

## Steinbeck's Use of Nonfiction Sources

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

### **Pride and Community Through the FSA camps**

#### *BACKGROUND INFORMATION*

*[The migrants who lived in the Arvin Camp] governed and policed themselves. This was made possible due to the efforts of the camp manager, Tom Collins, to whom John Steinbeck dedicated his book The Grapes of Wrath. Mr. Collins was sympathetic to the plight of the migrants. He did not see them as uneducated dirt farmers. To him they were "colorful relics of the nations rural past." He treated these migrants with care and dignity... The Weedpatch Camp not only provided a safe, clean haven for these migrants, it gave them back their self esteem. As Mrs. Blankenship wrote, "We worked together, we laughed together, and we cried together."*

From [Weedpatch Camp](#), a link from EDSITEment-reviewed the [National Archives](#)

#### CUTTINGS FROM THE COLLINS REPORT

From Tom Collins's report of February 2, 1936

We continue in our efforts to develop the idea of the "good neighbor." The camp is kept spotless at all times. The community center grows in popularity daily ... It makes a great sight nightly... The campers thought by pooling their interests they could collect sufficient funds for chess, checkers, cards, and etc...

From Tom Collins's report of October 17, 1936

So again we have the genuine Good Neighbor. What an improvement over existing relief agencies... There is no breaking down of the morale of the destitute here. The chin is lifted, faith in one's fellow man is restored...

From Tom Collins's report of March 7, 1936, p. 6

...[M]any of the campers, especially the older groups, easily become dependent and we must be ever careful to discourage this. ...as a result of the encouragement of self help and self effort and the use of materials at hand and the securing of other labor than agricultural during the off season WE DO NOT HAVE ONE PERSON AT CAMP ON RELIEF AT THIS TIME.

From Tom Collins's report of May 23, 1936, p. 8

To those of us fortunate to be working with these people, we know our Administration as "Resettlement." To ...the migratory laborers, it is not "Resettlement," it is re-birth, re-living the re-building of hope. ...it is also the rehumanizing of neglected children so long cast adrift on the ditch banks and prairies ...without even the minimum decencies necessary for a healthful living.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THESE CUTTINGS

1. Find one or more brief passages in *The Grapes of Wrath* that show a camp resident expressing pride in the camp or renewed pride in him- or herself.
2. Find one or more brief passages in *The Grapes of Wrath* that show the camp administrator respecting a/the resident(s).
3. Find one or more brief passages that show a resident discussing camp activities in a positive light.
4. How is each passage you cite from *The Grapes of Wrath* similar to and/or different from its matching passage in the Collins report?
5. What label describing how Steinbeck is using each Collins cutting would you apply to each matching passage from *The Grapes of Wrath*?
6. If Steinbeck's portrayal of the effect of the camp on the migrants in your cuttings is typical, would you say Steinbeck does or does not accurately portray the effect of living in the FSA camps for many residents?