

THE WORKS PROGRAM

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-- Works Progress Administration --

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

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

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

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

It is planned to publish the Guide in five volumes, corresponding to five principal regions of travel in the United States. For instance, one volume will cover the Northeastern region of the country extending from Maine and Massachusetts to Illinois and Wisconsin. West of Chicago travelers normally take one of two routes, either through the north middle western states to the Pacific Coast or through the southwestern states to Mexico or Arizona. Each of these sections will have its own guide. The Pacific Coast states, including Nevada and Utah, will also comprise one section, and the Southeastern states another. Travelers going from New York to

Orleans or Florida will be able to obtain information of interest to them from the guide book.

It is expected that between 6,500 and 7,000 writers, research workers, architects, geologists, photographers, map-makers, stenographers, clerical workers and other professional persons now unemployed will be given employment for at least ten months 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 class 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 therefore 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 centered in Washington. Control of the field force of writers and other workers will be vested 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 supervisor 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 reached 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, Urban Planning and Civic Association, Appalachian Trail Conference, American Nature Club, 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. Its reason routes of travel will be indicated not only for automobilists but also for persons wishing to see America from its rivers, canals and small streams, and for

ers wishing to follow mountain trails. Suggestions will be given for those who desire 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 Miami 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 persons who have lived in various localities at one time or another. Unique library and 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 historical landmarks, national 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 in its entirety. All of this material will be left with appropriate local officials and deposited 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 other settlements, these will be translated and made available to the public.

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