

The Farm Security Administration Photography Project:
Human Rights and Government Responsibility Through an Altered Lens

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Group Performance

Senior Division

Process Paper

In keeping with this year's theme, we were initially interested in researching the New Deal, because it ushered in a redefinition of human rights and government responsibility that still has behemoth implications for national policy today. To narrow our topic, we decided to focus on a specific part of the New Deal: the Farm Security Administration's landmark photography project and its relation to the rights of the rural poor in the 1930s, in a nation plagued by economic and ecological disaster. We were fascinated by FSA photographs and by how they supported an increase in government responsibility to protect the rights of Americans to a basic quality of life. The photography angle allowed us to investigate issues surrounding New Deal agricultural initiatives while considering how these initiatives were communicated to the public and whether this communication constituted legitimate documentation.

We began by studying secondary sources, especially books, scholarly articles, and interviews with experts, to gain background knowledge of our topic. Primary source research was also crucial. Our favorite primary sources were interviews with the friends and children of FSA photographers, who provided firsthand knowledge of how the personal qualities and motivations of individual photographers influenced the FSA project holistically. We encountered various primary source documents, including articles, pamphlets, guidebooks for FSA employees, and letters written by rural Americans and government officials alike, at the archives of Yale University, the FDR Presidential Library, and the National Agricultural Library. Some of our most important research took place at the Library of Congress archives, where we sorted through a selection of the more than 272,000 FSA photographs, which were organized in their original filing system.

This is our second year competing in performance, a category we chose because everyone on our team has theater experience. In our performance, we wanted to capture the gripping human story of rural poverty during the lean thirties, while incorporating the viewpoints of various individuals on both sides of the FSA debate: President Roosevelt, Roy Stryker, Dorothea Lange, a migrant mother, and two urban Americans. To dramatize the photography aspect of our topic, we chose to include the migrant mother photograph, the most famous of the project, as a character in our performance. Our set is composed of crates, to remind viewers of the fruit industry that compromised the rights of over 250,000 migrant workers in California, the most famous FSA region. By incorporating facts, quotations, analysis, and a song from the time period, we seek to bring our project to life for an audience.

Our project strongly relates to the theme, “Rights and Responsibilities in History.” FSA photographs made a significant impact at a time when the nation was struggling with new definitions of rights and responsibilities. These photographs took a key role in framing the debate over whether the poor have a right to aid, and whether a government should be allowed or required to take responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. These issues, and the photographs that encapsulate them, remain pertinent today.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

1. Agee, James, and Walker Evans. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men; Three Tenant Families*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960. Print.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men is a highly important book by Agee and FSA photographer Walker Evans that includes Evans' images of the rural poor and Agee's notes. This primary source was helpful in our research of FSA photographs and of the contemporary effort to inform people of the poverty around the country. The book examines all facets of the lives of the rural poor, and portrays their suffering in an emotional manner. The authors' concern for their subjects reflects the concern that the members of the FSA had for the people they represented.

2. Author Illegible. Letter to Edwin Richard Weinerman. 6 Nov. 1946. MS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

We found this handwritten letter while looking through the papers of Edwin Richard Weinerman, who worked with the FSA to improve rural health. This letter asks for an increase in FSA-provided health services in Montana. It conveyed to us some key facts about the cost of medical care to FSA families, as well as general statistics about FSA families in the state of Montana, such as the average increase in net worth of the families since FSA intervention, and living expenditures for the families at beginning and end of a year of FSA aid.

3. Author Unknown. *Proposed Draft of Testimony for Secretary of Agriculture, Two Carbon Copies, One Edited for Typos*. 1 April, 1946. TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

We found this source interesting given the modern debate about healthcare. This discussion of the need for government-provided health care in rural areas (which could be provided by the

FSA) reminded us of current concerns about centralized health care. The scope of government responsibility, greatly increased by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, continues to be a point of contention today. This source supports rural health programs, citing the counterintuitive unhealthiness of rural life as compared with urban life, the dearth of qualified doctors in rural areas, and the predominance of illness or “defect” in farming communities.

4. *The Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act*. 1937. TS. Beinecke Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

At Yale's Beinecke Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts, we had the opportunity to view an original copy of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act that had circulated through government officials involved in agricultural policy. The Act authorized the government to acquire and rehabilitate submarginal land and to help tenant farmers to purchase their own land. Importantly to us, it was a part of the formation of the FSA from its precursor, the Resettlement Administration, and enabled the FSA to expand through increased funding. Reading the details of the act firsthand enabled us to acquire an accurate understanding of the nuances of this controversial piece of legislation.

5. Brown, Harry L., and John Q. Stewart, Letter. " Helping the Small Farmer Progress to This End Made by the Farm Security Program Outlined Concerning National Storms" *New York Times* 22 Apr. 1939. *New York Times Archive*. Web.

This letter to the editor of the New York Times, written in 1939 by Harry Brown, then an Assistant Secretary for the Department of Agriculture, is a critical response to a previous letter, which had expressed concern about the aid given to small farmers. The page exemplifies two facets of the government aid movement: first, the concerned citizen, who realizes that small farmers are the ones who badly need aid, and second, the government actions to help these farmers.

6. Cryder, Clyde L. "Wright Says FSA Is Friend in Need." *Paragould Ark* 1939. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY. Print.

This article offers a ringing endorsement of the FSA, lauding the administration for its success in combatting rural issues and stressing the newfound stability of the farmer. We used this source to develop a conception of the nature of positive arguments about the FSA. However, our research did not show stability and happiness to be as widespread as is suggested here.

7. "Distress on Farms Found to Continue." *New York Times* 2 July 1939. *New York Times Archive*. Web.

This article from a 1939 issue of *The New York Times* discusses the aid given by the FSA in previous years as well as future plans for the administration. It details the reaction to a revolt by sharecroppers in the previous January, and talks about the money spent on aid to remedy the situation. While it delivers a historical narrative, we noted that this article was intended to inspire future support of government initiatives, rather than to merely reflect on past events.

8. Esther. Letter to Edwin Richard Weinerman. circa 1945. MS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

As part of an effort to create guidelines for agencies providing health services to rural Americans, this letter discusses a need to determine a procedure for assessing whether people were using Department of Agriculture medical services and whether they understood these services. This letter introduced us to the key problems facing rural health services, which were not highlighted in public speeches, press releases, and photographs related to the subject.

9. Evans, Walker. *Floyd Burroughs, a Cotton Sharecropper, Hale County, Alabama*. Summer 1936. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph depicts the face of a man who is exhausted, hungry, and poor: a man cheated in life, but still dignified. The man depicted here represents all sharecroppers and tenants worn

down after putting up with an unjust system. This photograph is a good example of how Evans often managed to capture the human face of the Depression.

10. Evans, Walker. *Lucille Burroughs, Daughter of a Cotton Sharecropper. Hale County, Alabama.* 1935 or 1936. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This is one of the more recognizable photographs from the FSA file, as it has been reproduced countless times in historical renderings of the Dust Bowl era. It is also one of our favorite photographs by Evans, as the piercing stare of the young girl portrayed is effective in inspiring a desire to learn more about her story and the story of others like her. Because of the fame of this photograph and the empathy it encourages, we chose to incorporate it into our backdrop.

