

THE WORKS PROGRAM

- - - - -

-- Works Progress Administration --

For release in morning newspapers,  
Monday, October 19, 1936.

WPA Workers Complete 45,000 Braille Maps for Free Distribution to Schools  
for the Blind

Forty-five thousand Braille maps, including the first ever made to teach history, are now being distributed by the Works Progress Administration to 78 schools for the blind, Mrs. Ellen S. Woodward, Assistant Administrator in charge of Women's and Professional Projects, announced today.

The maps, illustrating important periods in history, are supplemented by up-to-date geographical maps of every State in the Nation and every country in the world. They were produced at the Perkins Institution for the Blind, Watertown, Mass., as a Works Progress Administration project.

"Historical maps for the blind have, heretofore, been unobtainable and the sum total of paper maps in Braille from all sources, including England, has been small," Dr. Gabriel Farrell, director of the Perkins Institution and the WPA project explained. The new maps are made of paper as wooden maps, the old type, were found too expensive and bulky for schoolroom use.

The modern map-making process was developed at the Institution especially

- 2 -

for this project through perfection of two inventions to improve embossing methods. Forty-four workers, ten of whom are blind, are employed on the project. The maps are printed on heavy white paper.

In preparing the sets, which are distributed to schools in lots of 400 each, the workers first prepare three simple types. The first is an outline map with dots and dashes to indicate boundaries. The second is a physical map with masses of large raised dots to indicate mountains and masses of tiny dots to show bodies of water. The third is a political map with capitols symbolized by large dots with rings around them and other cities by smaller dots.

By running their fingers repeatedly over maps of their home city, blind children at the Perkins Institution have visualized the routes and points of interest so successfully as to instruct the guides who were leading them.

Dr. Farrell attributed the success of the project in large measure to the experience of Frank C. Bryan, manager of the Howe Memorial Press, which is a part of the Perkins Institution, and the co-operation of a trained faculty.

When the map-making project ends, WPA workers at Perkins Institution will be employed in making models, appliances and diagrams to instruct the blind in architecture and the sciences.

- - - 0 - - -