



T H E W O R K S P R O G R A M

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-- Works Progress Administration --

For Release to Newspapers
Sunday, May 8, 1938.

First Geodetic Control Surveys by WPA Near Completion

The first of 14 State-wide geodetic control surveys now being made by the Works Progress Administration will be finished within 60 days, Administrator Harry L. Hopkins announced today.

The work, now in the final stages in Georgia, will enable property owners to locate their boundary lines precisely in coordination with the national survey based on the State-wide coordinate system of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, instead of following uncertain surveys that have resulted in litigation involving millions of dollars' worth of property.

State-wide surveys of similar nature also are being made by the WPA in Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

In each of these 14 States a precise survey marker of this survey will be brought within a mile or two of most rural properties, and much closer to city and town property, making it practical for individual owners to check their property lines against permanent and accurate markers.

The U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey has the task of making a basic control survey of the entire country and setting up a network of "station markers" to indicate latitude and longitude, as well as bench marks to show elevation. These markers are being distributed in a series of belts or arcs about 25 miles apart.

The WPA projects, directed by M. Y. Poling, consulting engineer, consist of breaking down the Coast and Geodetic spacings into much smaller ones for the convenience of practising engineers and surveyors.

If an engineer can find a marker within one or two miles, in most cases, he can easily give a farm or other property a precise mathematical location on the national survey, which will preserve its location for all future time without disturbing its description on old deeds or records. As old landmarks of an individual property disappear with time - a classic example on a Maryland deed is "the point on Powder Mill Run where Bill Jones killed the Indian" - the precise mathematical location on the national survey affords a simplified means by which the landmarks can be restored to their original position. The geodetic surveys are based on astronomical observations on Polaris, the North Star, instead of on shifting magnetic bearings.

The U. S. Coast and Geodetic, and supplementary WPA surveys are designed to end hodge-podge surveying and mapping. Inaccurate and piecemeal surveys in many States, dating from Colonial times, have caused property owners endless confusion and litigation over boundaries.

The supplementary survey work began in 1933 under the CWA to provide employment for engineers and surveying personnel, not to mention the value and necessity of the work. Altogether, the CWA, FERA and WPA have allotted more than \$15,000,000 for State-wide projects alone. The WPA is also carrying on individual

projects in urban areas. The city of Boston has received an allotment of \$972,000, and projects are also in operation in Cleveland, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Denver and hundreds of small cities and counties.

The WPA is now considering similar surveys for Chicago, Omaha, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Madison, St. Paul, Duluth, Superior, Youngstown and some others. The individual cities and counties are being tied into the national network which is based on the "North American datum." As the major network is being broken into smaller spacing by the WPA surveys, individual properties are gradually being permanently located, and their positions preserved. Legal measures for tying in to the precise survey are being enacted in cities, counties and States.

In New York State the survey is being carried on in Westchester, Nassau, Saratoga and Erie counties.

All the work being done on the State-wide surveys is in accordance with the standards and regulations authorized by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, which has assigned technical advisers to various States, helped to instruct technical personnel, lent equipment and checked data. The markers being placed by the State control surveys are recorded in the Survey's Washington office, as well as locally. The States will also publish the details of these surveys. The surveys of urban areas conform to the Technical Procedures for City Surveys authorized by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The WPA has provided the services of an expert on geodetic control to consult with city, county and State officials regarding the technical procedures to be employed.

In many of the 14 States where State-wide projects are under way, the States are urging all property owners to connect at least one corner of their tract to the nearest State control survey marker at the earliest possible moment.

Ancient property line corners, such as trees, are decaying or being obliterated so rapidly that otherwise the next generation will be forced to undertake new surveys and continue the extensive litigation. Some States, like Louisiana, have distributed booklets to property owners, describing the advantages in detail.

In addition to its benefits to private property owners, the work now under way will establish one unquestioned basis for surveys of States, cities, counties, highways, power lines, irrigation, drainage and reclamation projects; agriculture, forestry and flood protection; soil and mine, canals and railroads, oil and gas lines, and, in time of war, positions for effective gun fire. It will serve all geographical and topographical purposes, including mapping of all descriptions.

The new coordinated network also eliminates the old-fashioned isolated surveys, and the laborious preliminary researches for future surveying.

Any property can have true astronomical bearings, the most accurate known, and if any point is lost or destroyed it can be replaced with a minimum of effort by the use of accurate coordinates. All surveys will be relative to all other surveys in a perfect framework, without gaps, overlaps or offsets.

The geodetic control survey affords a comprehensive and systematic assembling of survey information, its salient point being its fundamental and lasting character.

The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey has computed State-wide plane coordinate systems for all of the 48 States. The basis for the projection used is determined by the shape and size of the State. All of the WPA projects being operated on a State-wide basis use these new plane coordinate systems as recommended by the Federal agency.

Wherever possible, the projects of this character in urban areas are required to establish their coordinates on the State-wide system.