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# The Works Progress Administration in Daviess County, Kentucky, 1935-1943

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Heflin,

Shelia Eileen Brown

1984



THE WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
IN DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY  
1935-1943

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of History  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by  
Shelia Eileen Brown Heflin

April 1984

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THE WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
IN DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY  
1935-1943

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THE WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
IN DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY  
1935-1943

Shelia E. Brown Heflin

April 1984

101 pages

Directed by: Charles Bussey, Francis Thompson, and David Lee

Department of History

Western Kentucky University

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) aided 8.5 million people across the United States during its existence. WPA projects in Daviess County, Kentucky, admirably served as an example of the way national laws and regulations filtered down and worked in a single county. The federal program touched the lives of a variety of Daviess Countians in a positive manner. Blue collar workers, white collar workers, women, Blacks, and even people involved with the arts received jobs through this program. Local WPA projects illustrate the various jobs obtained by needy men and women from the relief rolls. The WPA aided these local citizens physically and socially by giving them jobs, which in turn put food on their table and restored their pride. This federal program, which received much criticism at times, functioned efficiently and effectively in Daviess County.

## CHAPTER I

### THE NOBLE EXPERIMENT

The Depression effected the people of Daviess County, Kentucky in many ways. For some, very little in their lives changed; for others the bottom dropped out. The less fortunate lost their jobs, their only means of supporting their families. Many tried to survive on their own, while others turned to the government for aid. Some gladly accepted government handouts--the dole--without any shame. Others bent their pride and accepted the dole but promised themselves to quit whenever they found work. Their economic situation worsened with each passing day. Daviess Countians were not alone in their distress; citizens all across the nation were effected by the Depression. The people of the United States decided that political change was the solution, and in the November 1932 elections Daviess Countians along with the rest of the nation overwhelmingly returned the Democrats to power, hoping that Franklin D. Roosevelt would take control and end the Depression.

In 1933, faced with a massive unemployment problem, Franklin D. Roosevelt took office as President of the United States. With approximately fifteen million people jobless by the Spring of 1933, Roosevelt's advisors urged massive federal public works projects as a means of returning the



unemployed to work and getting them off relief rolls. Roosevelt strongly opposed spending money for public works, but Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, Harry Hopkins, Senator Robert LaFollette, Jr., and Senator Edward Costigan convinced him that public works would be a definite step toward solving the unemployment problem.<sup>1</sup> On May 1, Roosevelt sent a message to Congress, one section of which concerned the use of federal money for public works:

The other proposal gives the Executive full power to start a large program of direct employment. A careful survey convinces me that approximately \$3,300,000,000 can be invested in useful and necessary public construction, and at the same time put the largest possible number of people to work.<sup>2</sup>

Congress considered Roosevelt's message and in a short time developed and passed the National Industrial Recovery Act, of which Title II established the Public Works Administration (PWA) with an initial appropriation of \$3,300,000,000. Roosevelt signed the Act on June 16, 1933 and named Harold L. Ickes to head the new program. Ickes moved slowly, but efficiently, and succeeded in beautifying the nation by building lasting public monuments. PWA projects were expensive, durable, and useful for future generations.<sup>3</sup> They failed, however, to provide enough jobs for the multitude of unemployed.

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<sup>1</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, p. 3549.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt, Vol. II: The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1958), pp. 282-86.

The slowness of the PWA in putting men to work led to the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 7034 on May 6, 1935, establishing the new agency. It read:

A Works Progress Administration, which shall be responsible to the President for the honest, efficient, speedy, and coordinated execution of the work relief program as a whole, and for the execution of that program in such manner as to move from the relief rolls to work on such projects or in private employment the maximum number of persons in the shortest time possible.<sup>4</sup>

Harry L. Hopkins would administer the WPA and execute the seemingly impossible task of putting millions of people back to work.

Hopkins headed the New Deal agency, considered to be the biggest employer and also the biggest spender of them all, until 1939 at which time he accepted the job of Secretary of Commerce. Congress combined the public works agencies in 1939 forming the Federal Works Agency and changing the Works Progress Administration to the Work Projects Administration. The WPA continued to provide work relief until June 30, 1943. In its eight years and two months of existence, the WPA employed approximately 8,500,000 people and spent over \$11,000,000,000 on a total of 1,410,000 projects. The number employed by WPA equaled nearly one-fifth of the country's workers. Count their dependents and the figure of

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<sup>4</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, ed. Samuel I. Rosenman, Vol. 4: The Court Disapproves, 1935 (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 164.



those who benefited from the WPA rises to between 25,000,000 and 30,000,000 people.<sup>5</sup>

In 1939, F. C. Harrington, the new WPA administrator, defined a WPA project as "any useful public work on which the Federal Government and some tax-supported public body have agreed to cooperate, through the WPA, in order to provide work for the needy unemployed."<sup>6</sup> The WPA worked hand in hand with state and local governments to plan and execute useful projects. State or local agencies, such as the city council, the county commissioners, or the board of education served as project sponsors and planned 95% of all WPA proposals. The completed project belonged to the community or state.<sup>7</sup>

Local agencies, such as the Owensboro City Commission or the Daviess County Board of Education, served as project sponsors in Daviess County. Sponsors not only suggested project ideas to local WPA officials, but also helped them develop plans and procedures for the project. The sponsor promised to contribute a specified percentage of the project cost and many times supplied supervisory personnel. Oren Larry Depp, Sr., WPA Area Engineer of Daviess, Hancock, and McLean counties in Kentucky from 1936-1942, stated that his job as Area Supervisor included working up the estimate for

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<sup>5</sup>Broadus Mitchell, Depression Decade (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1947), pp. 321-24; Edward Robb Ellis, A Nation In Torment: The Great American Depression, 1927-1939 (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970), pp. 503-6, 531.

<sup>6</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, p. A2542.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

the project plans devised by local sponsors, transferring the final figures to the proper government application form, and sending the form to the state WPA office for approval. Once approved at the state level, the plans were forwarded to Washington, D.C. where WPA officials scrutinized them, making sure they met all federal requirements. The federal office returned the approved or disapproved plans to the state WPA office. Any approved plans were placed in operation by the state administrator.<sup>8</sup> State administrators, such as Kentucky's George H. Goodman, selected the projects to be activated on the basis of availability of relief labor in a community, the necessity of project employment, and the desires of local officials.<sup>9</sup>

To gain approval the proposed project needed to meet several conditions. The project must be deemed socially useful and be located on public property. There must be needy unemployed workers in the area that have the skills to complete the job. There must be a local agency which will plan and sponsor the project above and beyond their regular work. The majority of the federal funds requested must be used as wages. The WPA advised communities to maintain a reserve of approved projects which could be activated quickly

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<sup>8</sup>Donald S. Howard, The WPA and Federal Relief Policy (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1943), p. 144; Interview with Oren Larry Depp, Sr., by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 20 October 1977.

<sup>9</sup>Corrington Gill, Wasted Manpower: The Challenge of Unemployment (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1939), p. 184.



when unemployment levels rose and more work projects were needed.<sup>10</sup>

The sponsor contributed to the total cost of the project. The majority of WPA funds were designated to be paid in actual wages. In 1939, Gill noted that eighty-six cents of every federal dollar spent went for wages, ten and a half cents for materials and equipment, and three and a half cents for administration.<sup>11</sup> The sponsor made cash contributions or contributions in kind. Contributions in kind included supplying labor, building materials, office or warehouse space, and use of equipment and tools. WPA Area Engineer Depp elaborated on Daviess County in kind contributions for street projects. The Owensboro City Commission sponsored many street projects and as its part of the total project cost the Commission chose to furnish all the crushed rock. The Commission decided on this particular contribution because one of the Commissioners could get a good price on the rock. The city also furnished the trucks, which they already owned, and the WPA provided the asphalt and labor. In kind contributions received criticism since the sponsor could easily over value them to receive more credit. Depp also recalled that in the beginning the federal government applied 90% of the cost of the projects in Daviess County. As the years passed and the WPA became

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<sup>10</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, pp. A2542-43.

<sup>11</sup>Gill, Wasted Manpower, p. 185.

more efficient, the sponsor and federal government shared local project costs more equally.<sup>12</sup>

In its eight years and two months of existence, the WPA spent 78% of its money on construction and conservation projects. These projects provided work for 75% of the people employed on WPA. The remaining 25% of the money went for community service projects: art, education, history surveys, music, public health, recreation, sewing, and writing.<sup>13</sup> Daviess County WPA projects followed this national pattern. The most expensive and visible projects were the construction projects which employed a majority of those on the local relief roll. The local service projects employed fewer people of which the majority were female. Countless people viewed the WPA's demise as a tragic mistake, while others rejoiced at its death. In 1939, the Institute of Public Opinion polled a variety of men and women across the United States, asking them to name the greatest and worst accomplishment of Roosevelt's administration. The experiment with federal relief ranked number one on both lists.<sup>14</sup>

Antagonists ridiculed WPA, saying the initials actually stood for We Piddle Around. In covering a 1935 New York City relief inquiry, the press heard Robert Marshall testify that he was a training specialist who taught local relief personnel boon doggles. This was a pioneer term which referred to the

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<sup>12</sup>Howard, The WPA, pp. 146-47; Depp interview.

<sup>13</sup>Mitchell, Depression Decade, p. 324.

<sup>14</sup>Howard, The WPA, p. 105.



handicraft of weaving ropes to produce useful belts. Thereafter, the press often labeled relief projects it felt were of questionable value as boondoggling.<sup>15</sup> Boondoggling did exist and the Daviess County projects certainly had their share. Edward Girvin, a WPA employee who occasionally dug ditches on Owensboro WPA sewer projects, cited men leaning on their shovels, drinking excessive amounts of water, and going to the bathroom frequently as local examples of boondoggling or piddling around.<sup>16</sup> Depp, who supervised WPA projects throughout Western Kentucky, readily admitted that piddling around existed but insisted the WPA did not deserve the amount of ridicule it received. He recalled that in the early years when he first approached Daviess County sponsors with proposals about major projects they responded with sarcasm, but soon gained their confidence by demonstrating what could be done with proper supervision.<sup>17</sup> Daviess Countians certainly observed some boondoggling, but they also viewed the hard work of many WPA employees as they worked on local construction projects or service projects.

Many people, including PWA Administrator Harold Ickes, thought the WPA was a political mistake and that it would ruin Roosevelt's chance of re-election in 1935. Friday,

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<sup>15</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen, Since Yesterday: The Nineteen-Thirties In America (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), pp. 142-43.

<sup>16</sup>Interview with Edward Girvin, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 16 October 1977.

<sup>17</sup>Depp interview.

September 13, 1935, Ickes recorded his thoughts about the WPA in his diary:

I have no confidence myself in Hopkins' program. I think it is the greatest present threat to the President's re-election. It looks to me as if the WPA will be perhaps the major issue in the campaign next year. Its absurdities, its inefficiencies, its graftings will all be aired in the press and from the platform and I don't see how we can defend it. The whole program seems to be based upon an economic and social fallacy. . . . Hopkins has finally convinced him [Roosevelt] that the goal ought to be to put men to work, regardless of what they were being put to work at, and if there is no legitimate work, to put them to work notwithstanding.<sup>18</sup>

Despite Ickes' fears, Roosevelt won the election. The federal public works program also failed to be a major campaign issue in 1940. The Republicans joked about WPA, but they did not recommend that it be abolished.<sup>19</sup>

In 1936, Hugh Johnson, a critic of the total work program, defended Hopkins and the WPA, declaring that "the charges of graft and politics are cruelly false and unfair." In a colossal organization like the WPA such things inherently occurred despite all efforts to stop it. He knew the WPA officials had orders to "keep WPA's nose clean." It was impossible to keep politicians from approaching WPA workers during their time off or travels to and from work. The local relief agencies that certified people for WPA work also possessed the potential to wield political power through job

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<sup>18</sup>Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Vol. I: The First 1000 Days, 1933-1936 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954), p. 438.

<sup>19</sup>Searle F. Charles, Minister of Relief: Harry Hopkins and the Depression (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1963), p. 235.



appointments.<sup>20</sup> Some critics of the WPA declared that it was "little more than a sophisticated and centralized vote buying machine."<sup>21</sup> The 1938 Kentucky Senatorial election illustrated that the WPA did not always manage to steer clear of political scandal. Newspapers suggested that incumbent Senator Alben Barkley bought the election with WPA votes, and a Senate investigating committee discovered evidence of political pressure. Some workers were threatened with losing their job if they voted for challenger Governor A. B. "Happy" Chandler. The investigation also discovered shake downs for campaign contributions. The final results indicated that winner Barkley received approximately \$20,000 from Kentucky employees of various federal agencies, but that Chandler managed to collect about \$71,000 from state workers.<sup>22</sup> Robert Stiff, a Daviess Countian who worked under local WPA supervisor Marshall Whitmer at that time, denied that any political pressure was placed on the men in his work crew. In fact, he did not recall any political pressure of any fashion ever being used during his time on the Daviess County WPA projects.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 181, 200-201.

