Key Words: California, Migrated, Survived, Worked


Topic: Struggles of the “Okies”

- This article focuses on the “Okies” and what they became 40 years later after migration. Just like everyone else they went into politics, construction work, professors, contractors, in general a California (Haslam, 1).

- They were really looked down upon, and an official in Madera once said “The squatter is usually . . , nothing more or less than an idler and a parasite on the body politic of the people surrounding them; They are a burden on the taxpayer and the growers”(Haslam,1). Research showed later on that the once popular idea that Okies came to California because of the states overly liberal welfare program was actually just a myth (Haslam, 1).

- Paul Westmoreland, who is known as “Okie Paul” throughout California stated “To me, Okies are anyone who went through that period like we did, whether they’re from Oklahoma or Illinois or Texas. Okies are anyone who picked that cotton for 506 a hundred pounds, or picked potatoes for 15$ an hour” (Haslam, 1).

- Some California growers circulated ads for labor. The following ad appeared in The Daily Oklahoman on Oct 13, 1937: Cotton Pickers. Several thousand still wanted to arrive here before November 15 the growers paying 85 cents short staple houses or tents free, ideal climate (Haslam, 2).