



Children of the Dust: An Okie Family Story (Plains Histories)

Betty Grant Henshaw

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Betty Grant Henshaw was born into a large family of tenant farmers in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl era. For years her father, Bill, worked himself to exhaustion, trying to earn enough to provide for his wife and nine children and to buy his own small farm, but he was never able to get ahead. Other family members had joined the great migration of Okies to California. Finally yielding to pressure from others, with some reluctance Bill piled his family in the Ford pickup and set off along Route 66 for the Golden State. There the family found abundant opportunities to work, but work often meant back-breaking labor in the fields for dirtcheap wages in hundred-degree heat. Bill did his best to shield his family from the brutality of the fields. His abiding respect for work, which he cultivated in his children, led his family through difficult times. In the end, although he missed Oklahoma, Bill was proud to find that the Grants could thrive in any soil.



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