<sup>21</sup>James T. Patterson, The New Deal and the States (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 81.

<sup>22</sup>Nathan Miller, F. D. R., An Intimate History (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1983), p. 413; Walter L. Hixson, "The 1938 Kentucky Senate Election: Alben W. Barkley, "Happy" Chandler, and the New Deal," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 80 (Summer 1982):317-19.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with Robert S. Stiff, Sr., by Shelia E. Heflin, Owensboro, Ky., 28 February 1984.

Hopkins admitted that politicians of both parties at one time or another probably tried to influence WPA workers. He notified workers by letter and radio that the WPA and politics were not allied and requested reports of attempts at intimidation.<sup>24</sup> It was a felony offense to promise, deprive, or threaten to deprive a WPA worker of a job for political reasons. Soliciting political campaign contributions also fell under the felony heading. A person committing these offenses risked a fine of up to \$1,000, a year's imprisonment, or both.<sup>25</sup>

In a 1939 Community Improvement Appraisal, the committee listed several faults of the WPA: insufficient coverage of employment needs, red tape, poor supervision, short hours of workers, and uncertainty and inability to plan ahead. Federal rules and quotas excluded many needy single or skilled people. The WPA also lacked projects to produce enough white collar jobs.<sup>26</sup> Insufficient funds accounted for large numbers of people certified for WPA employment not receiving jobs. The WPA led a hand-to mouth existence since it was funded under Emergency Relief Acts, which were budgeted yearly by Congress. Officials could only plan short term projects as

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<sup>24</sup>Harry L. Hopkins, "The WPA Looks Forward: A Statement and a Forecast," Survey Midmonthly, June 1938, p. 198.

<sup>25</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, p. A2544.

<sup>26</sup>National Appraisal Committee, U.S. Community Improvement Appraisal: A Report on the Work Program of the Work Progress Administration (Washington, D.C., 1939), pp. 18-23.



they were only assured funds for the fiscal year, July 1-June 30.<sup>27</sup>

Poor supervision often resulted from an upward turn in the economy. Higher wages in private employment lured competent supervisors from WPA projects. At this point, another worker moved into the supervisory position and often learned the task through on-the-job training. Naturally, his inexperience led to a decline in efficiency for a time.<sup>28</sup> Inefficiency from inexperienced supervisors never troubled at least two of the Daviess County WPA projects. Larry Depp began his job as WPA Area Engineer in September 1936 and only left the position to join the army in 1942. He provided excellent, continuous leadership for all the major Daviess County WPA construction projects. Mrs. Mary Ruth Shiver organized and supervised the local WPA Recreation Project before moving to the position of Area Recreation Supervisor. Even as Area Supervisor she worked with the Daviess County project. Mrs. Shiver worked for the WPA from 1937-1942.<sup>29</sup>

According to Howard, at one point WPA employees were allowed only a relatively few hours work a month. That created the need to hire several men, working on shifts to complete the work of one man.<sup>30</sup> WPA workers in Daviess

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<sup>27</sup>Howard, The WPA, p. 107.

<sup>28</sup>Charles, Minister of Relief, pp. 229-30.

<sup>29</sup>Depp interview; Interview with Mary Ruth Shiver, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 19 August 1977.

<sup>30</sup>Howard, The WPA, p. 136.

County worked at least eight hours per day from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 or 4:30 p.m. Timekeepers on each job kept records of the hours each man worked on that job.<sup>31</sup>

Depp thought that the greatest flaw of the WPA was that it began massive bureaucracy in government. In the beginning, red tape slowed Hopkins and his Washington office, which in turn kept much needed work relief projects from being started. The comptroller-general's office, just one step on the ladder of approval for WPA projects, returned WPA project applications marked unsatisfactory, but refused to tell what was wrong with them. WPA officials eventually learned through trial and error and much paper work which projects the comptroller-general favored. Red tape within the WPA mounted also. Any request or complaint submitted to WPA officials had to be answered, referred, approved, or investigated. Investigations ensued, which required that reports be filed, and finally the agency issued replies or new instructions to complete the investigation. Local and state administrators complained to journalist Lorena Hickok of the multitudes of forms required of them. She reported to Hopkins that it seemed as if "everyone who rates a private office and secretary in Washington" wanted copies of WPA reports and statistics.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Depp interview.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.; Charles, Minister of Relief, pp. 139-41; Ronald L. Heinemann, Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1983), pp. 100-101.



In June 1938, Hopkins defended the WPA against the cry that it was inefficient. He stated that across the United States it cost less than 5% to administer and less than 10% of the administrative personnel worked in Washington, D.C. Ninety per cent of the administrative personnel worked in the field and in almost all cases it was their home area. He further argued against the view of a huge Washington WPA bureaucracy by pointing out that all WPA workers were selected directly from local relief rolls and 98% of the WPA projects were initiated, sponsored, and supervised locally.<sup>33</sup> This was certainly true in Daviess County. On a few occasions people from outside the county suggested or helped start WPA projects, but the majority of Daviess County WPA projects were devised, supervised, and staffed by local citizens.

A 1942 Louisville Courier-Journal article summed up the weaknesses of WPA, yet also managed to praise it:

It was too centralized. It attempted to apply to the country as a whole a program which should have been tailored to fit the requirements of regions. It was not always efficient, it did not always avoid the strong odor of politics. But by and large it became a part of the American fabric. It put roads and buildings into counties too poor to buy them and gave hopeless men a wage when nobody else would hire them. It was certainly experimental but it was more truly a noble experiment than any earlier venture of the same title and many an American now prospering has cause to remember it kindly.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Hopkins, "The WPA Looks Forward," p. 198.

<sup>34</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, Liquidation of the Work Projects Administration, 77th Cong., 2nd sess., 1942, p. A4204.

Many citizens favored work relief over direct relief-- a doling out of food and supplies. In 1939, WPA Administrator F. C. Harrington supplied the House of Representatives with a written explanation of why the federal government provided jobs for needy unemployed rather than giving them direct relief. He stated that the government chose this method since it was convinced that a dole or handout did not preserve self-respect or an individual's working skills. Work relief kept the person trained and ready to return to private employment as jobs surfaced. The government also viewed work relief as a means to accomplish much needed public improvements across the land while financially aiding the unemployed masses.<sup>35</sup>

An Owensboro Messenger editorial, written in response to WPA criticism, summed up the feeling of many Daviess County government officials and private citizens--with the WPA you get something for your money. A WPA project produced something tangible whether it was an index or a new road. Under the dole, or direct relief, the public had nothing but grocery bills to show for the millions spent to aid unemployed.<sup>36</sup> By October 1936, Daviess County had received \$317,163.88 worth of improvements, with county taxpayers chipping in only \$79,355.18. The county received \$60,907.35 in streets, \$64,484.48 in farm to market roads, \$4,222.90 in

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<sup>35</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, Liquidation of the Work Projects Administration, 77th Cong., 2nd sess., 1942, p. A4204.

<sup>36</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 16 November 1935.



schools, and \$187,549.14 for other construction of a permanent nature from the WPA.<sup>37</sup> Daviess Countians clearly saw what they were getting from work relief expenditures.

State WPA Administrator Goodman pointed out another advantage of work relief. It increased purchasing power within the community, aiding the unemployed and local businessmen. Since relief workers spent their WPA wages within the county, money circulated, alleviating some of the business stagnation.<sup>38</sup> Cash in their pockets allowed Daviess County workers to pay delinquent bills and buy the extra items they managed without during their penniless times.

An intangible value of the WPA work relief program, which many underestimated and never understood, involved morale and self-respect. This probably stemmed directly from the old "Puritan Work Ethic." President Roosevelt emphasized the work principle as he laid the foundation for creating the federal work relief program:

Dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and mental disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit. It is inimical to the dictates of sound policy. It is in violation of the traditions of America. Work must be found for able-bodied but destitute workers.<sup>39</sup>

The 1939 United States Conference of Mayors, composed of Mayors from 100 leading cities, approved the federal

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<sup>37</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 27 October 1936.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Gill, Wasted Manpower, p. 182.

governments efforts in work relief. They also stated their view that "the dole, based upon idleness and groceries, has no place in our American scheme of society."<sup>40</sup>

The Owensboro Messenger pointed out that the dole system could keep the same number of people aided by work relief from starvation at about half the cost. Yet, the writer felt the human and material values gained through the WPA outweighed the expense. The joy of finding a job after months or years of unemployment lifted the man's spirits. At last, he could again become the family's bread winner, regain his self-respect, and a renewed respect from his wife and children.<sup>41</sup> A government dole provided physical help, but failed to provide spiritual or mental aid.

Robert Stiff worked on various Daviess County WPA projects. He thought that most people were honestly out of work and needed the WPA jobs. He sought a WPA job and was very proud to get the job. Despite the criticism the WPA has received, Stiff believes it to be a memorial to the people. He can still look around Daviess County and see the streets and buildings constructed with WPA aid. Stiff's father had a steady job and would have supported his son's family through the hard times. However, Stiff searched for a job, desiring to support his family himself. He proudly began his first WPA job in August 1936 and worked on WPA

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<sup>40</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, p. A2545.

<sup>41</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 16 November 1935.



jobs intermittently for several years, always managing to support his own family. He declared that he definitely would rather work and earn his way than to have taken a handout. His WPA jobs helped him maintain his self-respect during the troubled Depression years.<sup>42</sup>

Terry Coleman, a retired social worker and former Daviess County WPA certifying agent, adamantly stated that the dole system or direct relief was the worst thing the country ever did. He thought that it was and is wrong to help able-bodied men, for if they had self-respect, they would rather work than receive a handout. In many cases, he thought the WPA taught people how to work on the job. Relief personnel learned new skills and gained self-confidence. He witnessed many Daviess Countians trying harder to get regular jobs whenever possible. During difficult times, people did not necessarily need handouts--they needed something to do. Programs such as the WPA kept their minds and bodies busy. Coleman observed that the WPA was wonderful for that time. He thought it was far superior to direct relief because people tended to appreciate things more when they worked to obtain them.<sup>43</sup>

All the Daviess Countians interviewed about the WPA freely admitted it had faults, but in their minds the

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<sup>42</sup>Interview with Robert S. Stiff, Sr., by Shelia E. Heflin, Owensboro, Ky., 7 February 1983.

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Terry Coleman, by Shelia E. Heflin, Owensboro, Ky., 7 February 1983.

benefits of WPA outweighed all its faults. Depp's remarks summarized the views of many Daviess County WPA employees:

The WPA was a very worthwhile program. It had a rough beginning. But, by the time World War II made it no longer necessary, it was a very efficient organization capable of performing almost any type of construction. And while I played a small part in making it work, I wouldn't take anything for my experience. I surely hope and trust that this nation never needs to return to WPA. However, it was better than doling out relief to people without their having a need to work for their bread. I am sure that some of the problems of this nation today could have been solved or avoided had some of the lessons taught by the WPA program been applied.<sup>44</sup>

Depp along with many other people appreciated all the work that the WPA accomplished in Daviess and surrounding counties. They hated to see such a beneficial agency die. Area residents witnessed the beginning of the end in June 1942, when the Madisonville, Kentucky, WPA division of operations district office was discontinued. It had been the district headquarters for 26 Western Kentucky counties since 1933. At its peak in Fall 1937, it employed more than 18,000 people. WPA employees in District One as of June 15, 1942, totaled 3,513. Effective July 1 the 26 county district was divided into three areas--Owensboro, Madisonville, and Paducah. From that time WPA work centered on defense projects and completing all projects already under construction.<sup>45</sup> President Roosevelt wrote the Federal Works Administrator on December 4, 1942, agreeing that liquidation of WPA projects should be accomplished as soon as possible. At that time

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<sup>44</sup>Depp interview.

<sup>45</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 21 June 1942.



5,000 WPA projects were in operation across the nation. Normal project operations closed by April 30, 1943, and the WPA officially ceased to exist on June 30.<sup>46</sup> War prosperity killed the WPA--as the nation's industries cranked up to produce war material, they offered jobs to an ever increasing number of people. The WPA contributed to its own demise by training thousands of people for defense jobs.<sup>47</sup> War, not the federal government, solved the unemployment problem.

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<sup>46</sup>Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-1943 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 15.

<sup>47</sup>John Grover, "WPA Dies Unmourned," Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 2 May 1943, sec. 2, p. 5.

