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Dust Bowl the focus of exhibit, programs at EIU's Booth Library

CHARLESTON "Dust, Drought, and Dreams Gone Dry," a national traveling exhibition about the causes and aftermath of the historic Dust Bowl period, will be on display at Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library through Feb. 26.

The exhibition recalls a tragic period in our history – the drought and dust storms that wreaked havoc on the Great Plains in the 1930s – and explores its environmental and cultural consequences.

It raises several thought-provoking questions: What caused fertile farms to turn to dust? How did people survive? What lessons can we learn?

"The Dust Bowl was one of the worst man-made ecological disasters in American history. We are proud that Booth Library was selected to help make the public more aware of this important era," said Allen Lanham, dean of library services.

"This exhibition delves into the history and geography behind the Dust Bowl, but also provides a human element, through the words of the survivors themselves, we learn what it was like to

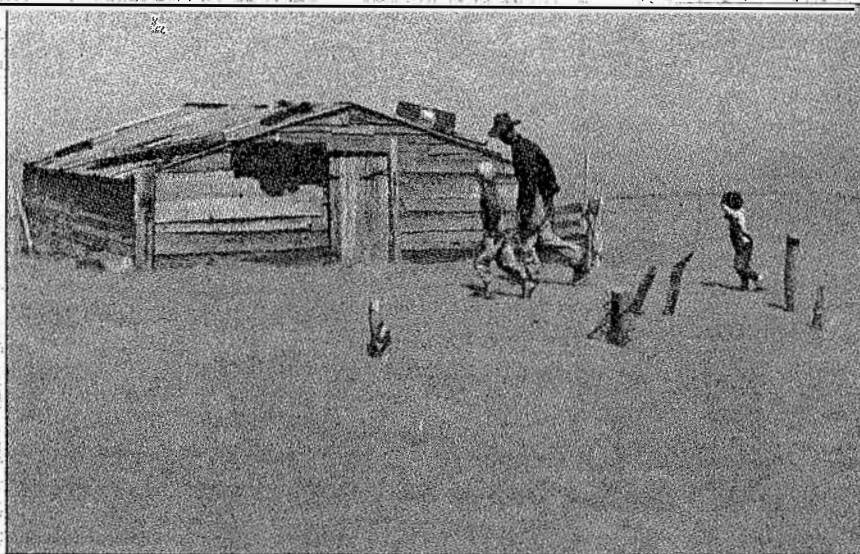


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION
A farmer and his sons walk in the face of a dust storm in Cimarron County, Okla., 1936.

live through such a difficult time."

"Dust, Drought, and Dreams Gone Dry" will be accompanied by a series of free library programs, including lectures and film screenings.

The exhibition and programs feature several overlapping humanities themes: the nature of the connection between humans and nature; the many ways human beings respond to adversity; and how people came to understand and describe their experiences

living through the Dust Bowl.

Lanham invites community members and groups to view the exhibit any time the library is open. More details are available at <http://library.eiu.edu/exhibits/dustbowl/>.

"Dust, Drought and Dreams Gone Dry" was developed by the American Library Association Public Programs Office in collaboration with the libraries of Oklahoma State University and Mount Holyoke College.

The exhibition and tour were made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities' "Exploring the Human Endeavor."

Local sponsors of the series are the Tarble Arts Center, Academy of Life-long Learning and WEIU-TV.

During the spring semester, Booth Library's regular hours will be from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to

1 a.m. Sunday.

For more information on the library, visit the website, www.library.eiu.edu; call 581-6072; or find the library on Facebook or Twitter.

Following is the complete schedule of events. The exhibit and all programs are free and open to the public.

• Jan. 21, 7 p.m., West Reading Room, Booth Library; opening reception/keynote address, "Stinging Dust and Forgotten Lives: The Dust Bowl," by Cameron Craig, professor laureate of geography;

• Jan. 25 and Jan. 26, 7 p.m., Doudna Fine Arts Center Recital Hall; two-part film screening of "The Dust Bowl," Ken Burns documentary, presented by Cameron Craig;

• Feb. 3, 4 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library; "Illinois Plows and Breaking the Plains: Technology, Ecology and Agricultural Production during the 1930s," by Deb Reid, professor of history;

• Feb. 8, 4 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library; "Dust Pneumonia Blues," by Sheila Simons, professor of health

studies;

• Feb. 10, 4 p.m., Doudna Fine Arts Center Lecture Hall; "Dust Bowl Ballads: Woody Guthrie and the Politics of the Working Class," by J.B. Faires, adjunct professor of music;

• Feb. 16, 4:30 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library; "Recapturing the Experiences of Women in the Dust Bowl: The Life and Writings of Caroline Henderson," by Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz, assistant professor of history;

• Feb. 17, 4 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library; "The Politics of Drought in 'The Grapes of Wrath,'" by Robin Murray, professor of English;

• Feb. 18, 4 p.m., Tarble Arts Center Atrium; film screening of "Grapes of Wrath," featuring the work of cinematographer Gregg Toland of Charleston, presented by Kit Morice, curator of education, Tarble Arts Center;

• Feb. 22, 4:30 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library; "Dust Bowl Lessons: Soil Conservation Then and Now," by R.J. Alier, Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District.