

Steinbeck's Use of Nonfiction Sources

Student Name _____ Date _____

ORGANIZED OPPOSITION To Government Migrant Camps

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Steinbeck first wrote about organized opposition to the migrant camps in a series of articles for the San Francisco News, later compiled as The Harvest Gypsies. The following excerpts from [Article III](#) can be found on the New Deal Network website.

...such organizations as Associated Farmers, Inc. have as members... officials of banks, publishers of newspapers and politicians... Members of these speculative farm organizations (include) individual absentee owners of great tracts... banks that have acquired land by foreclosure, for example... Bank of America... and incorporated farms having...the usual corporation approach... These farms are invariably run by superintendents whose policies with regard to labor are directed from above... [T]he power of these organizations extends far beyond the governing of their own lands... It is rare in California for a small farmer to be able to plant...without loans from banks and finance companies.... To refuse to obey is to invite foreclosure or a future denial of the necessary crop loan.... [A] few large ranches in California...maintain "model houses" for the workers. These ranches usually charge a rent of \$5 a month for a single-room house and pay 33 1/3 per cent less than the prevailing wage.

CUTTINGS FROM THE COLLINS REPORT

From Collins's report of February 8, 1936

...large growers opposed to the migrants camp program, will continue to use every means to defeat the program. Since they have not been successful in preventing the establishment of the camp here in Kern County, they can use other methods to discourage workers entering the camp.

From Collins's report of February 8, 1936

Mr. Humphreys interrupted: If the government is going to be a Santa Claus and waste the tax payers money, let the government give the money to the farmers who hire labor [to] build their own camps.

Mr. Burkle continued: ...I am a close neighbor of the camp where Mr. Collins is in charge. It is a fine camp. Why knock something you don't know anything about. I think we should be fair about this and—

Mr. Humphreys interrupted: We are fair. We don't want the government camps. We have our own camps...

From Collins's report of September 9, 1936

A small farmer who employed approximately 60 of our residents this week told us he intended to pay the \$1.00 rate until the finance company told him otherwise... The finance company is the hidden hand behind the small farmer and dictates the price for labor.

From Collins's report of September 9, 1936

Rumors are now afloat that the ASSociated (NOTE: Collins's caps) Farmers and the Cotton Finance Control agencies have been circulating through the Valley in an effort to have the larger growers and others to pay a cotton picking scale between \$0.60 + \$0.80.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THESE CUTTINGS

1. Find two or more brief passages in *The Grapes of Wrath* that relate to the methods used by large growers to oppose migrant camps.
2. Find two or more brief passages that relate to the methods used by large growers to pay the migrants less or to work harder for the same pay.
3. In what ways is each the passage from *The Grapes of Wrath* similar to its matching passage in the Collins report?
4. In what ways is each passage from *The Grapes of Wrath* 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*?