## CHAPTER II

### EMPLOYMENT FOR THE NEEDY

In eight years of existence, the WPA employed approximately 8,500,000 people. This number included artists, writers, actors, and teachers as well as blue collar construction workers. Between 1935 and 1943, Donald S. Howard observed four distinct phases of WPA employment on the national level. The first phase was naturally a period of increase, due to the fact that the WPA program was just beginning. National employment figures continued to rise through February 1936 when the average number of workers employed reached 3,019,000. Employment fell during the second phase, which ended September 1937 with an average of 1,454,000. During the third phase employment rose to a new peak of 3,238,000 in November 1938. WPA critics quickly noted that rises in employment always occurred during the period of time coinciding with national elections. The final phase, of course, was one of decline due to the fact that people previously seeking jobs had found them in defense work.<sup>1</sup>

Although Russell Shifley, an Owensboro city engineer who supervised WPA street crews, did not know the extent that WPA helped cut local unemployment, he recognized the fact

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<sup>1</sup>Howard, The WPA, pp. 532-33.



that "it fed a lot of people who had been out of work."<sup>2</sup>  
 The only figures available showing the number of Daviess  
 Countians involved in the WPA program are yearly totals com-  
 piled by the Welfare League of office visits and home visits  
 for 1938-1940 (see Table 1).<sup>3</sup> These figures are probably  
 somewhat inflated since a person could reapply for aid if  
 turned down at first or the government could demand periodic  
 recertifications.

TABLE 1  
 YEARLY DAVIESS COUNTY WPA TOTALS  
 COMPILED BY WELFARE LEAGUE

Year	Home Visits	Office Interviews	Other Visits
1938	1447	9550	1239
1939	2057	8602	1499
1940	1198	4340	1490

Those eligible for WPA work included "any American citizen or person owing allegiance to the United States, who is eighteen years of age or older, able-bodied, unemployed," and certified by the local relief agency as in need. Only one member per family received WPA work--normally

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Russell Shifley, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 20 November 1977.

<sup>3</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 1 January 1939; 31 December 1939; 1 January 1941.

the head of the family. If the father was unable to work, the certifying agency designated another family member as the economic head of the family.<sup>4</sup> In Daviess County the Welfare League served as certifying agent for the WPA. In February 1936, the Daviess County Fiscal Court created a Welfare Department to handle the federal program and named Mrs. Lawrence Weill, who also directed the Welfare League, to head the department.<sup>5</sup>

Terry Coleman began his job with the Welfare League just as the Depression took hold of America. Mrs. Weill suggested that he transfer to the WPA to work with the certification program. Coleman's starting salary as a WPA social worker was \$78 per month.<sup>6</sup> The WPA office where he worked was located on the second floor of the garage building next door to the City Hall. In August 1938, the office hours for WPA certification were set for Monday and Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.<sup>7</sup> The following statistical report for August 1938 demonstrates the typical monthly work load Coleman and other local WPA social workers handled:

139 visits to homes of WPA workers  
 68 were collateral visits about eligibility  
 949 office interviews  
 145 applications taken  
 75 new certifications  
 31 recertifications

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<sup>4</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, p. A2543.

<sup>5</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger & Inquirer, 3 January 1937.

<sup>6</sup>Coleman interview.

<sup>7</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 6 August 1938.



3 NYA certifications  
8 NYA workers added to cases  
108 applicants awaiting home visits  
30 refused on first interview  
56 refused after investigation  
149 awaiting assignment  
1 case closed<sup>8</sup>

Robert Stiff remembered seeking WPA employment. He was interviewed and asked to state his needs. The interviewer also questioned him about the type of work he would accept. Stiff, as did many others, replied that he would accept anything available.<sup>9</sup> WPA officials attempted to devise employment which would preserve the individual's morale and prevent his skills from deteriorating. Yet, in many cases he was assigned to a job totally unrelated to his former position. Although the people seeking WPA work were not beggars, they could not afford to be too particular since they needed the job. Shifley observed that in Owensboro many different types of people received WPA jobs which did not always involve their former skills. A local ten cent store manager lost his job and received WPA work which involved heavy labor to which he was sorely unaccustomed. Despite this fact, Shifley stated that the man worked at the job a long time, leaving only when he secured a new position in Florida.<sup>10</sup>

Coleman stated that an individual's financial situation was the primary criteria involved in certifying him eligible for WPA work. Coleman conducted the initial interview in

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<sup>8</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 27 August 1938.

<sup>9</sup>Stiff interview.

<sup>10</sup>Shifley interview.

the office. The second phase consisted of a visit to the applicant's home to check on the financial situation first-hand.<sup>11</sup> Once the individual received eligibility certification, he simply awaited assignment to a WPA job. The only people who received preferential treatment were eligible war veterans and then only because the United States Congress directed WPA officials to do so. The WPA Division of Employment selected certified workers from local relief rolls according to their previous experience and training for assignment to WPA projects. Noncertified workers received WPA work only if a special skill was necessary and unavailable among the certified workers. Noncertified personnel could not exceed 5% of the total project work force.<sup>12</sup>

WPA Area Supervisor Depp notified the State WPA office when he needed men for construction projects. Depp did not order by classification, such as skilled or unskilled; he just requested a specific number of men and the state office supplied the appropriate number of certified workers.<sup>13</sup>

Mrs. Mary Ruth Shiver, the Daviess County WPA Recreation Project Supervisor, received 35 people from the WPA rolls to aid in the recreation project. She received their names through the mail. When they reported to her, she assigned them to different locations throughout Owensboro. Many of

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<sup>11</sup>Coleman interview.

<sup>12</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, p. A2543.

<sup>13</sup>Depp interview.



those assigned to Mrs. Shiver had failed to finish high school and had little experience in recreation work. She helped them prepare programs by holding weekly In-Service meetings.<sup>14</sup>

The length of time a person could work for the WPA depended upon the year in which he received work. Coleman stated a person could obtain WPA work indefinitely or until he found another job.<sup>15</sup> Periodically worker's cases were reviewed and they were recertified or disqualified for WPA aid. By December 1939, the WPA certifying agents were required to review all cases every 90 days. At that time the WPA employed approximately 900 local people on projects.<sup>16</sup>

The federal rules handled duration of employment through a rotation policy. The rotation method produced two results. It spread the jobs among more people and kept the workers from becoming too comfortable with WPA work. With rotation, workers were dismissed upon the completion of a project. Thus, they, along with all the other unemployed persons, had the same opportunity to be assigned to the next project. The uncertainty of not having a continuous job often induced them to seek jobs in the private sector.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Shiver interview.

<sup>15</sup>Coleman interview.

<sup>16</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 31 December 1939.

<sup>17</sup>Howard, The WPA, pp. 515-16.

Stiff commented that he served two or three hitches on the WPA.<sup>18</sup> His statement implies that the rotation policy operated in Daviess County.

Beginning with the 1939 Emergency Relief Act, the separation of workers continuously employed for 18 months or more was mandatory. The majority left WPA positions for private employment before their time expired.<sup>19</sup> The nation's gearing up for war supplied many jobs at higher pay in the private sector. Nade Greenlee applied for WPA work and received a job hauling dirt away from projects and building materials to the projects. He drove a truck until his WPA time had expired; and like so many others, he decided not to reapply for more WPA work because he had secured another job in the private sector.<sup>20</sup>

The WPA assisted its workers in finding private employment by insisting they register with the public employment service in order to keep informed of private employment as it became available. When a job needing their skills opened up, they were required to take it, if the employer offered the prevailing local wage and proper working conditions. However, if they should lose their job through no fault of their own, WPA work would still be open to them if they met the eligi-

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<sup>18</sup>Stiff interview.

<sup>19</sup>Federal Works Agency, Third Annual Report, 1942 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 66.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with Nade Greenlee, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 2 October 1977.



bility requirements.<sup>21</sup> Opponents of the program felt that some workers refused private employment to stay on WPA payrolls. The agency investigated thousands of complaints and reported the results to Congress in 1939. They found that nationwide less than one-tenth of one per cent of the accusations were true.<sup>22</sup> Possibly, those receiving WPA work could express the same sentiment that Depp did about his time as WPA Area Supervisor--he stated that he had never worked harder in his life, not even under combat in the Army.<sup>23</sup> Those who could agree with Depp were probably delighted to return to private employment.

WPA wages were another reason to seek private employment. WPA projects paid security wages in monthly allotments. Monthly wages were higher than the monthly relief allowances, which encouraged people to leave the dole and obtain WPA work. Usually, WPA wages were lower than those received in private industry. The lower wages encouraged those with jobs in the private sector to remain there, while prompting WPA workers to seek higher paying jobs in private business. In some rural areas of the South the WPA paid higher wages than the worker would normally receive. However, in other areas the

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<sup>21</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, p. A2544; Federal Works Agency, Report on the Progress of the WPA Program, June 30, 1941 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941), p. 29.

<sup>22</sup>U.S., Congress, House, W. P. A., 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, p. A2544.

<sup>23</sup>Depp interview.

WPA wages did not even equal what the individual received on basic relief. Another problem with relief wages was that they were budgeted for a family of four, and many of the relief families were larger.<sup>24</sup> Wage scales were devised by Congress based on the area of the nation in which the individual lived, the size of his community, and his capabilities (see Tables 2-5).<sup>25</sup> The 1930 census recorded Owensboro's population as 22,765, and this figure reached 30,245 by 1940.<sup>26</sup>

Charles Tipmore stated that Daviess County WPA workers received their pay according to their skills. He said life was pretty rough for him during the Depression and that without the WPA work he would not have had anything to eat.<sup>27</sup> Depp recalled that in Daviess County in the beginning the base pay was thirty cents per hour.<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth Dennison managed to feed and clothe a family of four with the \$12 her husband earned as a WPA laborer each week. He received a pay check every two weeks.<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Shiver, Recreation Project Supervisor, recalled sending in time every two weeks; and the

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<sup>24</sup>Gill, Wasted Manpower, p. 187; Charles, Minister of Relief, p. 233; Howard, The WPA, pp. 166, 192-93.

<sup>25</sup>Howard, The WPA, pp. 860-62; Final Report on the WPA, p. 25.

<sup>26</sup>Polk's Owensboro City Directory, 1933 (St. Louis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1933), p. 12; Polk's Owensboro City Directory, 1943 (St. Louis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1943), p. 12.

<sup>27</sup>Interview with Charles E. Tipmore, by Shelia E. Heflin, Owensboro, Ky., 7 January 1983.

<sup>28</sup>Depp interview.

<sup>29</sup>Interview with Elizabeth Dennison, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 2 August 1977.



TABLE 2  
MONTHLY EARNINGS SCHEDULE  
May 1935

Counties in which the 1930 population of the largest municipality was:

	Regions Over 100,000	50,000- 100,000	25,000- 50,000	5,000- 25,000	Under 5,000
UNSKILLED WORK					
I	\$55	\$52	\$48	\$44	\$40
II	45	42	40	35	32
III	35	33	29	24	21
IV	30	27	25	22	19
INTERMEDIATE WORK					
I	\$65	\$60	\$55	\$50	\$45
II	58	54	50	44	38
III	52	48	43	36	30
IV	49	43	38	32	27
SKILLED WORK					
I	\$85	\$75	\$70	\$63	\$55
II	72	66	60	52	44
III	68	62	56	48	38
IV	68	58	50	42	35
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORK					
I	\$94	\$83	\$77	\$69	\$61
II	79	73	66	57	48
III	75	68	62	53	42
IV	75	64	55	46	39

Regions include the following states:

I--Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

II--Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, West Virginia

III--Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia

IV--Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

TABLE 3  
MONTHLY EARNINGS SCHEDULE  
June 1938

Counties in which the 1930 population of the largest municipality was:

	Regions Over 100,000	50,000- 100,000	25,000- 50,000	5,000- 25,000	Under 5,000
UNSKILLED WORK					
I	\$55	\$52	\$48	\$44	\$40
II	45	42	40	35	32
III	40	38	36	30	26
INTERMEDIATE WORK					
I	\$65	\$60	\$55	\$50	\$45
II	58	54	50	44	38
III	52	48	43	36	30
SKILLED WORK					
I	\$85	\$75	\$70	\$63	\$55
II	72	66	60	52	44
III	68	62	56	48	38
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORK					
I	\$94	\$83	\$77	\$69	\$61
II	79	73	66	57	48
III	75	68	62	53	42

Regions include the following states:

I--Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming

II--Delaware, District of Columbia, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, West Virginia

III--Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia



TABLE 4  
MONTHLY EARNINGS SCHEDULE  
August 1939

Counties in which the 1930 population of the largest municipality was:

