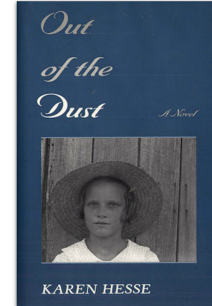


ALBUM [OUT OF THE DUST BY KAREN HESSE](#)

Album Description



One of my favorite novels is Karen Hesse's Newbery winner, *Out of the Dust*.

While I had heard of the Dust Bowl and learned about it in school, I was only really able to imagine it when I read Hesse's novel in verse. I also love that the cover is a primary source photograph of Lucille Burroughs.

In her Newbery acceptance speech, Hesse thanks her “inspiration...Lucille Burroughs, who stared out at me from the pages of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, imploring me to tell her story...even if I had to make it up.” I love how the primary source photograph touched Hesse so deeply that she felt the need to tell the story of the girl behind the picture.

Hesse further explained that when her editor was searching for a cover idea, she stopped in a shop in New York City that featured photography and found a collection of Walker Evans' images. She sent this image to Hesse with a post-it note suggesting it would make a “perfect cover.” Hesse herself “had been focused on this photograph while writing the book. It sat beside [her] computer along with several other images from the book.

When I was younger, in acting classes, one of the exercises was to find a portrait and tell that character's story—what were they thinking and feeling? Hesse did this with this 1936 primary source photograph. And this can be a great activity for young patrons to do with primary sources. Tell the story behind the people in the primary source. What were they doing just before the photo was taken? What is life like for them? What are their hopes and dreams?

In her acceptance speech, Hesse also talked about the kerosene incident in the book and how it seemed unbelievable to some readers but that it was based on a series of articles from the 1934 Oklahoma People's Voice. (The Oklahoma Historical Society has *The People's Voice* digitized from 1892-1910, so I was not able to locate a digital copy. Hesse received her copy of the 1934 paper on microfilm.)

The Library of Congress has a great [primary source set about the Dust Bowl](#) as well as a [Chronicling America resource guide](#).

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LUCILLE BURROUGHS. DAUGHTER OF A COTTON SHARECROPPER. HALE COUNTY,



Teaching Notes:

What do you think the girl in the photograph is thinking? Where does she live? What was she doing right before the photo was taken?

Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017762302/>

Created / Published

- [1936 summer]

Genre

- Nitrate negatives

Notes

- - Title and other information from caption card.
- - Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.
- - More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>
- - Temp. note: usf34batch1



Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id

- fsa 8c52249 <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8c52249>

LUCILLE

ALABAMA



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017758390/>

Created / Published

- 1936 Summer.

Genre

- Nitrate negatives

Notes

- - Original negative number: 31341-9.
- - Title and other information from caption card.
- - Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.
- - More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC 20540 USA
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>



Digital Id

- [fsa 8a44693 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8a44693](https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8a44693)

LUCILLE BURROUGHS

CHEROKEE COUNTY, ALABAMA



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8a44695/>

Created / Published

- 1936 Summer.

Genre

- Nitrate negatives

Notes

- - Additional information on caption card: For M2 use copy negative in series LC-USF331.
- - Original negative number: 31341-7.
- - Title and other information from caption card.
- - Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.
- - More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC 20540 USA
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>



Digital Id

- [fsa 8a44695 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8a44695](https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8a44695)



KAREN HESSE 1998 NEWBERY MEDAL ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR "OUT OF THE DUST"

Teaching Notes:

I love how the author talks about the primary source research that she did to create her novel.



FLOYD AND LUCILLE BURROUGHS ON PORCH, HALE COUNTY, ALABAMA

Teaching Notes:

"Strong and long-limbed like her father, Lucille Burroughs at age ten could pick 150 pounds of cotton a day. She also inherited a less useful legacy: her parents' lifelong debt to a landlord who owned their cabin, farm, tools, mules, and the product of all their labor."




WHAT HAPPENED TO LUCILLE BURROUGHS

Teaching Notes:

This article from "The Land" discusses the power of a photograph as well as Lucille Burrough's tragic story.



Teaching Notes:

Thanks for the fascinating backstory and the great activity ideas  [Soline Holmes](#) !



Teaching Notes:

In 2004, a teacher friend and I shipped a class set of *Out of the Dust* to China for our summer teaching gig - teaching Chinese English teachers in American teaching methods. We used the book to teach a range of teaching methods while the Chinese English teachers were learning a bit about America along with methods. I hadn't thought about that book in quite sometime. Thanks for the compelling backstory.