11. *Farm Tenancy, the Remedy: 20 Questions Asked and Answered.* Resettlement Administration, 1935. Pamphlet. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park NY. Print.

We had the opportunity to read numerous pamphlets such as this one in archives we visited. Pamphlets were among our favorite sources that we consulted, because they gave us a sense of how the government intended New Deal rural initiatives to be perceived by the public, and how photographs were used to create the desired perception. This source focuses on farm tenancy, a crippling issue that, it argues, has serious repercussions for both the health of the national economy and the preservation of human rights.

12. Fischer, John. *Need for a Research Center.* Rep. Circa 1935. TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This report, written by a Resettlement Administration official, asserts the need for a federally funded research center to facilitate systematic study of agricultural issues. Fischer argues that the environmental conditions contributing to rural poverty could be best remedied through scientifically applied principles. The most relevant part of this report is Fischer's belief that fixing the broken agricultural system was too "intricate and expensive for any individual to

handle without the government," perhaps justifying the government taking responsibility for this enormous task.

13. Fischer, John. "The Task of the Farm Security Administration." *The New Democracy* 8 Oct. 1937. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

We were able to read both an archival partial draft with notes and a final draft of this article by FSA official John Fischer, which argues for the necessity of the FSA and seeks to define and defend FSA ideology. Fischer's argument centers on the danger of tenancy, which he refers to as "a creeping economic cancer." He appeals both to the inherent rights of tenants and to the economic interests of the nation.

14. Fischer, John. *Untitled Article Discussing Rexford Tugwell*. Circa 1935.TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This source gave us insight into the personality and motivations of Rexford Tugwell, head of the Resettlement Administration. In an interesting passage, Tugwell's friend compares him to a possum that only becomes angry after children poke it repeatedly with a stick; Tugwell and his work had been criticized incessantly, so it wasn't his fault that he "sometimes snapped back." We classified this as a primary source because it was written about someone involved in our topic by a contemporary who knew him personally.

15. *FSA Fund Authorization Papers*. 1933-1936. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY.

These papers, belonging to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, authorized the appropriation of various funds to the FSA and to its predecessor, the Resettlement Administration. These papers gave us a sense of the scope of the project, and of the surge in funding after the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. We compared the numbers listed in private government papers with those

listed in public speeches and press releases, and noticed that the government often ended up spending far more than it promised.

16. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Dir. John Ford. Prod. Darryl F. Zanuck. Twentieth Century-Fox, 1940.

This original black and white film, based on Steinbeck's novel, gave us an idea of how the difficulties of migrant workers in the western United States were presented to Americans at the time. The film tells the story of the members of the fictional Joad family, who find refuge from their migratory lifestyle in an FSA camp. This source portrays the FSA and government intervention in a positive light, showing the neglect of the rural poor to be nothing less than an abridgment of human rights. We classified this as a primary source because it served to advocate social change during the New Deal era.

17. Guthrie, Woody. *Dust Bowl Refugee (Dust Bowl Ballads)*. Victor Records, 1940. MP3.

An iconic American artist, Guthrie was able to capture American sentiment during a difficult time in the history of the nation. We felt that this song captured the plight of Dust Bowl migrants, left adrift by a cruel economy and by ecological disaster. For this reason, we decided to include it in our performance.

18. Haun, C.C. *Memorandum for FSA for Preparation of Reply for Mr. Roosevelt's Signature*. 10 Nov. 1939. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY.

This memorandum addresses the frustrations of implementing FSA policies in Tennessee. C.C. Haun, minister of Cumberland Homesteads, concedes that the FSA forced contracts onto homesteaders, and that aid recipients showed little desire to carry out these contracts. In addition to being unwilling, they were often unable to comply with the FSA. This letter illuminated some of the issues the FSA was having, which were glossed over in other sources.

19. Haverdly, Frank, FSA Administrator "Farm Security Administration Organizational Chart of Administrative Divisions." 30 May, 1945. Chart. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

This chart of the various administrative divisions of the FSA was from the private collection of Frank Haverdly, an FSA administrator, and included his penciled notes and signature. It gave us a sense of the structure of the organization, and how this structure changed over the lifespan of the administration. We classified this as a primary source because it is an official government document from the time period we researched.

20. *Home in a Government Camp*. 1938. MP3. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This song highlights the gratitude of the singer towards the government. Many such songs were recorded by the FSA as a historical record of the experience of people in migrant camps.

Although we did not choose to highlight this recording in our performance, listening to songs such as this one convinced us that we should present music as a central part of the migrant experience.

21. Lange, Dorothea. *Home of Negro Landowner, Greene Country, Georgia*. 1937. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

No people are visible in this image of the house of a black landowner in the South, which includes a caption by Lange emphasizing the importance of property ownership to the cultivation of a healthy family and lifestyle. This photograph is indicative of two things: the work of the FSA to help blacks own their own land, and Lange's characteristic desire to include a caption that gives insight into the image. The latter is a trend we noticed throughout our research: Lange didn't leave her work open to interpretation.

22. Lange, Dorothea. *Migrant Mother*. 1936. 5 Photographs. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

Lange's photographs of a mother at a California pea picker's camp are among the most recognizable American images. We located these photographs in the original FSA filing system at the Library of Congress archives in Washington DC. These images were central to our project; in fact, we decided to include the migrant mother as a character in our performance.

23. Lange, Dorothea. *Part of a Family on Relief*. 1937. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph encapsulates the misery of the way of life that was a reality for many families in the South. The pain and struggle this family feels on an everyday basis is integrated into the frowns of these two broken women. This photograph resonated with us because of Lange's skillful incorporation of expressive faces and dilapidated surroundings.

24. Lange, Dorothea. *Power Farming Displaces Tenants from the Land in the Western Dry Cotton Area*. 1938. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

This photograph of an abandoned house standing in the middle of a ploughed field is a testament to the massive human displacement that resulted from the industrialization of the agricultural sector. The caption implicates the institution of tenancy in causing many Americans to lead an unstable, dependent life. While it does not feature a human subject, this photograph tells a human story.

25. Lange, Dorothea. *Scenes from the Dust Bowl: A Dustbowl Farm. Coldwater District, North of Dalhart, Texas*. 1937. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

We found this image striking, as it highlights the remoteness of rural areas, as well as the ecological devastation wrought by years of imprudent farming. We chose to paint this

photograph onto our backdrop, because it is impactful and iconic; this particular image potentially captures the message we want our audience to receive.

26. Lee, Russell. *Family of Cajun Farmer Living Near New Iberia, Louisiana*. 1938. Photograph and interview. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

We were interested in this photograph, not because it is particularly visually arresting, but because the accompanying interview underscores the difficulty of rural life. The large family posing in their plain house seems to enjoy a relatively comfortable existence. An excerpt from an interview we found in the file with this photograph contradicts this. The father asks, "What we goin' to do if they keep on cutting us down?"