	Regions Over 100,000	50,000- 100,000	25,000- 50,000	5,000- 25,000	Under 5,000
UNSKILLED B WORK					
I	\$52.00	\$48.10	\$48.10	\$42.90	\$39.00
II	52.00	48.10	48.10	46.80	44.20
III	46.80	42.90	42.90	36.40	31.20
UNSKILLED A WORK					
I	\$57.20	\$52.00	\$52.00	\$48.10	\$42.90
II	57.20	52.00	52.00	50.70	49.90
III	50.70	48.10	48.10	40.30	35.10
INTERMEDIATE WORK					
I	\$68.90	\$62.40	\$62.40	\$57.20	\$52.00
II	68.90	62.40	62.40	61.10	59.80
III	61.10	57.20	57.20	48.10	42.90
SKILLED WORK					
I	\$89.70	\$81.90	\$81.90	\$74.10	\$67.60
II	89.70	81.90	81.90	79.30	76.70
III	79.30	74.10	74.10	62.40	54.60
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORK					
I	\$94.90	\$84.50	\$84.50	\$76.70	\$68.90
II	94.90	84.50	84.50	81.90	78.00
III	81.90	75.40	75.40	65.00	55.90

Regions include the following states:

I--Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin

II--Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

III--Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

TABLE 5  
MONTHLY EARNINGS SCHEDULE  
September 1939-June 1943

Counties in which the 1940 population of the largest municipality was:

Regions Over 100,000	25,000- 100,000	5,000- 25,000	Under 5,000
UNSKILLED B WORK			
I \$52.00	\$48.10	\$42.90	\$39.00
II 52.00	48.10	46.80	44.20
III 46.80	42.90	36.40	31.20
UNSKILLED A WORK			
I \$57.20	\$52.00	\$48.10	\$42.90
II 57.20	52.00	50.70	49.40
III 50.70	48.10	40.30	35.10
INTERMEDIATE WORK			
I \$68.90	\$62.40	\$57.20	\$52.00
II 68.90	62.40	61.10	59.80
III 61.10	57.20	48.10	42.90
SKILLED WORK			
I \$89.70	\$81.90	\$74.10	\$67.60
II 89.70	81.90	79.30	76.70
III 79.30	74.10	62.40	54.60
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORK			
I \$94.90	\$84.50	\$76.70	\$68.90
II 94.90	84.50	81.90	78.00
III 81.90	75.40	65.00	55.90

Regions include the following states:  
 I--Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts,  
 Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsyl-  
 vania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, West Vir-  
 ginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Mis-  
 souri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota,  
 North Dakota  
 II--Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona,  
 Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California  
 III--Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia,  
 Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas,  
 Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas



workers then received their pay in the form of a check from the federal government.<sup>30</sup>

Mrs. Shiver received higher monthly wages because she was classified as a professional. She earned \$57.60 a month as her first salary, and with this amount she adequately supported her husband and daughter. At the end of four years her pay had increased to slightly over \$100 per month.<sup>31</sup> Area Supervisor Depp, also classified as a professional, earned under \$200 per month when he began working with the WPA program. In 1942, when he left to join the service, he earned approximately \$230 a month.<sup>32</sup> Individuals working for the WPA did so to survive because they certainly could not become wealthy on WPA wages.

Men and women--black or white--received work on WPA projects. Throughout the United States in 1937, the WPA employed 1,477,000 people, of which 82% were males and 18% females.<sup>33</sup> This fact is indicative of the Nineteen-Thirties. At that time males were the traditional family providers and received a majority of the jobs. The women receiving WPA jobs did so because they were designated as family providers if they were single or their spouse was unable to work or deceased. Men and women WPA workers of the white race greatly

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<sup>30</sup>Shiver interview.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Depp interview.

<sup>33</sup>Corrington Gill, "W. P. A.," Current History, 48 (January 1938):37.

out numbered the blacks and people of other races. Discrimination at local certifying agencies could account for the large number of white WPA workers. Whites first, blacks last had been a philosophy held by many United States citizens for years.

The WPA helped women obtain jobs, but only in traditional areas. The female construction worker did not appear until World War II created a man shortage. In Making Do, Jeane Westin reported a case involving a woman qualified to teach, but unable to attain a job with a public school system. The WPA provided the lady with a job teaching adult education classes. She declared that the WPA experience helped preserve her morale and self-respect.<sup>34</sup> On the local level, Mrs. Shiver was an example of a qualified woman needing work. She stopped teaching to raise a family, but times were hard and her husband could not find work. The three member family moved to Owensboro from the county in hopes of finding work. Unexpectedly in December 1935, John L. Foust, Superintendent of the Owensboro Public Schools, approached Mrs. Shiver and asked that she take over as teacher for the WPA adult education program. She gladly accepted and soon began teaching general math. Before long Foust recommended her to organize and supervise the WPA Recreation Project in Owensboro. She felt that her work with the Recreation Project was very rewarding:

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<sup>34</sup>Jeane Westin, Making Do: How Women Survived the Thirties (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1976), p. 165.



Not only did it give me something to live on and some work to do during that period of time, but it gave me a broader outlook on life and a broader education because I was re-educated in another way that I had never had.<sup>35</sup>

The Shiver family benefited physically from the WPA because it helped put food on their table. Mrs. Shiver also received a mental benefit. Her WPA job not only kept her body busy, but it also stimulated her mind and boosted her morale.

Another traditional program for women was the sewing project. WPA sewing projects sponsored by city and county governments supplied jobs for a great number of women across the nation. Mrs. Bernadine King, a widow with several children, earned \$24 every two weeks on the Owensboro WPA sewing project. She liked sewing, but truly enjoyed the regular paycheck. Before acquiring this job she had trouble making ends meet, however, once at work she was able to budget her check and the financial problems eased. Working for money on a relief project appealed to her much more than waiting for a humiliating dole.<sup>36</sup> Other Daviess County projects for women involved housekeeping, child care, cooking, and clerical work.

Regardless of race, each certified person on the relief rolls should have received the same opportunities. Congressional legislation actually imposed penalties on anyone who deprived eligible men and women from receiving WPA benefits

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<sup>35</sup>Shiver interview.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Bernadine King, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 14 April 1979.

because of race, creed, or color.<sup>37</sup> Despite the federal regulations, some state and local agencies practiced discrimination. At times, sponsors refused to initiate or contribute to the cost of WPA projects that required skills that black workers possessed. Another method of denying blacks jobs involved the certification process. The certifying agents simply used a different set of eligibility requirements for blacks or reviewed their applications more slowly than they did for the white people.<sup>38</sup> Coleman denied that such activities occurred in Daviess County. He stated that there was no local problem with segregation and everybody received the same treatment at the local WPA certifying office.<sup>39</sup>

Depp recalled that discrimination did not exist in the Owensboro projects. He remembered unskilled black workers and skilled black concrete finishers working along side white workers. The skilled black concrete finishers even received higher pay due to their qualifications. Supervisors requested a specific number of workers and simply used the people sent to the project regardless of their color.<sup>40</sup> Shifley stated he never paid any attention to color; men were

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<sup>37</sup>Federal Works Agency, Jobs for American Workers: The Negro in the Government's Work Program (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), pp. 3-4.

<sup>38</sup>Howard, The WPA, pp. 291-92.

<sup>39</sup>Coleman interview.

<sup>40</sup>Depp interview.



assigned to street or sewer crews wherever a vacancy occurred.<sup>41</sup> Stiff, who worked on several WPA projects, never encountered any problems with black workers. He stated that the average appeared to be one black worker out of approximately twelve white workers.<sup>42</sup>

Mrs. Shiver taught weekly integrated workshops for her recreation project leaders. In fact, she stated that she was the first one to integrate blacks and whites in such a manner. An English lady objected to blacks attending the meetings, but Mrs. Shiver quickly pointed out that she did not have time to conduct two separate workshops per week. Several weeks later the lady apologized for her remarks, stating that she had discovered that blacks also had worthwhile ideas to contribute to the sessions.<sup>43</sup> J. P. Perkins, a black who supervised the park for black people, reported that he never felt any hostility at these meetings. Perkins also reported that black children competed with white children in the other parks. He deemed this competition to be the first real evidence of local integration.<sup>44</sup> Girvin, an occasional WPA worker, summed up the question of fair treatment of blacks in the Owensboro projects:

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<sup>41</sup>Shifley interview.

<sup>42</sup>Stiff interview.

<sup>43</sup>Shiver interview.

<sup>44</sup>Interview with Joseph P. Perkins, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 18 October 1977.

WPA was for everyone, not just for certain races or certain colors. It was for everybody in the city. Black or white--if they believed in a days work, a days pay they will receive.<sup>45</sup>

The problem of segregation appeared to be nonexistent in Daviess County according to local WPA supervisors and workers involved in construction activities. However, the service projects--recreation and sewing--are proof that major segregation existed locally. Indeed, as Mrs. Shiver stated, the black and white recreation instructors met together for weekly training meetings, but they returned to their jobs at separate parks designated as white or black. An October 1937, Owensboro Messenger article reported the weekly attendance at the individual parks; there was one "colored" park compared to three parks which were not given a racial designation in parenthesis.<sup>46</sup> The WPA sewing project operated at two locations. The white women worked in the Ames building on St. Elizabeth Street, while black women gathered in the United Brothers of Friendship Hall at Third and Cedar Streets.<sup>47</sup>

Segregation existed in Daviess County, but not to the degree that it had in years past. Blacks and whites were becoming more aware of one another--they faced many of the same problems during the Depression. The fact that blacks were given jobs at equal pay to whites and treated fairly in

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<sup>45</sup>Girvin interview.

<sup>46</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 5 October 1937.

<sup>47</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger & Inquirer, 20 September 1936.



receiving job assignments was probably a tremendous advance in race relations in a county which exhibited great Southern sympathy during the Civil War. To many of the men and women of the Thirties and Forties, just offering programs for blacks, although they were held at different locations, was viewed as a step forward. Perhaps the WPA facilitated race relations as well as providing work relief for the unemployed.

## CHAPTER III

### FROM OUTHOUSES TO HOSPITALS

Faced with millions of unemployed workers, WPA Administrator Harry Hopkins initially looked for projects which would employ many people, yet require little training. Construction projects solved his dilemma. The building and construction trades covered a wide variety of skilled and unskilled occupations, areas in which the majority of the unemployed worked prior to the Depression. Therefore, four-fifths of the WPA program dealt with construction projects.<sup>1</sup>

By December 1940, approximately 79% of the WPA expenditures involved construction projects. The remaining 21% involved educational, professional, and clerical projects. The percentages of funds expended from July 1935 through December 1940 on various types of WPA projects indicates the areas of greatest employment nationwide:

CONSTRUCTION-39.2%	Highways, roads, and streets
10.4%	Public buildings
10.1%	Publicly owned or operated utilities
8.6%	Recreational facilities
3.8%	Conservation
2.2%	Airports and airways

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<sup>1</sup>Harry L. Hopkins, Spending to Save: The Complete Story of Relief (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1936), p. 168; Harry Hopkins, Congressional Digest 17 (June-July 1938):177.



NONCONSTRUCTION-6.6%	Sewing
2.0%	Research and surveys
2.0%	Education
1.5%	Public records
1.0%	Library projects <sup>2</sup>

Across the nation the WPA built or repaired thousands of roads, schools, hospitals, public buildings, and recreation centers. These improvements were needed prior to the Depression, yet were left undone--it took unemployment to accomplish the necessary construction work.<sup>3</sup> WPA work in Daviess County, Kentucky, serves as an excellent example of the projects going on throughout the United States. WPA Area Engineer Larry Depp supervised many worthwhile construction projects in Daviess County, which included sealing old mine entrances to keep minerals from polluting streams, making concrete blocks and pipes, laying sewers, building city streets, county roads and bridges, schools, gyms, and a seven story fireproof addition to the Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital.<sup>4</sup> A 1942 Louisville Courier-Journal map reported that with WPA help public buildings, utilities, and recreational facilities were constructed in the county along with 132 miles of streets and roads and 642 outhouses. The dollar value of these projects totaled \$3,038,153.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Arthur E. Burns and Edward A. Williams, Federal Work, Security and Relief Programs (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941), p. 58.

<sup>3</sup>Dean R. Brimhall, "The Paradox of the WPA," Common Sense 7 (September 1938):16-17.

<sup>4</sup>Depp interview.

<sup>5</sup>Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal, 18 April 1942.

A majority of Daviess County men probably worked on street and road construction. According to Depp, practically every street in Owensboro prior to World War II was paved or improved by the WPA, and in most cases sewers were also installed.<sup>6</sup> The city sponsored the WPA street projects from January 1936 to May 1943, and the City Engineer's office designed and supervised the construction.<sup>7</sup> The city furnished a percentage of the materials, and the WPA supplied the remainder plus the workers. Retired City Engineer Russell Shifley stated that the percentage the city provided depended upon the amount of labor needed for the job. He said that this arrangement "made it a little easier on the cities because most of them, especially Owensboro, was in financial straits and it aided the city to do more work because they didn't have to pay the total cost of the material." In fact, Owensboro even recovered a portion of its material cost from the property owners who petitioned the city to have their street paved and agreed to pay footage. This amount, calculated to pay the city's portion of materials, ranged from 90¢ to \$1.50 per lineal foot.<sup>8</sup>

From 1936-1939 the streets were paved with water bound macadam and surfaced with natural rock asphalt. In 1939 crushed limestone became difficult to obtain, and the city

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<sup>6</sup>Depp interview. (See Appendix for list of WPA street and road projects.)

