effort.

From Collins's report of May 2, 1936

We were discussing with two women how best to cut down on the use of toilet paper in the women's sanitary units.

One suggested sprinkling red pepper through the roll. The other suggested a wire be attached to the roll so that every time a sheet was torn off the big bell placed outside of the building for the purpose would ring and let everyone know who was in the sanitary unit and what she was doing.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THESE CUTTINGS

1. Find one or two brief passages in *The Grapes of Wrath* that relate to each anecdote of life in the migrant camp.
2. In what ways is each passage from *The Grapes of Wrath* similar to its matching passage in the Collins report?
3. In what ways is each passage from *The Grapes of Wrath* different from its matching passage in the Collins report?
4. What label describing how Steinbeck is using each Collins cutting would you apply to each matching passage from *The Grapes of Wrath*?
5. If his use of these anecdotes is typical, would you say Steinbeck accurately portrays life in the camp?