27. Lee, Russell. *Farmers Squatting on Sidewalk, Caruthersville, Missouri*. August 1938. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

These four farmers squatting on the sidewalk are tired and worn out. Despite the hardworking ethic of the farming class, individuals such as these had little to show for their labor. The juxtaposition of penniless farmers with a shop window full of goods introduces the irony of American economic conditions.

28. Lee, Russell. *Grandfather, Mother, and Children. A Family Living Near Litcher, Louisiana*. 1938. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

This is one of the more famous images we viewed. Each individual in the family captured here looks solemnly away from the camera. We could tell that this image was meant to instill empathy in the viewer, to bridge the gap between relatively comfortable Americans and the poor in remote rural areas.

29. Lee, Russell. *Negro tenant farmer on his front porch, south of Muskogee, Oklahoma*. June 1939. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

Lee's photograph of a black tenant standing in front of a squalid shack spoke to us, because it managed to capture two important FSA arguments: the predominance of racial injustice and the detrimental impact of tenancy. For this reason, we chose to feature this photograph in our performance.

30. Lee, Russell. *Tenant Farmer, near Warner, Oklahoma*. June 1939. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph displays a frowning man covered in a fine layer of dirt. The man's rickety chair and decrepit shack indicate the poverty his region was facing. This photograph is another jarring representation of poverty that was intended as a wake-up call for relatively comfortable Americans.

31. Lee, Russell. *Two Agricultural Day Laborers Eating Dinner after Spending the Morning Chopping Cotton*. June 1939. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

The two agricultural workers shown in this photograph are sharing a meager meal after a long morning of hard work. These two people look emaciated as they shovel down their small portions of beans, which are barely enough to sustain them through the hard labor it will take to provide the next meal. The photograph and accompanying caption are successful in communicating the injustice of rural conditions that stood in the way of basic human subsistence.

32. National Emergency Council. *Report to the President on Economic Conditions in the South*. Rep. 22 June, 1939. TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This report investigates the issue of farm tenancy, a system that was deeply entrenched in the southern economy, to the detriment of the quality of life of many poor southern Americans, both white and black. Although less well known than the photographs of Dust Bowl refugees in the Far West, FSA photographs capturing the injustices of the southern economy and way of life

were an enormous part of the project. While our initial secondary source research was mainly focused on photographs capturing the Dust Bowl and displaced California migrant workers, primary sources such as this one convinced us that FSA work in the South was very important and should be incorporated equally into our performance.

33. "Out in the Open, At Last." *Montgomery Alabama Advertiser* 8 Feb. 1942. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY. Print.

This article discusses a comprehensive investigation of the FSA that was being conducted by opponents of the administration. While this source introduced us to the impediments facing the FSA, it is not pejorative in itself. On the contrary, it delivers an indictment of people who wished to diminish the strength of the FSA. Using emotional language rather than statistical or logical evidence, this article appeals to the conscience of Americans.

34. Partridge, Elizabeth. "Goddaughter of Dorothea Lange." E-mail interview. 6 May 2014.

Photographer Dorothea Lange is an important character in our performance, and we wanted to gain insight into the story behind her photographs. Because Lange herself is no longer alive, we decided to reach out to Partridge, who grew up with Lange and was able to describe her personal qualities and philosophies. Partridge identified Lange as a strong-willed individual whose opinions about poverty, social justice, and photography genuinely informed her iconic images. We classified this as a primary source because Partridge was a witness to Lange's personal character.

35. *The Plow That Broke the Plains*. Dir. Pare Lorentz. Perf. Thomas Hardie Chalmers. *YouTube*. Public.Resource.Org, 1936. Web. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQCwhjWNcH8>>.

We viewed this film because we were interested in projects that were closely linked to the photography project during its nascence under the Resettlement Administration: a few aesthetically and historically significant documentary films seeking to explain ecological disaster

and to justify government intervention. It was also important for us to watch this film because it contains examples of contested photographic realism which continued to be debated into the days of the FSA project, such as Arthur Rothstein's staged skull photograph.

36. "President's Message to Congress on the Budget." *The Evening Star, Washington DC* 8 Jan. 1937. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park, MD. Print.

This article is mainly a printing of the president's message to Congress on the budget, but we cited it as an article because it includes arrangement, selection, and short analysis of quotes that may have transformed the original effect of the address. We discovered that President Roosevelt suggested a substantial increase in funding for agricultural programs, and, while he sought to explain away his across-the-board funding increases, his program did require a sizable tax increase to cover expansion of government responsibility. This source illuminated some of the valid financial concerns about New Deal policies.

37. *Resettlement Administration: Restoring Land for Good Use*. Circa 1934. Pamphlet. FDR Presidential Library Special Collection, Hyde Park, NY. Print.

This pamphlet seeks to combat public complaint that the Resettlement Administration represented an overextension of the government's rightful realm of responsibility. It was interesting not only for its textual content, but also for its use of Resettlement Administration photographs. This was one of many pamphlets that gave us insight into how the photographs commissioned by the Resettlement Administration, and later by the FSA, were used.

38. Residents of Longview Homesteads. Letter to Resettlement Administration. Dec. 1936. MS. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY.

In our effort to contextualize the FSA programs, we looked at primary and secondary sources related to the Resettlement Administration, a precursor to the FSA. This letter from the residents

of a Resettlement Administration Homestead demonstrates the enthusiastic response of these people to administration programs.

39. Robertson, Flora. *Why We Come to Californy*. 1940. MP3. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This song was recorded in an FSA camp, during the later years of the administration. The woman in the recording sings about her experience with the Dust Bowl and why she went to "Californy" in search of a better life. This song communicated to us the factors that influenced the massive westward migration during the Depression era, from the point of view of someone who experienced the migration firsthand.

40. Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Address of the President." Democratic Victory Dinner, 4 Mar. 1937. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park MD. Address.

This impassioned speech, delivered at the Democratic Victory Dinner, demonstrates how strongly Roosevelt felt about his policies of government responsibility. Roosevelt was preaching to the choir, and thus did not need to temper his enthusiasm for New Deal policies during this speech.

41. Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Annual Message of the President of the United States." Joint Session of the Senate and House of Representatives of the US, 6 Jan. 1937. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park, MD. Address.

This speech concedes that the New Deal accords the government "unprecedented activities." It stresses improvements wrought by the New Deal, including economic recovery and improvement in security. One controversial assertion Roosevelt makes is that the deeper purpose of government responsibility is to assist as many of its citizens as possible. We felt that it was important for a team member portraying Roosevelt to express this idea during our presentation.

42. Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Call for Federal Responsibility." Chicago, 1932. Columbia University. First Presidential Campaign Address. Web. <<http://www.columbia.edu/~gjl10/fdr.newdeal.html>>

We read this source towards the beginning of our research process, and it helped us to conceptualize Roosevelt's political ideology and how it would come to inform his legislative policies. We could tell that, even relatively early on in his political career, Roosevelt maintained his strong conviction that a government had a responsibility to provide for the welfare of its citizens. We incorporated a quote from this source into our performance, as we felt it effectively communicated Roosevelt's stance.