<sup>7</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) City Engineer Department, List of Streets Constructed with WPA Aid, January 1936-May 1943.

<sup>8</sup>Shifley interview.



engineer switched to Portland cement concrete. The switch allowed the street crews to use river gravel and sand as the aggregate, both of which were easily acquired locally. The WPA operated a rock quarry between Livia and Glenville to help supply sandstone for county road projects. Depp estimated 20-25 men worked on the quarry project using aircompressors to blast the stone and the county's rock crushing machinery to crush the rock into a useable size.<sup>9</sup>

Shifley marveled that many of the WPA constructed streets still exist and are in fairly good shape. All the street work was done by hand to assure as many people as possible WPA jobs. WPA men prepared the grade with picks and shovels. A concrete mixer was allowed, but it was fed by hand. When ready, the workmen rolled the two bag mixer to the spot and dumped it. Then they spread and finished the concrete entirely by hand.<sup>10</sup>

Approximately 550 men per year received WPA work on city streets and county roads between July 1936 and December 1938. A June 1938, Owensboro Messenger news article reported that since 1936 the WPA had spent \$456,416 on city streets, sewers, and water mains compared to the \$140,035 that city officials and property owners spent as sponsors. The WPA spent \$128,061 on county road projects with the county contributing only \$30,244 as the sponsor. The WPA not only

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<sup>9</sup>Depp interview; Tipmore interview; Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 1 January 1939.

<sup>10</sup>Shifley interview.

employed the economically needy, but also made possible improvements that "would either not be made or would be years in coming to Owensboro."<sup>11</sup>

WPA street work within Owensboro included surfacing the streets with either cinders, oil, or concrete, and constructing curbs and gutters. Owensboro had 85 miles of streets in January 1942. Twenty-five miles were paved, and the remainder were cindered or oil treated. Although the city began paving projects in 1901, the WPA accounted for approximately 42% of the improvements in just a short span of time--four years.<sup>12</sup>

WPA county road projects often involved preparing the road for proper surfacing by grading and draining the area. Many roads were surfaced with either bank gravel or river gravel.<sup>13</sup> During 1938, with 250 men the WPA built almost 30 miles of new roads in Daviess County and also added 4 bridges: two with 16 foot spans, one 20 foot span, and one 15 foot span.<sup>14</sup> WPA labor also expended a lot of muscle in 1941 when they constructed six culverts, six bridges, and 20 miles of highway.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 12 June 1938.

<sup>12</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 4 January 1942.

<sup>13</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger & Inquirer, 27 September 1936.

<sup>14</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 1 January 1939.

<sup>15</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 4 January 1942.



Sewer projects provided another area of employment for a majority of people. It took muscle, not skill, to man a shovel for digging ditches. During May 1938, approximately 300 men received WPA employment either constructing or repairing Owensboro sewers.<sup>16</sup> According to Shifley, the areas of Owensboro which did not have sewers at that time, received them with the aid of the WPA.<sup>17</sup> The city spent \$36,156 in 1938, while the WPA contributed \$70,294 for the two and seven-tenths miles of sewers built that year. Sewer work not only involved digging the ditches, but also included constructing the manholes and making all the necessary house connections and laterals.<sup>18</sup>

Charles Tipmore, who lost his job making furniture at the Ames factory, dug ditches for the WPA sewer project which ran from the street car barn at Sixth and Breckenridge Streets to Fourth Street. He used grub hoes, spades, and long handle shovels to dig the ditch. Tipmore stated that the WPA worker dug, but city employees actually laid the sewer pipe.<sup>19</sup> Edward Girvin recalled earning about 25¢ an hour digging ditches on a WPA sewer project on East Nineteenth Street. He was sixteen or seventeen years old the first time he worked for the WPA. He worked in a team with two other men digging a ten foot ditch. The two men took advantage of Girvin's

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<sup>16</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 4 May 1938.

<sup>17</sup>Shifley interview.

<sup>18</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 1 January 1939.

<sup>19</sup>Tipmore interview.

youth by putting him in the bottom of the ditch with a short handle shovel while they stayed on top. As he tossed out dirt, they used the long handle shovels to throw it back out of the way. The two men handled the same amount of dirt as one did, with better shovels. Girvin stated that his strenuous first day of work exhausted him. The next day, the foreman learned of the situation and questioned Girvin as to why he was in the bottom of the ditch with the short handle shovel. He replied that the other two told him to work in the bottom and that there were only two long handle shovels and they got them. The foreman made those two men get in the bottom and kept Girvin on top for the remainder of the project. Despite the initial treatment he received, Girvin believes that the WPA was not only beneficial to the participants, but also to the cities.<sup>20</sup>

The biggest sewer project undertaken by the WPA was the repair of the sewer cave in at Sixteenth and Breckenridge Streets. A March 1938 cloudburst caused the 70 foot deep tunnel sewer to break. The rushing water carried sand and subsoil into the break, creating a huge hole, about 300 feet by 150 feet, that caused seven homes on Breckenridge Street to slide inside. Depp stated that they needed in excess of 30,000 cubic yards of dirt to refill the hole, which equalled approximately 8,000 loads of rubbish, cinders, and soil. Over a fourteen month period a new shaft was constructed to the deep tunnel, and the damaged sewer was replaced with a

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<sup>20</sup>Girvin interview.



new sewer line at a more shallow elevation. The new shaft alone cost over \$13,000. Cleaning 5,000 yards of sand from the sewer break to the river, 15-16 blocks away, also cost several thousand dollars. Shifley recalled that it took three different WPA appropriations to finish the costly repair job.<sup>21</sup>

Other sewer projects in the rural areas of Daviess County took the form of the old-fashion country outhouse. A September 1936 news article reported that WPA workers had built 225 of 400 sanitary toilets. They built these in accordance with specifications provided by the state board of health.<sup>22</sup> The threat of typhoid led the State Department of Health to cooperate with the WPA and the United States Public Health Service in providing a program of "community sanitation involving the installation of sanitary privies on any property, either public or private."<sup>23</sup> Robert Stiff worked on the WPA sanitary toilet project. He remembered being taken around by truck out in the county where he asked the home owner if he could inspect their outhouse. If the privy failed to meet government standards, he discussed the situation with the owner. The owner was not forced to acquire a new outhouse, but if he wanted a new one the WPA would build

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<sup>21</sup>Shifley interview; Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 28 May 1939.

<sup>22</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger & Inquirer, 27 September 1936.

<sup>23</sup>Judy Jenkins, "There's a place for nostalgia, but there should be some limit," Henderson (Ky.) Gleaner, 16 March 1938, p. B1.

it. The catch was that the property owner had to pay for the materials. If they wanted a new outhouse, Stiff added their name to his list. After he collected several names, WPA workers began constructing the new facilities.<sup>24</sup>

The sanitary toilets were built on Eighteenth Street across from the old Ames building. Later the project moved to the Stanley area of the county.<sup>25</sup> Naturally, the shell of the outhouse was wood. A concrete slab served as the floor with a concrete seat and lid attached. All this was placed over a deep hole which was walled up with wood.<sup>26</sup> Once in place, the new WPA outhouse was ready for immediate use.

In the beginning of the WPA many people voiced the opinion that building outhouses was as big a project as needed to be assigned to WPA workers. However, under the leadership of capable supervisors, the public soon realized it was possible to take people on relief and do something worthwhile for the community.<sup>27</sup> The WPA project at the Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital is a prime example of these attitudes.

WPA Area Engineer Depp read in the local newspaper about a meeting between Judge Jim Wilson, Mayor Fred Weir,

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<sup>24</sup>Stiff interview.

<sup>25</sup>Tipmore interview.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Willetta Francine Whitten Brown, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 2 August 1977.

<sup>27</sup>Depp interview.



and the hospital board concerning a proposed \$150,000 bond issue for construction of an addition to the hospital. He attended the meeting and suggested they proceed with the bond issue, but also apply for WPA aid. They laughed at him, asking if it would have two holes or three holes. He loaded them into his car and drove to Madisonville, Kentucky, where they viewed the WPA at work on a hospital and a high school. Properly impressed, they decided to try Depp's suggestion.<sup>28</sup>

In a special meeting, held January 26, 1938, then Mayor Harry C. Smith and City Commissioners Lyman S. Cox and Henry Cline agreed to execute WPA Form No. 301, which involved applying for WPA assistance. They also contracted with Otis and Lea of Louisville, Kentucky, for drawing up the hospital plans.<sup>29</sup> The WPA approved the project application and allocated \$125,498 toward the construction cost. The city financed the remaining funds by selling \$150,000 worth of bonds. Excavation work for the hospital foundation began January 23, 1939.<sup>30</sup> A. D. Gore, the WPA foreman, used 35 men to clear the grounds and excavate for the heating plant. The number of workers increased as the project progressed.<sup>31</sup> In order to insure the maximum amount of WPA labor, Depp

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) City Commission, Minutes of Meetings of the City Commissioners, 1938, Meeting of 26 January 1938. (Typewritten.)

<sup>30</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 22 January 1939.

<sup>31</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 26 January 1939.

planned that the 60,000 cinder blocks needed for the seven story building be built on the hospital grounds. Cinder blocks were used for the inner wall and were faced with brick. WPA workmen tamped very fine cinders into a mold to form the blocks. M. N. Boston, superintendent of the hospital construction, reported 20,000 cinder blocks ready to be used on June 24, 1939. At that time 103 men from relief rolls worked on the site.<sup>32</sup> Nade Greenlee and James Dennison were two of the workmen on this project. Greenlee hauled dirt away from the project and earned approximately 25¢ per hour. Dennison helped construct the smoke stack and the floors of the main building and took home \$12 per week for his efforts.<sup>33</sup>

The new addition took two years and five months to build. WPA men worked on almost every phase of the construction. The plumbing and electrical work were the only jobs handled by outsiders. The new, seven story addition contained 27 private rooms, 10 semi-private rooms, and 4 rooms which contained 4 beds each. The addition doubled the capacity of the old hospital. Included were a surgical department on the seventh floor and a kitchen plus classrooms for student nurses in the basement. Hundreds of people toured the new hospital on June 22, 1941, at an informal open house.

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<sup>31</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 26 January 1939.

<sup>32</sup>Depp interview; Greenlee interview; Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 25 June 1939.

<sup>33</sup>Greenlee interview; Dennison interview.



The following day a formal dedication with a flag raising ceremony officially opened the new hospital unit.<sup>34</sup>

The WPA also took great interest in projects dealing with public schools. WPA funds not only helped build halls of learning, but also provided extras from which students derived pleasure. During Fall 1938, WPA workers laid sidewalks at Owensboro Senior High, Longfellow, Emerson, and Washington Elementary Schools.<sup>35</sup> Owensboro High School students certainly enjoyed one particular extra, an addition to their school stadium, which WPA funds provided in 1940-1941. The Owensboro Board of Education authorized and signed the application for WPA aid at its February 1940 meeting. They agreed to sponsor the project which entailed building sections to seat 1800 people on the east side of the football field and 400 people on the west. The estimated cost for these improvements totaled \$30,400. The Board was responsible for one-fourth, or \$7,600, of this amount.<sup>36</sup>

The architectural plans and the WPA application were sent to the Madisonville WPA office for approval. Approved at this level, they traveled to Louisville, and then to Washington, D.C. for final approval.<sup>37</sup> The Board received word

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<sup>34</sup>Depp interview; Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 22 June 1941; William Foster Hayes, Sixty Years of Owensboro, 1883-1943 (Owensboro, Ky.: Messenger Job Printing Co., 1943), pp. 76-77.

<sup>35</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 15 November 1938.

<sup>36</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 9 February 1940.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

in April 1940 from Congressman B. M. Vincent that the WPA approved \$30,926 for the additions to Rash Stadium.<sup>38</sup> Later, in July 1941, Senator Alben W. Barkley wired Superintendent John L. Foust that the WPA had allotted \$10,016, for additional improvements. The improvements included a drainage system, a running track, repairing the seats in the old stadium, and a concrete wall around the football field.<sup>39</sup>

John T. Stites supervised the WPA stadium project, which began in early July 1940, with twenty men preparing the grounds for construction work.<sup>40</sup> By early September the workmen excavated and poured the concrete base for the new portion of the stadium and began pouring concrete for the 400 seat annex to the old part of the stadium. The eastern tier also included a press box in the center and a band stand.<sup>41</sup> At the August 1941 school board meeting, Superintendent Foust reported on the project, "as tile is being put in to drain the field, a water system is being installed to sprinkle the field. Preparations are being made to build a concrete block wall around the field."<sup>42</sup> Red Devil supporters helped WPA and city officials formally dedicate the new additions to Rash Stadium on Friday, September 21,

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<sup>38</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Board of Education, Minutes of Meetings of the School Board, 1940, Meeting of 11 April 1940. (Typewritten.)

