

Name _____



Journey West

The Joad family had always lived in Oklahoma, where they worked hard to grow crops on their farm. But one year, the rain stopped coming. The ground turned dry and cracked, and the crops wouldn't grow. Soon, the Joads and many other families like them could not afford to stay. They heard that California had jobs and food, so they packed their few belongings onto an old truck and set out on a long journey west.

As they drove along Route 66, they saw hundreds of other families just like theirs, also heading to California. Some families had lost their farms because they could not pay their debts. Others had no choice but to leave when the dust storms ruined their land. Everyone was hoping for a fresh start.

The journey was not easy. The Joads slept outside, cooked food over small fires, and sometimes went hungry when there wasn't enough to eat. They met people along the way who warned them that California might not be as wonderful as they hoped. "There are too many workers and not enough jobs," one man told them. "People live in camps, and the work pays very little."

Still, the Joads kept going. When they finally arrived in California, they saw that the man had been right. Instead of finding good jobs and houses, they found crowded camps filled with families just like them. The work was hard, and they were paid so little that they could barely buy food. Many farm owners treated the workers unfairly, knowing they had nowhere else to go.

Even though life in California was difficult, the Joads never gave up. They helped others in the camps, shared what little they had, and supported each other as a family. Ma Joad, the mother, often said, "We keep going because we have each other. We are strong."

The Joad family's story is like that of many migrant workers during the Great Depression. They faced hardship and unfair treatment, but they also showed courage and hope. Their journey reminds us that even in the hardest times, people can find strength in family and kindness.