

Dbq: what caused the dust bowl?

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DBQ: What caused the Dust Bowl? In the 1930's many people were devastated by vast dust storms. Many people suffered from them in Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas and some people even died. In the fiction book *Out of the Dust*, an Oklahoma girl named Billie Jo tells her story on how she survives the Dust Bowl with the loss of her mother. Billie Jo also describes the pain she is going through having her beloved piano destroyed by a dust storm. Lots of people think differently on how the Dust Bowl was caused but I believe it was caused by overproduction, lack of rainfall, and dust storms. As technology evolved during the depression, more crops were being harvested. Farmers bought the newest equipment to gather crops more efficiently. This may sound more profitable, but it wasn't, overproduction led to the prices of crops going down and down. In 1899, 50 million crops were harvested and in 1929, 150 million crops were harvested (doc D) due to the evolution of better farming equipment and less hard labor. With over billions of acres of land taken up by crops, that leaves less space to irrigate the land and to allow moisture to enter the soil. Therefore, resulting in arid fields. In the 1930's there was huge drought in the Great Plains. A decreased amount of precipitation was another main cause of the Dust Bowl. Without precipitation, it is very hard to grow crops. The Great Plains already has a semi-arid climate and without the much need rain, this area turned into a "bowl" of dust. The average precipitation according to John Wesley Powell is 20 inches of rain annually (doc E). As the years pass, the annual rainfall for Dallam County, Texas jumps around (doc E). Sometimes getting as low as 9.78 inches a year (doc E)! I think this problem was a result of the overproduction. You see, without enough space to let the

water irrigate, there will be no way for the water to evaporate out of the ground to continue on with the water cycle. The outcome of this is that the soil becomes parched and it turns into dust. Dust storms are high winds which carry clouds of dust, soil and sand over a large area. In the southern plains, many people suffered from diseases from these clouds of dust. In Nate White's story of the Dust Bowl, he said that as soon as he walked outside, it was as if somebody had blindfolded him (doc A). He said he had bumped into telephone poles, skinned his shins on boxes and cans in the alleyway, and he fell on his knees and crawled to a dim house light (doc A) because the dust was so thick, he was unable to see. These storms were so bad that many people thought it was the end of the world (doc A). These people thought the world was ending because the dust storms occurred year after year (doc A). During the storms, dust rattled against windows and fine powder caked people's lips. The Dust Bowl got its name because many of the worst storms occurred in the Great Plains area in Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and the panhandles of Texas and Oklahoma.