<sup>39</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 15 July 1941.

<sup>40</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 9 July 1940.

<sup>41</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 1 September 1940.

<sup>42</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 23 August 1941.



1941, in the pre-game activities of the OHS-Reitz Memorial football game. Although OHS lost, 34-13, the fans jubilantly celebrated the completion of the WPA stadium project.<sup>43</sup>

The Daviess County Board of Education also applied to the WPA for aid to modernize and improve its schools. During August 1936, the Board announced that WPA projects for its West Louisville, Sutherland, and Whitesville schools had been approved. The WPA and the school board installed a \$600 cistern to provide more water at West Louisville and extended the basement at Sutherland into a playroom. A \$2,000 project at Whitesville included painting and plastering classrooms, building a parking lot, and adding to the farm shop.<sup>44</sup> Paint, plaster, new sidewalks and driveways, and landscape work for the grounds constituted the WPA work approved for Stanley and Maceo elementary schools.<sup>45</sup> During 1940, the WPA provided a \$9,155 grant to the school board for the addition of an auditorium at Sutherland school.<sup>46</sup>

The largest WPA project sponsored by the county school board involved the building of a new Utica High and Grade School. In 1936, the WPA repaired the old Utica school by plastering and painting as needed and sprucing up the outside by landscaping the yard. They also added two new rooms for

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<sup>43</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 21 September 1941.

<sup>44</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 16 August 1936.

<sup>45</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 9 February 1939.

<sup>46</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 23 May 1940.

the agriculture class and farmshop and elevated the home economics wing by constructing a basement beneath it. The improvements and repairs cost \$7,000, of which the county board paid only \$600.<sup>47</sup> P. C. Younker, a WPA engineer, reported that 40 men were at work on the project in September 1936.<sup>48</sup> The Utica community celebrated the project's completion with a basket dinner at the school on December 1, 1936.<sup>49</sup> All their work crumbled to the ground when the school burned December 10, 1938. The Board of Education met in called session on January 10, 1939, and instructed its architect to apply for WPA aid. The minutes of that meeting state, "It was thought wise by the board to apply for W. P. A. assistance due to the great saving in this building."<sup>50</sup> The WPA replied in April, allotting \$48,168 for the \$80,000 project.<sup>51</sup> In mid-January 1941, the WPA approved an additional allocation of \$4,082 for landscaping the grounds and for other minor construction not included in the original grant.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 July 1936.

<sup>48</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger & Inquirer, 27 September 1936.

<sup>49</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 29 November 1936.

<sup>50</sup>Daviess County (Ky.) Board of Education, Minutes of Meeting of the School Board, Meeting of 10 January 1939. (Typewritten.)

<sup>51</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 20 April 1939; 4 January 1942.

<sup>52</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 26 January 1941.



Nade Greenlee, a WPA worker, hauled material to the Utica project site. He earned about 25¢ per hour to haul such items as posts and benches to the school and haul dirt away from the grading.<sup>53</sup> The construction of the new school took less than two years. At the November 1940 school board meeting Walter Scott Roberts, the architect, announced that the school would be ready for occupancy January 1, 1941.<sup>54</sup> The building was ultra modern and its architectural design was unique in Daviess County. One of the newest innovations of the time, reinforced monolithic concrete construction made the building fireproof. Tipmore recalled building runways 30-40 feet in the air during the construction work. Workmen then rolled wheelbarrows full of concrete up the incline. At the top, they dumped the concrete into the forms. Educators wholeheartedly approved the many windows to admit the necessary light for study without eyestrain. The thoroughly modern school included an auditorium-gymnasium, a sound proof music room, a library, nine classrooms, complete science units, a cafeteria and kitchen, and an office for the principal.<sup>55</sup>

The city school board sponsored the Owensboro Technical High School project, its largest project in connection with the WPA. On October 19, 1939, the WPA approved plans for the

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<sup>53</sup>Greenlee interview.

<sup>54</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 6 November 1940.

<sup>55</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 26 January 1941; Tipmore interview.

building of a new trade and vocational school with a grant of \$76,989. The project included demolishing the old building and erecting a new building which would house a trade school for boys, a vocational school for girls, and an auditorium-gymnasium.<sup>56</sup>

WPA workmen began demolishing the old building February 14, 1940. On May 20, they started pouring concrete and by July 31, the bricklayers were at work.<sup>57</sup> The new three story structure fronted 180 feet on Frederica Street and extended 178 feet on Fifteenth Street.<sup>58</sup> Approximately 90 WPA men worked on the project at the time of the corner stone laying ceremony on October 17, 1940. The building was 35% complete with the gym ready for its roof and the third story concrete floor already poured.<sup>59</sup> Depp described the excellent construction of the school:

This building was of beam and column construction, reinforced concrete and masonry from its foundation to the ceiling of the top floor, fireproof, even to the doors, stairways. The only thing you could have burned was the wooden surface on the seats in the gym, which were set on concrete, and the roof.<sup>60</sup>

In July 1941, the WPA allotted \$4,167 more for improvements to the Technical High grounds. The work included

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<sup>56</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 October 1939.

<sup>57</sup>WPA Description of Owensboro Technical High School, Owensboro, Ky., 17 October 1940. (Placed in Corner Stone of Building.)

<sup>58</sup>John L. Foust, "Some Facts About the Owensboro Trade School or Technical High School," 17 October 1940. (Type-written Report Placed in Corner Stone of Building.)

<sup>59</sup>WPA Description.

<sup>60</sup>Depp interview.



laying concrete sidewalks, street curbs, and making two driveways.<sup>61</sup> WPA workmen completed the building October 18, 1941. The cost, including equipment, totaled \$225,000.<sup>62</sup> School board members and WPA officials, aided by many proud Owensboroans, dedicated the new Owensboro Technical High School on October 30, 1941.<sup>63</sup>

Needing office and storage space, the WPA, in cooperation with the City of Owensboro, built a very useful warehouse on the corner of Fourth and Orchard Streets. The city paid only \$1,400 for the project and the WPA supplied the remainder of the \$8,420.<sup>64</sup> Greenlee, a WPA truck driver, stated that concrete mixers, cement, picks, shovels, and various other tools were stored in the warehouse. The building also contained the Area Supervisors office.<sup>65</sup> At the WPA's demise the warehouse became city property. It has since been a part of the city garage and the headquarters for the city beautification department.

Along with constructing large buildings, the WPA workers also aided in smaller tasks. When the old city light plant at Fourteenth and Lewis Streets was demolished WPA registrants cleaned the bricks for other construction

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<sup>61</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 15 July 1941.

<sup>62</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 30 October 1941.

<sup>63</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 31 October 1941.

<sup>64</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 23 August 1938.

<sup>65</sup>Greenlee interview.

projects.<sup>66</sup> Mrs. Sue Roberts McCulloch, former director of the Owensboro Carnegie Free Public Library, related the fact that WPA employees washed the inside library walls during a cleanup campaign. She remarked that the women worked hard while the men sat around. She instructed the men to get up and get busy or she would refuse to sign their work record at day's end.<sup>67</sup>

The Daviess County Fiscal Court sponsored a beautification project in Spring 1940. The WPA granted \$2,186 for the improvement and beautification of the Daviess County Courthouse lawn. County Agents J. E. McClure and W. O. Hubbard directed the landscaping project, with the local Garden Club also providing assistance.<sup>68</sup> In a sense, the WPA crews which sealed old mine entrances also contributed to the beautification of Daviess County, as well as making the area safer. The sealed entrances prohibited copperas water from leaving the mine to pollute streams and damage nearby vegetation.<sup>69</sup> A concrete wall also hindered precocious children and adventuresome adults from coming to harm in an abandoned mine. Tipmore explained that WPA workmen sealed old mines in the Mosleyville area by building a form and

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<sup>66</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 30 October 1941.

<sup>67</sup>Interview with Sue Roberts McCulloch, by Shelia E. Brown, Owensboro, Ky., 4 February 1981.

<sup>68</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 15 March 1940.

<sup>69</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger & Inquirer, 27 September 1936.



pouring concrete down into it. The hardened concrete effectively sealed the mine entrance.<sup>70</sup>

White collar workers suffered the pains of unemployment just as much as the blue collar workers. Although white collar projects accounted for less than one-fourth of WPA expenditures, they provided a vital source of employment for women and the needy from clerical, professional, and service fields.<sup>71</sup> WPA administrators devised programs involving the fine arts, education, local government records, and public health to provide jobs for unemployed in the white collar sector.

The federal government sponsored four WPA fine arts programs. The Federal Theatre, Music, and Art programs never developed in Daviess County. However, the Federal Writers' Project did exist in the county. The Federal Writers' Project prepared thousands of publications across the nation. Their American Guide series compiled detailed information on each of the 48 states. WPA writers used material in the Owensboro Carnegie Library to compile information on Owensboro, Daviess County, and surrounding areas for the Kentucky volume of the series.<sup>72</sup> Mrs. McCulloch stated that Cecelia Laswell worked for the WPA and used a great deal of information from library materials in her

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<sup>70</sup>Tipmore interview.

<sup>71</sup>Burns, Federal Work, p. 60.

<sup>72</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 12 July 1936.

writings.<sup>73</sup> Laswell also gained information through oral interviews. She interviewed a former slave to provide the Daviess County entry in the WPA Slave Narratives.<sup>74</sup>

Laswell began work on the writers project November 25, 1935. She earned \$24 every two weeks. A December 2, 1935 letter to her district supervisor listed four Owensboroans who had agreed to serve as her advisory board: Mr. Edward E. Smith, Mr. A. Baer, Mrs. Ethel Brown, and Mrs. Sue McCulloch. Possibly these people suggested contacts for Laswell to interview in order to fulfill her weekly writing assignments. The district supervisor sent Laswell weekly topic assignments which she researched, composed an appropriate article, and returned the finished project by mail. Miss Margaret A. McClain of the Kentucky Library at Western Teachers College in Bowling Green, Kentucky, served as her district supervisor through Spring 1936. In August 1936, Laswell addressed any questions or problems to a different supervisor, Miss Virginia M. Landfear of Murray, Kentucky. A bound compilation of Laswell's writing assignments is located in the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library. It includes historical tidbits dealing with Daviess, Hancock,

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<sup>73</sup>McCulloch interview.

<sup>74</sup>Federal Writers' Project, "Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves," 1936-1938, Manuscript Division, Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky.



McLean, and Ohio counties in Kentucky.<sup>75</sup>

Another white collar project, the historical records survey, trained men and women directly from relief rolls to inventory and prepare bibliographical guides for the multitude of documents located in city halls, courthouses, and state capitols. The bibliographies undoubtedly proved to be great aids for officials and researchers.<sup>76</sup> Four historical survey projects, the Real Property Survey, the Historical Records Project, the Record Indexing Project, and the Traffic Violation File, operated in Daviess County. Miss Louise Kelly of Madisonville, Kentucky, addressed a special meeting of the Owensboro City Commission on February 10, 1938, to explain WPA work involving indexing city ordinances. The Commission accepted the idea and agreed to sponsor the project.<sup>77</sup> Mrs. Gwendolyn Rickert supervised eight workers who indexed the city ordinances from April 1866 to January 30, 1939. The project commenced March 1, 1938, and ended January 24, 1939. The eleven month project consisted of 570½ working days which totaled up to 4,562 man hours.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Cecelia Laswell, Daviess, Hancock, Ohio, and McLean Counties, Kentucky: Early Settlement, Customs, Superstitions, Sketches, Etc. (1936), passim.

<sup>76</sup>Cedric Larson, "The Historical Records Survey," Wilson Bulletin, 13 (November 1938):187.

<sup>77</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) City Commission, Minutes of Meetings of the City Commissioners, 1938, Meeting of 10 February 1938. (Typewritten.)

<sup>78</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) City Commission, Minutes of Meetings of the City Commissioners, 1939, Meeting of 30 January 1939. (Typewritten.); Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 29 January 1939.