43. Roosevelt, Franklin D. Letter to Representative A.J. Elliot, Chairman of the California Delegation on Interstate Migration. 17 Feb. 1939. TS. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY.

This typewritten letter relates to an internal discussion between Department of Agriculture officials about the need to compose a detailed study of the Dust Bowl migration and its impact on rural poverty. Roosevelt expresses his strong sympathy with California because of the large numbers of the economically distressed in that state. This source gave us insight into Roosevelt's personal beliefs on a subject that was prominently featured in our performance.

44. Roosevelt, Franklin D. *Press Release: Efforts to Deal with Drought Conditions*. 14 May 1934. TS. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park, MD.

Because it was clearly intended for publication, this press release from President Franklin D. Roosevelt offered some insight into how drought conditions were presented to the American public by the president. This source supports the idea, heavily endorsed by Democrats at the time, that the ecological disaster plaguing farmers could only be dealt with using the power of the government.

45. Roosevelt, Franklin D. *Press Release: Expanding Responsibility of Government*. 28 June 1934. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park, MD.

Citing the need for social insurance to provide security from the vicissitudes of modern life, this press release about the expanding responsibility of government employs both specific examples and abstract humanitarian ideals to support its compelling argument about the importance of the New Deal. This source also acknowledges and contradicts a major criticism of the New Deal: that increased government responsibility might infringe on the rights of many Americans. As this was an argument we considered while constructing our performance, it was relevant for us to see how it was rebuffed by official government publications.

46. Roosevelt, Franklin D. *Request to Congress*. 9 June, 1934. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park, MD. Address.

As President Roosevelt urged Congress to appropriate 525 million dollars to purchase seed and livestock, construct work camps, provide loans to farmers, and facilitate government acquisition of submarginal land, he firmly asserted his belief that government assistance was necessary to combat crippling drought. This transcript of an address from Roosevelt to Congress encapsulates a central argument that pervades many of the President's statements about New Deal agriculture: it would be unsuccessful and drastically inefficient for individuals to deal with environmental issues themselves, without the aid of the government.

47. Rothstein, Arthur. *Children Playing in a Nursery, Shafter Migrant Camp, Shafter, California*. March 1940. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph shows carefree children playing in a migrant camp. It was clearly intended to highlight the positive aspects of government-run programs. These poor children, the most vulnerable members of society, appear clean and well cared-for.

48. Rothstein, Arthur. *Heavy Black Clouds Rising Over the Texas Panhandle, Texas*. 1936. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

This photograph offers a visual reminder of the horrors accompanying the Dust Bowl. The sky is black with dust billowing up behind a lone car on an empty stretch of road. We could understand, viewing this image, why migrants would have felt that they had no choice but to leave the affected states.

49. Rothstein, Arthur. *Main Street of Small Agricultural Community, Having Population of Seven Hundred in Center of Wheat Raising Area, Fairfield Montana*. May 1939. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph was taken on the main street of a dying farming town in the West. The atmosphere is depressing, with no signs of life evident in the photograph, aside from the occasional car.

50. Rothstein, Arthur. *Skull and Parched Earth in the Badlands*. 1936. 4 photographs. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

We discussed these four photographs in our performance, because they were among the most controversial images in the FSA file. Rothstein was accused of manipulation and propaganda when he moved a cow skull to several different locations to photograph it. Viewing and researching these photographs inspired us to interview Rothstein's son and daughter about the incident and about Rothstein's work with the Resettlement Administration and FSA more generally.

51. "Second Inaugural Address of President Franklin Roosevelt." *Washington Daily News* 20 Jan. 1937. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park, MD. Print.

This article reprints the second inaugural address of the president, and also includes comparisons with other historical inaugural addresses. On the back of what he considered an electoral mandate, President Franklin D. Roosevelt strongly advocated expansion of government responsibility; indeed, he declared, "Irresponsibility is a portent of disaster." This article supports

our claim that Roosevelt wanted to give Americans a right to a basic standard of living, by reprinting Roosevelt's references to the tens of millions of citizens unfairly denied "what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life."

52. Secretary of Agriculture. Letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt. 6 Feb. 1939. Memo of Correspondence. TS. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY.

This letter to President Roosevelt from the Secretary of Agriculture illuminated some of the many issues the FSA had with public perception. This letter discusses protests against the operation of FSA farms in competition with privately owned farms in Crittenden County, Arkansas. It shows that the FSA, one of the most controversial New Deal agencies, received opposition from large-scale farmers who stood to lose money, from urban Americans concerned about the scope of government, and even from poor farmers who felt that assistance injured their pride.

53. Segan, Annie, PhD, and Rob Stoner. "Son and Daughter of Arthur Rothstein." E-mail interview. 19 Feb. 2014.

Segan and Stoner had unique viewpoints as the daughter and son of Arthur Rothstein, the first photographer hired for the FSA project. They staunchly defended their father's work with the FSA, despite the controversy this work garnered. Segan, in particular, was explicit in stating that Rothstein felt that cropping photos and juxtaposing subjects was not photographic fraud, but simply a way to use the medium of photography to convey an accurate message about the state of America. We considered this to be a primary source because Segan and Stoner provided firsthand knowledge of the personal character and opinions of their father, which helped us as we sought to understand how the qualities and motivations of individual photographers influenced the success of the project as a whole.

54. Selby, Lucille. "Granger Homesteaders Thank God, Happy Residents Tell of Old Conditions." *Des Moines Register*, 14 Dec. 1936. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY. Print.

Despite the controversy that plagued the Resettlement Administration and influenced its renaming as the Farm Security Administration, we found several primary sources which demonstrated that many rural Americans benefitted substantially from Resettlement Administration programs. This article is one such source. It elaborates on the positive changes the administration wrought in the lives of the Granger Homesteaders.

55. Shahn, Ben. *Negro Quarter, Natchez, Mississippi. The Home of a Negro Family with a Negro Man and Woman Looking out the Window*. 1935. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

This photograph appealed to us because it is an excellent example of an image that tells a human story. The faces of the man and woman in this picture are expressive. To us, they seemed hopeful and dignified. The caption tells a more negative story about the impact of segregation on the lives of these two individuals and of many Americans like them.

56. Shideler, Ernest H. *A Guide to Assist You in Planning to Meet the Health Needs of FSA Families, to All Indiana FSA Personnel*. February 1946. Pamphlet. Sterling Memorial of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

Rural health was one area of FSA operation that we were particularly curious about. This guide for FSA employees gave us an inside view on how health services were implemented in remote rural areas.

57. Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. New York: Penguin, 2006 (original 1939). Print.

FSA photographs inspired Steinbeck to craft this famous novel, which calls attention to the deplorable conditions faced by Dust Bowl migrants in the Depression era. We were not surprised to find that Steinbeck, a loyal New Deal democrat, portrays the FSA in a very positive

light: the impoverished American family in his novel finds one of their only places of refuge in an FSA camp. We cited this book as a primary source because it drew attention to FSA photographs and policies and ignited public opinion, positive and negative.

