

TEACHER'S GUIDE
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MISSION 5: "Up from the Dust"

Aftermath of Dust Storms

While the April 14, 1935, Black Sunday storm was the largest dust storm of the Great Depression, it was certainly not the first or only one to strike the Great Plains. In 1932, there were 14 reported dust storms in the region. By 1933, the number climbed to 38. Dust and dirt became a constant problem that affected many aspects of everyday life in the Dust Bowl. The following oral histories describe the consequences and cleanup process that took place at home after a storm.

Margie Daniels, Hooker, Oklahoma: The next morning you'd still have that dust settling in the air, but there would be the sunshine and all again but then everything would just be covered in dirt. Everything was full of dust. If you were cooking a meal, you'd end up with dust in your food and you would feel it in your teeth. You'd start to eat and when you would drink water or something, you would grit down and you always felt like you had grit between your teeth. You know it felt terrible.

Clella Schmidt, Spearman, Texas: The next day when Mother and my grandmother started cleaning out the house, they were taking the dirt out in buckets full. They were scooping it up onto, ah, ah, wheat scoops, which are pretty good-sized scoops, and carrying it out into the yard.

Imogene Glover, Guymon, Oklahoma: The dust was just like face powder. It was so heavy and thick. It wasn't like sand. It was just real heavy, like face powder. Only it was real dark, almost black.

Source: WGBH Educational Foundation, "American Experience: Surviving the Dust Bowl" Transcript, 1998. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/dustbowl/>