Miss Kelly approached the Commission again in February 1939, outlining a WPA project for conducting a real property survey of the city and surrounding area for future planning and zoning. Once again the city agreed to sponsor the project and provide the necessary forms and paper.<sup>79</sup> The 14-20 project workers used a second floor office in the No. 1 Fire Department on Fourth Street. Maurice A. Stimson directed the survey project which started May 25, 1939. The WPA workers constructed sixteen maps showing every piece of property and whether it was residential, commercial industrial, or vacant. The survey also supplied information on housing conditions within the city.<sup>80</sup>

The WPA county record indexing project employed four typists and six clerks. I. C. Sutherland, a former Daviess County clerk, supervised the project which involved alphabetically arranging all the deeds, mortgages, marriage licenses, and oil and gas leases from the creation of the county in 1815. The project cost approximately \$25,000, of which the county furnished only \$1,000.<sup>81</sup> These indexes increased the office efficiency tremendously. Lawyers across the state liked the new indexes so well that the State Bar Association pressured the state legislature to pass an Act

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<sup>79</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) City Commission, Minutes of Meetings of the City Commissioners, 1939, Meeting of 28 February 1939. (Typewritten.)

<sup>80</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 2, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 1, p. 7.



in 1942 requiring county officials to keep the WPA indexes current.<sup>82</sup>

The historical records project operated from the third floor of the courthouse. Archie Brown supervised the project which proposed to provide a history of the county.<sup>83</sup> Brown and Thurmon F. Fitzgerald were the two field workers for the Historical Records Survey in Daviess County. They filed weekly reports concerning their activities and progress.<sup>84</sup>

The city and county jointly sponsored a 1940 WPA project to compile a four year record of Owensboro and Daviess County traffic violations. Mrs. Rosa L. Kennedy acted as supervisor for the project which furnished local authorities and the state police details of all traffic violations in the local courts since January 1, 1937. The information compiled in this file aided in enforcing traffic laws.<sup>85</sup>

Education was another professional area where the WPA found eligible men and women who needed jobs. Unemployed teachers gladly conducted adult education classes which were open to the public with no restrictions. WPA adult education

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<sup>82</sup>Final Reports of Service Projects, "Record of Program Operation and Accomplishment: County Records Indexing Project," Series 14, Box 22, Archives Division, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Ky.

<sup>83</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 2, p. 5.

<sup>84</sup>Administrative Records of the Division of Community Service, Research and Records Section: Historical Records Survey, "Weekly Activity Reports of Field Workers, 1938-1941," Series 26, Box 125, Archives Division, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Ky.

<sup>85</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 15 December 1940.

teachers taught over 1,000,000 people to read and write. They prepared special textbooks which taught reading through adult topics rather than the traditional children's materials.<sup>86</sup> Another adult education program aided 250,000 foreign born men and women to become American citizens. They learned to read, write, and speak English, their rights and obligations as citizens, important historical facts, and how local, state, and federal government works.<sup>87</sup>

Mrs. Shiver recalled working with WPA adult education in Owensboro. Needing work, the unemployed teacher happily accepted a position with the local program when offered the job by the city school superintendent. She taught general math to nineteen couples every evening in her home. Her students desired to learn mathematics in order to perform their jobs more efficiently.<sup>88</sup>

Another facet of the WPA's educational program involved the National Youth Administration (NYA) which helped many youth to continue their educations. Government investigations provided evidence showing the economic distress encountered by the nation's youth:

1. Worthy students of high school and college age needed financial assistance to continue their study
2. The vast number of unemployed youth not in school, and whose families were on relief needed assistance

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<sup>86</sup>"Adult Education Under the Works Progress Administration," School & Society, 48 (26 November 1938):692-94.

<sup>87</sup>The Works Projects Administration Americanization and Citizenship Program (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941).

<sup>88</sup>Shiver interview.



3. Vocational guidance and apprentice training to both groups through cooperation of the colleges, schools, private industry and governmental placement service were needed
4. Instructions and provision for the use of leisure time were also needed<sup>89</sup>

To alleviate these problems President Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7086 on June 26, 1935, creating the NYA, which worked as an independent agency within the WPA. It remained there until July 1, 1939.<sup>90</sup> After signing the bill, Roosevelt stated:

I have determined that we shall do something for the nations unemployed youth because we can ill afford to lose the skill and energy of these young men and women. They must have their chance in school, their turn as apprentices, and their opportunity for jobs--a chance to earn for themselves.<sup>91</sup>

Between 1935 and World War II the NYA aided approximately 1,500,000 girls and boys from 16-25 years of age. Aubrey Williams directed this national project that created part time jobs to help young people complete their education and also, keep them out of the full time labor market. The pay--\$6 per month for high school students, \$20 for college students, and \$30 for graduate students--was low, but sufficient to help them stay in school. The NYA also helped young people from relief families to find part time employment, encouraged the establishment of job training, counseling

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<sup>89</sup>National Youth Administration for Kentucky, NYA Program: Review of Activities, 1935-1936 (n.p. 1937), p. 6.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.; Final Report on the WPA, p. 15.

<sup>91</sup>U.S., Congress, House, National Youth Administration, 74th Cong., 2nd sess., 1936, p. 9669.

and placement service programs, and suggested developing worthwhile leisure activities for youth.<sup>92</sup>

A September 1935 Owensboro news article directed students who were members of certified relief families to apply for NYA aid through their principal. The youngster would perform some task at the school to earn the \$6 per month aid. They would not be required to work more than ten hours per week or three hours per day.<sup>93</sup>

The Owensboro NYA work program for out-of-school youths 18-25 years old was very successful. During the 1937-1938 fiscal year 192 young men and women received part time employment. The newspaper reported 45 persons currently involved in the program in August 1938. To obtain NYA aid a youth had to be certified by the Welfare League as being between 18-25 years old and from a family receiving some type of public assistance. Terry Coleman supervised the boys while Mrs. Thelma T. Morgan took charge of the girls. The local Red Cross chapter sponsored a sewing project for the girls. Besides needlecraft, Mrs. Morgan taught the girls how to cook, can food, dye and weave cloth, and maintain a sanitary home. The Federal building housed the girls project until they moved into a cottage located at 1535 West Fifth Street. The city hall garage building served as headquarters

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<sup>92</sup>Miller, FDR, p. 369; Bruce L. Melvin, Rural Youth On Relief (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), p. 48.

<sup>93</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 8 September 1935.



for the three male projects. Shopwork, improving the city parks, and minor construction work on public buildings kept the boys busy.<sup>94</sup> Coleman recalled that the boys put up flood signs during the 1937 flood, removed tree stumps from the city parks, and erected the first street signs within Owensboro. The city purchased the signs and the NYA boys placed them in the proper places. He stated that the NYA program contributed greatly to that generation because it gave the youth training in working--it taught them to work.<sup>95</sup>

The WPA service projects primarily provided jobs for widows and other women who were forced to assume the role of provider during the Depression. These projects, such as the sewing project or school lunch program, left no physical monuments behind, but they certainly paid dividends in community health and child welfare.<sup>96</sup> The WPA sewing project was probably the most successful women's relief project. Sewing projects operated in all 48 states and in almost all of their counties. Local public agencies sponsored the sewing rooms, contributing a portion of the operating costs, the needed space, one-third of the equipment, and a portion of the fabric. The WPA furnished the remainder of the supplies and paid the wages.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 2 August 1938.

<sup>95</sup>Coleman interview.

<sup>96</sup>Gill, Wasted Manpower, p. 193.

<sup>97</sup>Catherine Cleveland, "The W. P. A. Sewing Program," Journal of Home Economics, 33 (October 1941):587.

In November 1935, the first Kentucky WPA employment offered to needy, unemployed, unskilled women began. These sewing projects operated independently within the individual counties until October 1939, when the first state-wide sewing project commenced. Sewing units operated in 118 Kentucky counties with a peak employment of 3,198 women.<sup>98</sup> City and county governments in Daviess County sponsored sewing projects. A September 1936, Owensboro Messenger & Inquirer reported that the 108 Owensboro sewers had used 30,415 yards of material to make 13,485 garments. They constructed men's shirts and trousers, women's dresses and underclothing, and outfits for children. The 84 white women worked in the Ames building on St. Elizabeth Street under the direction of Mrs. Haddie Gabbert. Sedalia Crowe supervised the 24 black WPA seamstresses in the United Brothers of Friendship Hall at Third and Cedar Streets. The women worked in two shifts, eight hours a day, three days per week for 30¢ an hour.<sup>99</sup>

Mrs. Bernadine King, a widow in her early forties with several children, recalled that she and her coworkers on the Owensboro sewing project sat at long tables to cut material by machine or sewed at the electric machines along each wall. The project used the assembly line method of production-- one lady put in zippers, another the pockets, another sleeves

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<sup>98</sup>Final Reports of Service Projects, "Record of Program Operation and Accomplishment: Sewing Project," Series 14, Box 21, Archives Division, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Ky.

<sup>99</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger & Inquirer, 20 September 1936.



and so on until the finished garment lay at the final table. Besides making garments for others, the ladies also made their own uniforms, which were white with little green stripes.<sup>100</sup> In 1938 the white sewing project moved to new headquarters, the third floor of the First Owensboro Bank & Trust Company.<sup>101</sup> As of May 1, 1940--a little more than four years since its beginning--the local WPA sewing project had sewn 54,099 garments which the Welfare League distributed to needy people. These WPA garments distributed during the school year by the truant officers kept 711 children properly clothed and in school. The forty women employed in May 1940 worked seven days per week, 130 hours a month.<sup>102</sup> During peak employment the project employed 180 women.<sup>103</sup>

The Ames building also housed a WPA mattress project. The 30-40 women employed on this project constructed mattresses from scratch. They baled the cotton, then shaped, cut, bound, and finally quilted it to produce the finished mattress. After completion, the local relief agency distributed the mattresses to needy families.<sup>104</sup>

The local WPA sewing project also provided black and white checked dresses for the women on the Housekeeping Aide

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<sup>100</sup>King interview.

<sup>101</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 27 October 1938.

<sup>102</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 2, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 29 August 1940.

<sup>104</sup>Depp interview.

Project which the WPA initiated on September 29, 1937. It provided employment for needy people by furnishing free assistance to families unable to hire help when the housewife was temporarily incapacitated by illness. The aides received two weeks of instruction which included training in cooking and serving meals, laundrying, sewing, nursing, child care, and general housekeeping. By February 1939, the city sponsored project had furnished aid to 130 Owensboro families.<sup>105</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth Dennison gratefully accepted the help of a housekeeping aide after the birth of her baby in 1941. The aide cooked, washed clothes, and ironed for the five member family while Mrs. Dennison recuperated. She spoke highly of the aide's work and capabilities.<sup>106</sup>

The Housekeeping Aide Project presented a series of cooking schools in 1941 as part of the national defense nutrition program. The cooking demonstrations were open to the public, but primarily aimed at the people receiving relief commodities. The purpose of the cooking school was to teach women different methods of preparing the commodity foods in order to get the maximum nutritional value from them. The school met for two days with white women attending the first 1½ days, leaving the last afternoon open for the black women.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 5 February; 4 June 1939.

<sup>106</sup>Dennison interview.

<sup>107</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 15 June; 3 August 1941.



The matron service and nursery schools were two more of the WPA service projects in Daviess County. Matron services operated at Robert E. Lee Elementary School and Daviess County High School. Daily the matrons kept everything clean and in order in the school restrooms. Another plus for the project was the fact that an adult was always present to help with any problems. The white nursery school for children 2-6 years old operated at 1034 Breckenridge Street and remained open 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The nursery for black children was located at 721 Jackson Street in the Paul Dunbar School. These nurseries cared for children from low income families as well as children whose parents worked on WPA projects.<sup>108</sup>

In January 1939 the newspaper announced the approval of a new WPA project in Owensboro involving toy lending. The purpose of the city sponsored project was to lend toys to underprivileged children. The Toy Lending Project not only included making toys, but also repairing and sterilizing old toys donated by the community.<sup>109</sup>

Several service projects involved the more practical human needs--the necessity of food. Gus Slaughter headed a project which distributed food supplies twice a month to needy families. In May 1940 approximately 800 families benefited from these surplus commodities which were

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<sup>108</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 2, p. 5.

<sup>109</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 January 1939.

distributed from a center in the city hall garage on St. Ann Street.<sup>110</sup> People willing to grow their own food received aid from the WPA Garden Seed Project. Jack McClure, the Daviess County Extension Agent, supervised the project and certified the pay of the 5-6 men involved with the project. McClure stated the men earned around \$2.40 per day by holding planting demonstrations. He also recalled cutting a car load of seed potatoes into planting pieces to be issued to people who had special forms. Another task of the project was the distribution of prepackaged seeds of staple vegetables.<sup>111</sup> Edward Girvin stated these were large packages with 50-75 small packages of all types of garden vegetable seeds inside. The seed was available to anyone with enough space to raise the garden.<sup>112</sup>

Another service project involving food was the WPA lunch program which operated in schools throughout the nation. WPA women prepared and served hot meals to hungry children and in some cases the vegetables they prepared came straight from WPA gardens. In March 1942, the Daviess County Board of Education allowed up to \$20 per acre for the expense of raising a garden for the county schools. The WPA furnished the labor to plant, cultivate, and harvest the

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<sup>110</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 2, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup>Interview with Jack McClure, by Shelia E. Heflin, Owensboro, Ky., 7 February 1983.