58. Sterling, Philip. "Following 'The River'" *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 1938. *New York Times Archive*. Web.

This article, written in 1939, details the history and contemporary state of the U.S. Film Service. By 1939, the Film Service had been part of the Office of Education under both the Resettlement Administration and FSA. Along with the Information Division's photography project, films such as "The River" and "The Plow That Broke the Plains" were vital to gaining public support for the RA and FSA.

59. Stryker, Roy Emerson, and Nancy C. Wood. *In This Proud Land: America, 1935-1943, as Seen in the FSA Photographs*. New York: Galahad, 1973. Print.

We considered this book to be a primary source, because Roy Stryker, who led the Information Division of the FSA, selected and arranged the photographs within. Looking through the photographs Stryker chose to include, and reading his essay on these photographs, gave us insight into his personal preferences as well as into how he viewed the project in hindsight.

60. Taeuber, Conrad, Rachel Rowe, and United States Department of Agriculture Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Farm Security Administration Cooperating. *Five Hundred Families Rehabilitate Themselves: Summarized from the Annual Reports of Twenty-Two FSA Farm and Home Administrators*. Rep. February 1941. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

This report was intended to present the FSA in a positive light to an unconvinced public. The report discusses the success stories of poor farm families who "rehabilitated themselves" and incorporates carefully chosen FSA photographs. By presenting the FSA as an organization

determined to help farmers help themselves, this pamphlet tries to combat negative public opinion that the government was overstepping its responsibility.

61. *Tent Housing for Migrant Workers Provided by the Farm Security Administration, Pahokee, Florida*. State Archives of Florida, *Florida Memory*. Web. Accessed 13 June 2014.

<<http://floridamemory.com/items/show/28562>.>

By enabling us to see what an FSA camp would have looked like, this photograph provided a crucial complement to our research of such camps and of the controversy they generated. We could understand, after viewing this photograph, why opponents branded those involved in the FSA “Communist sympathizers”. However, we could also see that free, clean housing such as the tents portrayed here would have been preferable to ditch-bank roadside camps for impoverished migrant workers.

62. Thompkins, WM J, Recorder of Deeds, President of the National Colored Democratic Association. Letter to Julian Friant, USDA. 30 Aug. 1934. MS. National Agricultural Library Special Collections, College Park, MD.

This letter and accompanying booklet sent to President Franklin D. Roosevelt summarizes the positive effects of New Deal programs and extols the virtues of Roosevelt’s expansions of government responsibility into a variety of spheres. The text supports our assessment that Roosevelt and his supporters advocated new rights for all Americans: rights to security and to a basic living standard. Equally interesting was a section encouraging colored Americans to throw their firm support behind the Democratic party, and detailing the efforts of Roosevelt to involve colored men and women in the new rights he advocated.

63. Training Division of the United States Department of Agriculture. *Conducting FSA Meetings That Lead to Action: Guide and Sourcebook*. July 1, 1946. Pamphlet. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

Before we consulted this guide, we were unaware of the procedures and components that went into meetings with FSA aid recipients. This source underscores the government's effort to involve farmers in the process of their own rehabilitation. We learned that the goal of meetings was to help farmers help themselves: to discuss their needs and options and educate them about proper farming practices.

64. Tugwell, Rexford. "Behind the Farm Problem: Rural Poverty." *New York Times Magazine* 10 Jan. 1937. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

We found this article to be of particular interest because it exposes the opinions of Rexford Tugwell. As the initial leader of the Resettlement Administration, which became the FSA after two years, Tugwell was well qualified to discuss the pressing issues facing the rural sector. This article gave us an idea about the ideology of an influential leader of rural programs.

65. Turner, HA, Assistant Agricultural Economist. *A Graphic Summary of Farm Tenure Based Largely on the Census of 1930 and 1935*. USDA Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1936. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY.

This statistical analysis of farm tenure describes the unwanted consequences of a flawed and unjust system that plagued farmers in the South. The juxtaposition of textual content with photographs specifically chosen from the Resettlement Administration file helped us to understand in what context Americans would have viewed these photographs at the time of the Depression. This was crucial as we developed an understanding of the full impact of the photography project.

66. United States Department of Agriculture. *Annual Report of the Farm Security Administration*. Rep. 1944-1946. TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Examining reports like this one, which came from the private papers of FSA and Department of Agriculture officials, gave us an inside view on the strengths and weaknesses of the FSA. This report shows the enormous expenditures involved in carrying out FSA initiatives, but tries to frame the programs in a positive light and to appeal to the need for government-driven reform in rural areas.

67. United States Department of Agriculture. *Emblem of the Farm Security Administration*. 1937. Logo. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This black and white emblem is reminiscent of the stark bureaucratic structure of governmental administrations. We included this emblem in our performance, to remind our audience of the government's role in the FSA photography project: ultimately, the aesthetically and historically valuable documentary project was rooted in the policies of the Department of Agriculture during the New Deal.

68. United States Department of Agriculture. *Family Appraisal and Record of Progress*. circa 1935. Blank forms. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

These blank forms, which belonged to a Department of Agriculture Regional Administrator, were to be filled out periodically for each family being aided by the FSA. We were interested to see what criteria were considered to denote progress or stagnation for these families. Some categories included income, expenditures, indebtedness, health, and even education. We could see that the FSA wanted to take a holistic approach in these evaluations, considering many aspects that would together contribute to quality of life for the family involved.

69. United States Department of Agriculture. *Farm Security Administration Informational Pamphlet*. 1941. Pamphlet. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

This source was particularly relevant to our research because it contains a plethora of FSA photographs. We were able to get a sense of what types of photographs were selected for publication later in the project. Additional research corroborated our perception that, in response to criticism, later FSA publications showed some positive images of American life, rather than simply documenting the abuse and neglect of poor farmers and the failure of American economic and agricultural systems.

70. United States Department of Agriculture. *How to Create an Integrated Information System*. circa 1938. TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

We cited this document, sent to numerous Department of Agriculture officials, because it articulates the importance of the FSA's photography project and encourages the expansion of the project. Asserting that, "Our most neglected asset is our picture file," this memorandum suggests having Regional Information Advisors visit Washington once a year to familiarize themselves with the picture file, and modifying regulations to facilitate the expansion of field photography.

71. United States Department of Agriculture. *Handbook for Farm Security Administration Committeemen*. August 1945. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT. Print.

Like other handbooks intended for use by Department of Agriculture employees, this informative source revealed the expectations for FSA personnel. Viewing this handbook gave us access to the internal workings of the FSA in various regions of operation. It showed us the roles various employees were expected to fill and the forms of aid that could be offered to farmers.

72. United States Department of Agriculture. *The Relation of the Farm Security Administration to Other Agencies, Carbon Copy*. N.d. TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This report asserts the need for the FSA to achieve cooperation with other New Deal agencies, and evaluates the extent of the cooperation already in existence. Importantly, it concedes that the public was hostile to the FSA, and mentions mobilization of public opinion as an important goal. We learned from additional research that the photography project was intended as a major step towards this goal.

