

SchoolScene

Students take a journey through the dust

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Seventh-grade students at the Carl W. Goetz Middle School didn't have to read John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" to learn about the hard life in the Dust Bowl during the 1920s and '30s.

Students at the school attended "Journey from the Dust," a program about the dust bowl that was presented by Living Voices.

JACKSON

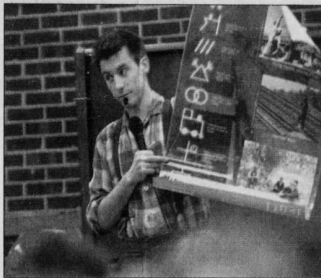
Living Voices is an organization that is affiliated with the Washington Commission for the Humanities, which is based in Seattle.

The performers reconstructed a story that illustrates the hardships and survival of the Oklahoma residents (who were known as "Okies") during this time. The story they illustrate is about the life of Mark Dobson (played by Dan Dennis) and his family, who live on their farm on the Oklahoma panhandle.

An idyllic life quickly goes bad when the stock market crash plunges Dobson's family into poverty. They are ripped apart when his father leaves to find a job, and Dobson sets out alone for California to get a job as a crop worker.

Dobson travels Route 66, meets hoboes and learns to hop trains. He is met with disappointment when he gets to California, is rejected by the locals and discovers that the work he is seeking is not there.

Another transformation takes place when Dobson finds a job after President Franklin Roosevelt institutes his New Deal, which was an attempt during his administration to help the



Clockwise from top left: Dan Dennis shows graffiti markings, used by hobos to communicate with each other during the Dust Bowl Era to students. Dennis plays the narrative character, Mark Dobson, during the Great Depression. Dennis uses narrative storytelling and images to portray life during the Dust Bowl Era for students at the Carl W. Goetz Middle School in Jackson. (PHOTOS: MIKE MCJAGHER/STAFF)

poor get back on their feet. Through the New Deal, Dobson finds a job with the Civilian Conservation Corps. Here, he

meets up with his father, who is also working on the project. Tragedy comes again when Dobson's father is killed, and Dob-

son is badly injured. He is laid off from work and survives with his mother on the money she receives from the death of her

husband.

Dobson later learns to play the piano, and his musical dreams begin to grow.

After the program, students worked on a packet which contained questions about the performance.