The Works Program

-- Works Progress Administration --

Please Sunday, September 15, 1935.

is national organizations to work with WPA writers on American Guide.

The American Guide, which will provide work relief for about 6,500 writers
rt of the project for professional and service workers which has just been ap-
by President Roosevelt, aims "to discover America for Americans," according
my L. Hopkins, administrator of the Works Progress Administration.

Many national organizations have endorsed the project. Work is expected
under way immediately.

When an American goes to Europe usually one of the first things he does is
uire a "Baedecker", or other comprehensive book, to guide him on his tour. If,
, he wishes to visit interesting parts of his own country he finds it impossi-
obtain any comprehensive handbook of information. No such manual has been
ble for the United States since the Baedecker guide of 1909, which is no longer
able, having been prepared prior to the age of widespread travel by automobile.
ach a large city as New York has no comprehensive guide book to its amazing
of cultural, educational, and economic resources of interest to both tourists
idents. The American Guide is designed to fill this need.

It is planned to publish the Guide in five volumes, corresponding to five
regions of travel in the United States. For instance, one volume will com-
the Northeastern region of the country extending from Maine and Massachusetts
Illinois and Wisconsin. West of Chicago travelers normally take one of two
either through the north middle western states to the Pacific Coast or through
western states to Mexico or Arizona. Each of these sections will have its
de. The Pacific Coast states, including Nevada and Utah, will also comprise
ion, and the Southeastern states another. Travelers going from New York to
pleans or Florida will be able to obtain information of interest to them from
this book.

It is expected that between 6,500 and 7,000 writers, research workers,
artists, geologists, photographers, map-makers, stenographers, clerical workers and
professional persons now unemployed will be given employment for at least ten
weeks in preparing material for this encyclopedic undertaking. Hitherto it has been
difficult to find an adequate number of useful projects to provide work for this
large group of white collar workers. It is felt that this one project will go a long way
toward solving their immediate problem.

A great deal of preparatory work has already been done in outlining plans for
the project and in getting the organizational structure laid out. It will thereby be possible to get the work throughout the country launched in a very short time.

Administration of the research and editorial preparation of the Guide will be
based in Washington. Control of the field force of writers and other workers will
be in twelve regional supervisors, who will also direct the work in each of the states in which the regional offices are located. Every other state will have a director and a staff of writers, taken from the relief rolls, working in every city with a population of over 10,000. Smaller localities and rural sections will be covered by field trips and through the cooperation of local community organizations.

The project has already enlisted the support of many national organizations, and those which have expressed interest and willingness to cooperate are the American Automobile Association, American Forestry Association, American Geographical Society, National Recreation Association, Foreign Language Information Service, American Planning and Civic Association, Appalachian Trail Conference, American Nature Association, American Historical Association, and Science Service, which represents the National Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Academy of Sciences. Various government departments have also signified their willingness to offer counsel and furnish valuable information. Notable among them are the National Park Service and the U. S. Geological Survey.

The American Guide is intended especially to serve travelers of modest means. Reason routes of travel will be indicated not only for automobilists but also for those wishing to see America from its rivers, canals and small streams, and for
wishing to follow mountain trails. Suggestions will be given for those who aspire to observe typical manufacturing and agricultural processes at factories and farms where visitors are welcome. Facts will also be compiled regarding interesting sights in the foreign quarters of large cities.

Colorful festivals, which are held in all parts of the country at some time during every year, will be described. Examples are the Portland, Ore., rose festival, the New Orleans Mardi Gras, the Santa Fe Fiesta, the Easter Dawn Service at Beach, Indian ceremonials and the Bach music festival at Bethlehem, Pa.

The influence of racial groups on the life and customs of different communities will be traced. Information will be provided on hunting and fishing seasons and methods of obtaining licenses. Biographical notes will be compiled about noted men who have lived in various localities at one time or another. Unique library museum items will be listed, attention will be directed to churches and public buildings where distinctive architectural and art work may be studied, experimental farms and schools will be described briefly, and all manner of historic landmarks, natural parks, hotels, mineral springs, geological wonders, irrigation projects, low-cost housing developments and model factories will be described. Where unusual developments in natural science, such as the colonies established by beavers and prairie dogs in certain parts of the country, may be seen, these will be called to the attention of tourists.

In the process of compiling the material for the national Guide books, a great deal of information will be uncovered, in States and localities, which cannot be used entirely. All of this material will be left with appropriate local officials and saved in municipal libraries. It is expected that most States and many cities will avail themselves of this opportunity to prepare their own guide books after the national guide has been completed. At present there is a great scarcity of local guides. If, in the course of research for the Guide, important manuscripts in foreign languages are unearthed pertaining to early Spanish, French or British settlements, these will be translated and made available to the public.