73. "United States Map, Different FSA Regions Color-Coded in Colored Pencil." circa 1946. MS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This image gave us information on how the FSA was divided into regional initiatives. A color-coding system, added in colored pencil by FSA official John Fischer, divulged the most important problems Fischer identified in each region. These problems were related to economy, ecology, and human rights.

74. Vachon, John. *Mr. and Mrs. Byson, Aged Rehabilitation Borrowers, St. Mary's County, Maryland*. 1940. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph depicts an elderly black couple standing proudly in front of their shack with big smiles on their faces. The accompanying caption implies that government programs have enabled this couple to own their own home. This photograph presents the FSA's stance on racial and economic issues.

75. Vachon, John. *Shoeshine Boy*. December 1940. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph shows a glum-looking young boy, having a hard time trying to earn money through shoe shining to supplement his family's income. The photo allows the viewer to understand the struggles of this defeated child. This picture is a good example of the conditions many children faced in the South.

76. "Various Letters, to and from Franklin D. Roosevelt; Governor Earle of PA; Marvin McIntyre, Assistant Secretary of the President; Joseph Guffrey, US Senate." 1936. MS. FDR Presidential Library Special Collections, Hyde Park, NY.

We viewed this assortment of correspondences discussing federal land purchase in Pennsylvania as part of our research related to the Resettlement Administration. Because government officials wrote these letters, these sources support the government's argument that purchasing land neither overstepped the government's responsibilities nor interfered with the rights of any individuals.. We could tell from these letters that the resettlement program was mired in controversy.

77. Wallace, Henry A., Secretary of Agriculture. *Press Release on the Topic of Rural Relief Needs*. United States Department of Agriculture, Jan. 11, 1938. TS. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This press relief details the needs of the rural poor, and makes an argument for why these needs must be filled by the government. The New Deal represented the first time in American history that serious efforts were made to define rural poverty and to raise awareness of rural issues. Many Americans had been operating under a misconception that poor farm families chose to live a simple life and didn't need modern amenities. This press release represents part of a government effort to alter that view.

78. Weinerman, Edwin Richard. *Assorted Notes and Papers*. March 1946. MS. Sterling Memorial of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

These papers came from the desk of Edwin Richard Weinerman, who worked for the Resettlement Administration and later for the FSA. In this collection, we found assorted documents including to-do lists, thoughts on the issues facing the FSA, and opinions on problems in rural areas such as health deficiencies, lack of education, and habits of tenancy. These papers gave us an idea of the tasks required of FSA officials on the administrative level.

79. West, George P. "Rural California Has Starving Men; Farm Work Ended, Thousands Are Reported in Squalor, With Children Dying." Editorial. *New York Times*, 30 Jan. 1938. *New York Times Archives*. Web.

This Times article reports on the state of health of children in migrant families. Many migrant families did not qualify for health aid and so acquired diseases after living in squalid ditch-bank camps. The concern of the reporter is indicative of the growing awareness that a large group of people needed aid.

80. Wolcott, Marion Post. *Compton, Negro Sharecropper and his Wife Stripping and Grading Tobacco*. September 28, 1939. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This photograph exemplifies Wolcott's commitment to advocate for blacks in the South through her photography. To illustrate our discussion of FSA photography in this region, we incorporated this photograph into our performance.

81. Wolcott, Marion Post. *Negro Going in Colored Entrance of Movie House on Saturday Afternoon, Belzoni, Mississippi Delta, Mississippi*. 1939. Photograph. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

When we interviewed Linda Wolcott Moore, daughter of Marion Post Wolcott, Moore pointed us towards this photograph and described it as her mother's favorite. It relates the story of a black man confined to the sweltering colored section of a movie house, while whites relax in the cool downstairs area. It is a key example of an FSA photograph intended to inform the public of the injustices of segregation. Because of the story behind this photograph, we chose to include the image in our performance.

82. Wolcott, Marion Post. *Young Woman from Tennessee, Trying to Get the Black Muck, Which Causes Rash and Sores and Scabs on Scalp, out of Her Oldest Child's Hair*. January 1939. Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress. Web.

This source is an excellent depiction of a poverty-stricken family living a squalid existence. This photograph, in particular, would have been used to show that many Americans in rural areas were being denied a right to a basic quality of life. It might have been employed as a wake-up call for citizens in the rest of the nation living in their nice warm homes.

83. Wolcott Moore, Linda. "Daughter of Marion Post Wolcott." E-mail interview. 22 Feb. 2014.

Interviewing Moore, daughter of gifted FSA photographer Marion Post Wolcott, enabled us to learn about Wolcott's photography, life story, and personal mission. While we hadn't previously considered Wolcott's goals and ideologies separately from the goals and ideologies of the larger documentary project, we learned that many things set Wolcott apart from her colleagues at the FSA: her desire to photograph wealthy Americans going about their lives in ignorance of squalid rural conditions, her beautiful images of the bounty of America in addition to the failures of American farming, and, famously, her documentation of the plight of blacks in the segregated South. We categorized this interview as a primary source because Moore had firsthand knowledge of her mother's attributes and motivations.

Secondary Sources

84. Baldwin, Sidney. *Poverty and Politics; the Rise and Decline of the Farm Security Administration*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1968. Print.

This book was a good source of background information, relaying the history of the FSA, from its origins as the Resettlement Administration to its eventual decline at the end of the New Deal era. We were able to get an in-depth look at the mechanics of the FSA and the motivations of the people involved in it. This foundation of knowledge allowed us to fit our study of the FSA photography project into the greater context of the mission of the administration.

85. Borhan, Pierre. *Dorothea Lange: The Heart and Mind of a Photographer*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002. Print.

The depth and scope of the collection of Lange's work presented in this book is enhanced by lengthy and well-researched analysis. We learned that many things made Lange special: her early work as a portraitist enabled her to successfully capture the essence of people, she developed a fundamental social motivation, and she had no pretensions of being an "artist" despite the undeniable artistic value of her work. Partly biographical, partly analytical, the essays accompanying Lange's photographs informed an understanding of Lange that we incorporated into our performance.

86. Cohen, Stuart, and Peter Bacon Hales. *The Likes of Us: America in the Eyes of the Farm Security Administration*. Boston: David R. Godine, 2009. Print.

This selection of FSA photographs spans the entire time period of the photography project, incorporating striking images from almost every FSA region and photographer. A mix of structured assignments provided by Roy Stryker's shooting scripts and improvisation on the part of each individual photographer, these images are arresting and attention-grabbing. Even more interesting were re-printings of shooting scripts, letters written by photographers, and interviews with people involved in the project.

87. Curtis, James. *Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth: FSA Photography Reconsidered*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989. Print.

Like other sources we read, this book takes a firm stance against the inherent objective veracity of FSA photographs, and of documentary photography more generally. Curtis focuses on common misperceptions of photography, criticizing Americans for upholding FSA photographs as a repository of revealed truth and authenticity. Yet, Curtis does not resist the idea that FSA photographs are of value. We were intrigued by his idea that the power of the photographs is

derived from their connotations and their reflection of the views and beliefs of the historical time period and of the photographers.

88. Duncan, Dayton. *The Dust Bowl: An Illustrated History*. San Francisco: Chronicle, 2012. Print.

This book was a good accompaniment to the Ken Burns Dust Bowl documentary we watched as part of our preliminary research. The source captures the horror and devastation of the worst man-made ecological disaster in the history of our nation. We paid particular attention to the quotes scattered throughout the text, which helped us to understand the issues facing Americans in Dust Bowl states better than any secondary account could.

89. *The Dust Bowl*. Dir. Ken Burns. Public Broadcasting Service, 2012. DVD.

This film, which we watched towards the beginning of our project, illustrates the hardship farmers faced during the Dust Bowl. Told through the words of survivors and featuring visually striking images from the time, this documentary informed us of the causes and consequences of a terrible ecological disaster while focusing on human impact. It provided helpful background information, allowing us to place FSA photographs of migrant workers displaced by the Dust Bowl in historical context.

90. Edwards, Steve. *Photography: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.

Edwards investigates the history of photography, from its inception to its modern ubiquity. More relevant to us, he explores the critical issues with the medium, discrediting the idea that photography can ever be objective or effective as real documentation. Edwards specifically explores the problems with FSA photographs, asserting that these photographs were not documentary, but rather functioned as propaganda. He references the manipulation of the images, the debate surrounding them, and scandals such as the Arthur Rothstein skull controversy, which we discussed in our performance.

91. Egan, Timothy. *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2013. Print.

We valued this source because it is comprised of interviews with survivors of the Dust Bowl, and captures the sentiments and memories of people who lived through our nation's worst ecological disaster. The Dust Bowl was an important contributor to the crippling rural poverty so prevalent in the Depression era, and Dust Bowl migrants were among the most famous recipients of FSA aid and subjects of FSA photographs. These heart-wrenching accounts of the Dust Bowl allowed us to understand why the government felt it was required to step in to help alleviate the despair of the rural poor.

92. Eklund, Douglas. *Unclassified - a Walker Evans Anthology: Selections from the Archive at The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Ed. Jeff L. Rosenheim. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975. Print. Beinecke Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Yale University, New Haven CT.

In our performance, we wanted to show the FSA photography program, not only as an achievement of the administration, but also a product of the achievements of numerous talented and hardworking photographers. Walker Evans' photographs are some of the most iconic of the era, and this book, which accompanied a Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition on Evans, allowed us to understand his origins, ideas, and life story. The source was mostly composed of Evans' photographs, letters, and writings, interspersed with short essays.

93. Elliot, George P. *Dorothea Lange*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, DoubleDay, 1956. Print.

We cited this short book, which was meant to accompany an exhibition of FSA photographs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, because it characterizes Dorothea Lange as an objective photographer, with no agenda beyond capturing the truth. We learned that Lange was inspired by Francis Bacon's assertion of the nobleness of "the contemplation of things as they are without error or confusion" and even tacked this quotation to her darkroom door. The description in this source of Lange's open depiction of the mundane directly contrasts with other sources we

used, which maintain that photographic objectivity is impossible and that the FSA photographers in particular were guilty of slanting their images.

94. Finnegan, Cara A. *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2003. Print.

This source was relevant to our topic, as it focused in specifically on the role of FSA photographs in defining and shaping social policy during the Depression era. Finnegan introduced us to multiple perspectives, considering three different ways of studying the FSA photographs: as tools for social engineering, as works of art, and as historical documents. Because this source was so helpful, we were motivated to contact and interview the author.

95. Finnegan, Cara A. "Author of *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs*" E-mail interview. 23 Sept. 2013.

After reading Finnegan's book, which was strongly related to our thesis, we decided to reach out to the author to ask further questions. Finnegan corroborated our tentative thesis, telling us that the FSA photographs provided a strong visual argument for the necessity of increased government responsibility and an expanded definition of rights. Finnegan also discussed the bias of the project, something even Stryker conceded years after the decline of the FSA.

96. *Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Museum*. Hyde Park, NY. 7 Nov. 2014.

This museum, located on the Roosevelt estate in Hyde Park, NY, informed us of various aspects of Roosevelt's life and presidencies. Many exhibits stressed Roosevelt's belief that it is a government's responsibility to protect the rights of its citizens to a basic quality of life. While obviously biased in favor of Roosevelt, the museum did concede some drawbacks of the New Deal, especially the massive budget deficit it generated.

97. Gabbart, Jim. "Farm Security Administration." *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Oklahoma State Library. Web. Accessed 14 Mar. 2014.

<<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/f/fa015.html>>.

This article interested our team because it explained that the FSA was not simply a “relief agency,” but was a legitimate program that offered loans to farmers so that they could purchase land, equipment, and livestock. The FSA did not provide for the helpless but for those who had exhausted all their options but were still striving for success.

98. Ganzel, Bill. "FSA Photographers Document the Great Depression." Wessels Living History Farm, 2003. Web. Accessed 11 Mar. 2014.

<http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water_14.html>.

This article showed our team that while the FSA may have been accused of publishing propaganda, they did so because they had important goal: to convince Congress and the public to implement their plans to save rural America. The source argues that the most persuasive photos of the project were incredibly convincing.

99. Gorman, Juliet. "Farm Security Administration Photography." *Junkin It Out: Contested Visions of Florida in New Deal Narratives*. Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences, May 2001. Web. Accessed 14 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.oberlin.edu/library/papers/honorshistory/2001-Gorman/FSA/>>.

FSA photographers were hired to show America that there was a need for government intervention. This article brings this idea to light and shows that the FSA was ultimately successful in its goal of capturing America’s eye by carrying out one of the most famous documentary project of all time.

100. "The Great Depression Hits Farms and Cities in the 1930s." *Iowa Pathways*. Iowa Public Television. Web. 14 Mar. 2014. <http://www.iptv.org/iowapathways/mypath.cfm?ounid=ob_000064>.

This was a great article to start with because it provided some information about the time before the Great Depression, as well as the time after. Because a long period of time is considered in this article, the source enabled us to place our topic in historical context.

101. "The Great Depression." National Drought Mitigation Center. Web. Accessed 12 Mar. 2014.
<<http://drought.unl.edu/DroughtBasics/DustBowl/TheGreatDepression.aspx>>.

This short article informed our team about the quick rise and fall of farming during the 1920s. In the 20s, effective new equipment expanded farming, but many farmers had to take out loans to afford this new machinery. Because of the low crop prices after WWI, farmers had a tough time making money, and couldn't pay off their loans. When this debt was coupled with the Dust Bowl, American farmers were thrust into dark times.

102. Gregory, James N. *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California*. New York: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.

We used this source to gain background knowledge on the Dust Bowl Migration, an important event closely related to our project. Incorporating Dorothea Lange's photographs and numerous statistics related to the massive migration, this book was comprehensive and informative. We tried to convey a sense of the devastating ecological and economic disaster and heartbreaking journey facing migrants in our performance.

103. Hurley, F. Jack. *Portrait of a Decade; Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1972. Print.

Because we wanted to include Roy Stryker as a character in our performance, we found it relevant to research his life, opinions, and role in the Information Division of the FSA. We learned that Stryker believed firmly that it was necessary to "Introduce America to Americans" and, while sometimes difficult to work with, was very invested in the project. This book also

revealed the bias of the FSA photographs: Stryker was known to give his photographers specific instructions and punched holes in thousands of negatives that he didn't like.

104. Kennedy, David M. *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999. Print.

An exhaustive source of background information on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidencies, this book explores Roosevelt's liberal ideology and how it influenced his policies. We found this book very valuable, as it enabled us to contextualize legislation related to the rural poor. We learned that Roosevelt was consistent in advocating that the rights of all Americans to a basic quality of life, and to security from want and fear, be protected by an increase in government responsibility.

105. Kidd, Stuart. *Farm Security Administration Photography, The Rural South, and the Dynamics of Image-Making, 1935-1943*. Wales, UK: Edwin Mellen, 2004. Print.

We found this impeccably researched book helpful because it investigates the work of the FSA in the South, locating that segment of the project in the greater culture of the New Deal and in the general context of documentary photography. Kidd frames the FSA's work in the South as a milestone in documentary photography. Unlike other scholars whose work we read, Kidd focuses on Stryker as a mediator between photographers and the larger institutional structure, crediting Stryker with the success of the photographs rather than discussing the contributions of individual photographers.

106. "The Lean Thirties." *Harvester World Magazine* Feb.-Mar. 1960. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven CT. Print.

This article claims that the unfavorable economic atmosphere of the lean thirties was necessary for the cultivation of the successful photographic project: "The climate was ripe for photography, wretched for farming." Roy Stryker's comments are incorporated throughout, so we could read,

in his own words, his thoughts on rural poverty, the FSA project, and specific photographs such as that of the migrant mother. We classified this as a secondary source because it is a retrospective analysis written years after the decline of the FSA, by editors who were not involved in the administration.

107. McLuckie, Alan, PhD. "Professor of Political Philosophy at Stanford University." Online interview. 1 Oct. 2013.

Dr. McLuckie helped us to approach the concepts of government responsibility and human rights from a theoretical standpoint. We specifically discussed the New Deal, its accompanying ideology, and how that ideology diverged from pre-Depression Hooverism. This interview provided a broad basis of understanding for Roosevelt's policies, which enabled us to contextualize legislation and documentation related to the rural poor.

108. Meyer, Chris. "The FSA Photographs: Information or Propaganda?" Boston University. Web. Accessed 14 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/issue-1/the-fsa-photographs-information-or-propaganda/>>.

This paper was very intriguing because it brings up both sides of the debate about whether the FSA photos were propaganda or documentation. The article concludes that the FSA project cannot be considered propaganda because no lies were told to the American people. We valued this article because of the depth it goes into and the nuanced argument it articulates.

109. National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television, London. *Touring Exhibitions: Women Photographers of the Farm Security Administration*. circa 1980. Exhibition guide. TS. Beinecke Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This exhibition catalogue proposes showing photographs by famous female photographers of the FSA. Notes in the catalogue explain that the FSA photographers did not merely reflect a social crisis, but made sense of it and won support for the New Deal. This source was interesting

because we saw that the photographs of these women had shifted in meaning by the 80s, as they began to have historical importance more than social potential, but still remained relevant. We classified this as a secondary source because it was created decades after the decline of the FSA.

110. "Photographs of the Great Depression Curriculum Guide." Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. Web. Accessed 3 Oct. 2013.

<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/education/resources/pdfs/fsa_introduction.pdf>.

This document thoroughly covers all aspects of the FSA photography project. We consulted it during our initial phase of project selection, and considered it when determining the structure of our performance. While this curriculum guide is simplistic and one-sided, it ignited our interest in FSA photographs and inspired more in-depth research.

111. Sontag, Susan. "In Plato's Cave." *On Photography*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973. Print.

In this essay, Sontag criticizes the FSA photographs for their presumption of validity. While acknowledging the immense gift given by FSA photographers to the study of history, Sontag firmly states that these photographers imposed their own standards on their photographs, rather than documenting the truth. The selective nature of photography, and the inevitable exploitation of light, geometry, framing, and shadow, rendered FSA photographs an interpretation, not an objective representation, of reality. We addressed these concerns about the validity of photographs in our performance.

112. Steichen, Edward, ed. *The Bitter Years, 1936-1941: Rural America as Seen by the Photographers of the Farm Security Administration*. 1962. Exhibition guide, Museum of Modern Art, New York NY. Sterling Memorial Library of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

This exhibition guide, intended to accompany a 1962 showing of FSA photographs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was incredibly valuable to us, as it contained many quotes from American citizens in the 1930s expressing either support of FSA photographs or disdain for

the project. We used this source to gain knowledge about the reactions of urban Americans to the rural programs, and incorporated these reactions into our performance. We classified this as a secondary source because it draws from primary source material and presents that material in an edited and contextualized form.

113. Terkel, Studs. *Hard Times: An Illustrated Oral History of the Great Depression*. New York: New, 2012. Print.

This source proved an invaluable compilation of primary accounts of the Great Depression, delivered by people who experienced it firsthand. Terkel did not limit himself to interviewing one type of person: the accounts of businessmen, politicians, artists, and farmers alike are included. We categorized this as a secondary source, because although the accounts are presented in their entirety and without interposition or accompanying analysis, they were put together years after the event by a historian who selected them, arranged them, and illustrated them, thereby potentially changing their original meaning.

114. Walbart, David. "The Depression for Farmers." *Learn NC*. UNC School of Education, n.d. Web. Accessed 13 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-worldwar/5955>>.

This useful article shares a bit of information about farming during the Great Depression, as well as a brief summary of events leading up to the Great Depression. It makes clear that, due to industrialization and inflation, the Great Depression started in the 1920s for farmers and farming communities.

115. *Walker Evans' American Photographs*. Exhibition. Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York. 18 Oct. 2013.

This collection of photographs celebrated Walker Evans, a gifted photographer who created a portrait of America during a period of profound transformation while working with and separately from the FSA. The photographs exhibited exemplified one of two themes: people in

America and American cultural artifacts. Visiting this exhibition gave us the opportunity to see Evans' photographs up close and to get a sense of his vision of America.

116. Wood, Nancy C. *Heartland New Mexico: Photographs from the Farm Security Administration, 1935-1943*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1989. Print.

This collection of FSA photographs from New Mexico, mostly taken by Dorothea Lange, Arthur Rothstein, Russell Lee, and John Collier, Jr., reveals the troubles of Americans struggling through the Dust Bowl. Wood's commentary focuses not only on the difficulties confronting the subjects of the photographs, but also on the adverse conditions FSA photographers faced in their quest to capture these iconic images. We were struck by Wood's argument that FSA photographs should be remembered as a multifaceted portrait of Depression America, rather than simply as an endorsement of New Deal ideology and legislation.