<sup>112</sup>Girvin interview.



garden.<sup>113</sup> Sorgho School housed the only lunch room project in Daviess County.<sup>114</sup> The program operated in two schools in neighboring McLean County with significant and desired results. McLean County officials recorded an increase in weight and scholastic achievement during the course of the project.<sup>115</sup>

WPA officials decided a recreation project would benefit everyone, since they had an abundance of leisure time with little money to spend. The Owensboro City Commission and the Board of Education sponsored a WPA recreation project which they asked Mrs. Mary Ruth Shiver to organize and supervise. The government issued thousands of dollars to Mrs. Shiver and she purchased athletic equipment, power tools, and craft materials for the year round recreation program. During the summer the projects operated in the local parks, Chautauqua, Moreland, Legion, and Douglas, the park for blacks. Summer activities ranged from tiddlywinks and croquet to soap carving to baseball tournaments. The WPA recreational activities helped bring about several park improvements. At this time the first lighted baseball diamond appeared at Chautauqua Park, while Moreland Park boasted the first paved tennis courts, shuffle board, and finished croquet field. Winter programs operated at the Salvation

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<sup>113</sup>Daviess County (Ky.) Board of Education, Minutes of Meetings of the School Board, 1942, Meeting of 3 March 1942. (Typewritten.)

<sup>114</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 16 January 1941.

<sup>115</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 2, p. 2.

Army, City Hall, a small hut in Chautauqua Park, and the Colored Center at Third and Cedar Streets. The City Hall facility featured a bowling alley, room for skating, and a craft shop. Ping-pong and pool proved to be the main attractions of the winter programs. The recreation project offered activities which covered all interests for every age group.<sup>116</sup>

Mrs. Shiver stated the philosophy of the recreation program was to provide leisure time activities to all the citizens of Owensboro if they wanted to take part. It provided a program for those who excelled or wanted to excel, as well as those interested only in fun and enjoyment. They were not in the business to select and feature the best runner or storyteller, but to provide healthy competition, sportsmanship, and fun for the local population.<sup>117</sup>

Mrs. Shiver attended State Department workshops in which she learned how to give a party, folk dancing, ballroom dancing, arts and crafts, and how to organize tournaments. She held weekly in-service days to teach her park leaders what she learned at the workshops. At that point the leaders returned to their parks and initiated the new ideas. The arts and crafts department, added to the WPA recreation program in March 1938, was directed by Cecelia Laswell. She and James Horton conducted classes five afternoons a week and on previously scheduled nights. They taught free hand

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<sup>116</sup>Shiver interview.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.



drawing, painting decorations on wood and glass, belt weaving, clay modeling, linoleum block printing, and puppetry.<sup>118</sup> As they learned new crafts, they added them to the program.

The WPA recreation program not only included art, but two more of the fine arts--drama and music--as well. The year end review of the 1937 Owensboro recreation project related that puppets had been made for three plays. The participants constructed the proper stage and presented five shows. The dramatic division staged two plays during the year.<sup>119</sup> The music program fell under the recreation project heading until August 1940, when the State-Wide Music Project began.<sup>120</sup> During June 1938, the WPA band attracted ten people for the white band, directed by C. L. Brown, the district WPA supervisor of music. The black WPA band practiced at Douglas Park and attracted fifteen members. Brown's black assistant for the Owensboro project was Robert Wooldridge. Participants received weekly music lessons. A thirty member black drum and bugle corps also existed in Owensboro due to the WPA music project. For their first local appearance they marched in the Armistice Day Parade in November 1938.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 3 March; 3 July 1938.

<sup>119</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 2 January 1938.

<sup>120</sup>Final Report of Service Projects, "Record of Program Operation and Accomplishment: Music Project," Series 14, Box 22, Archives Division, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Ky.

<sup>121</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 26 June; 12 November 1938.

As part of her duties as County WPA Recreation Supervisor, Mrs. Shiver spearheaded the local drive to send underprivileged children to the WPA District Camp held for two weeks during the summer at Blue & Gray State Park in Elkton, Kentucky. Community leaders solicited funds over the new WOMI radio station for the project. Local schools furnished the buses and the city bought the gas. The Welfare League opened the storerooms of the WPA sewing project to provide clothing for the children. In August 1938, Mrs. Shiver accompanied 56 children, 9-14 years old to camp. Mrs. Laswell also attended the camp and taught nature study.<sup>122</sup>

Local WPA employees not only worked well in preplanned programs, but also could be counted on to help in emergency situations. The WPA acted quickly and efficiently as flood waters swept over the Ohio Valley in 1937. Under Area Supervisor Depp's direction local WPA workmen constructed eight barges at the county garage to be used during the flood emergency as rescue boats.<sup>123</sup> After the waters receded, more than 1,000 men aided the United States Public Health Service, city, and county officials in the clean up program. They cleared streets and roads of all debris, purified wells, disposed of over 1,500 head of dead livestock, and helped people return to their homes.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 18 August 1938; Shiver interview.

<sup>123</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 23 January 1937.

<sup>124</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 4 February 1937; Depp interview.



As the United States approached the gravest emergency situation of all--war--the WPA was ready to help. Nationwide the WPA trained its blue collar workers for employment in defense industries, while white collar workers produced maps, researched and compiled records and surveys, taught classes on military bases, or planned recreation activities for servicemen. The WPA allowed those who could not find private employment to make valuable contributions to national defense.<sup>125</sup> Locally, the WPA furnished two women to staff the Civilian Defense office in the Cary Building.<sup>126</sup> In Summer 1940, 54 WPA workers attended national defense classes at Owensboro Technical High School where they enrolled in either arc welding, auto mechanics, electricity, or wood-working.<sup>127</sup> The Daviess County Health Department and the WPA operated a nursery in 1942 to aid women working in defense plants or other positions outside the home. It cost 10¢ per child, 1-6 years of age, but no more than 25¢ per family. The nursery extended its hours to 6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.<sup>128</sup> By March 1943, nurseries operated at Franklin School, Central Junior High, and Dunbar School. At the WPA's end, the Lanham Act continued these three nurseries and added another to care for defense plant worker's children.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>National Defense and the WPA (Washington, D.C., 1941).

<sup>126</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 6 October 1942.

<sup>127</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 1 September 1940.

<sup>128</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 29 August 1942.

<sup>129</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 18 March 1943.

The scrap metal drive was one of the biggest defense projects in Owensboro which received WPA aid. The Kentucky Newspapers Scrap Metal drive began September 20, 1943, and collection ended October 31. Daviess Countians collected 5,723,140 pounds of scrap metal for the war effort. The WPA operated a salvage depot on West First Street and collected scrap metal by truck from county residents. The WPA was the only federal agency authorized to purchase scrap for the government or accept direct donations. The scrap collected was not always junk, as some families surrendered their iron fences; and the members of the John C. Breckinridge Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy turned over their brass cannon which decorated the courthouse square.<sup>130</sup> Depp recalled that the last project he supervised before joining the Army was the removal of the abandoned street car tracks for the scrap drive.<sup>131</sup>

The men and women employed on WPA projects in Daviess County had little time to "piddle around." They were busy making the program work--not only for themselves, but for the community. The general attitude of all those interviewed about the Daviess County WPA projects was one of pride for the work they had accomplished. They worked hard at their respective jobs and accomplished things that they felt were useful and needed by their fellow citizens. They thought

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<sup>130</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 1, 4 October; 1 November 1942.

<sup>131</sup>Depp interview.



that everyone benefited from the improved streets and roads, new schools, and the hospital--all accomplished through their work on WPA jobs.

Several expressed the opinion that the WPA was a grand organization and wondered if it should be revived to aid today's unemployed. Daviess Countians traditionally vote the Democratic ticket; perhaps these people were all staunch Democrats and would have supported Roosevelt's programs whether he was right or wrong. However, the evidence does not point to that reason for their support of the WPA. The people interviewed who received WPA work genuinely needed work. They had lost their jobs and needed a way to support their families. The pay was not always much, but it was regular. People such as Mrs. King or Mr. and Mrs. Dennison managed to budget the money to feed and clothe their children and still make ends meet. They greatly appreciated the WPA work and expressed great joy at not having to take handouts from the government or their families.

The jobs the Daviess County WPA workers received were tailored to their attitudes about appropriate sex roles. The men received traditionally male jobs involving heavy labor and construction work. Although, some men did receive clerical jobs or positions as park recreation leaders. Primarily, the WPA jobs for women centered on homemaking abilities or child care. Both the Sewing Project and House-keeping Aide Project involved skills that the women should have been familiar with at home. The female did receive

some male help with child care in the Recreation Program. It is interesting to note that in Daviess County no women worked on construction projects, an area in which women nationwide would be asked to serve due to the home front manpower shortage during World War II.

The WPA jobs directly influenced the course of some Daviess Countians lives. Depp pointed out many men that learned trades such as bricklaying or carpentry during their WPA days continued working and using that skill to earn a living. Possibly WPA jobs rescued some unemployed people from developing a welfare mentality. With a job, they earned their own way and were able to forego the charity of others or the government dole. Those interviewed who had WPA jobs found work and continued to lead productive working lives after their WPA tenure ended. Generally, those who worked as laborers continued to be laborers. Those who served in a supervisory capacity remained in the upper class or professional areas of the working world. No matter what direction their lives took these Daviess Countians fondly remembered their WPA jobs as an opportunity to work, benefiting themselves and their community.

The men and women involved with the Daviess County WPA projects can hold their heads high and be proud of their work. A majority of the local projects were well organized and supervised by competent, dependable leaders. WPA workmen followed directions well and managed to leave behind several soundly constructed buildings and a multitude of new



or improved streets and roads. The WPA service projects, staffed mainly by the women, provided essential items, such as clothing, which were necessary for daily living. The continuation of the service projects involving the hot school lunch program and the recreation program after the liquidation of the WPA is evidence of the value of the projects. It appeared that the total WPA program in Daviess County worked efficiently and provided a positive influence in the community.

## CHAPTER IV

### THIS WORK PAYS OUR COMMUNITY

The WPA benefited the nation, the state, the community, the family, and the individual physically and socially during its existence. Throughout May 1940, the nation observed open house week for all WPA projects in order for the community to view the valuable work done by local WPA units. In Owensboro, Judge James R. Wilson proclaimed "This Work Pays Our Community" Week. A dinner meeting at the Rudd Hotel with speeches and introductions of local WPA supervisors initiated the festivities. A portion of the program included a national radio broadcast by Col. F. C. Harrington, WPA administrator; Mrs. Florence Kerr, his assistant; and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, to explain the purpose of the open house.<sup>1</sup> At a similar meeting in Greenville, Kentucky, Rev. E. L. Young expressed the viewpoint that lack of knowledge about the WPA led to unfair criticism. He stated that "The WPA pays in two ways. It has helped preserve the self-respect of a large number of persons by providing jobs for those who otherwise would have been unemployed, and it has served the public as a whole."<sup>2</sup> The open house week

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<sup>1</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 21 May 1940.

<sup>2</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 23 May 1940.



enlightened the citizens as to the significant work and benefits of the local WPA projects.

Mere numbers do not clearly relate the tremendous benefits produced by the WPA. The following examples, which of course include the Daviess County projects, will show the vastness of WPA work on the national level during its first six years:

The WPA constructed or improved 600,000 miles of highways, streets, and roads--these would encircle the Earth 24 times.

The WPA built or rebuilt over 116,000 bridges and viaducts--place them end to end and they would stretch more than 700 miles.

The WPA constructed or renovated over 110,000 public buildings--enough new buildings only, to give about 10 to each of the 3,000 counties in the United States.

The WPA renovated nearly 80 million books--over 3 for every 5 people in the United States.

The WPA served 575,000,000 hot school lunches through December 1940--equal to more than 4 meals apiece for the 130,000,000 Americans.<sup>3</sup>

The WPA may not have eradicated the depressed economic situation in the United States, but it helped prime the pump. The above mentioned projects employed needy men and women who spent their wages for food, clothing, and shelter. Thus, grocers, clothiers, landlords, and their employees received some benefits from the WPA. These projects also needed various building materials and tools which were purchased from private businesses; this aided another section of the economic community. No matter how insignificant the amount,

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<sup>3</sup>Howard, The WPA, pp. 126-28.

the circulation of money in a stagnant or depressed economy helped someone.

Perhaps the words of an Owensboro Messenger newspaper man expressed the thoughts of many Daviess Countians, as well as people across the nation, concerning the benefits of the WPA:

Despite the jibs poked at WPA workers, their contributions to the nation's wealth has been a notable factor in maintaining industrial equilibrium during years of depression. It came into being when deadly want stalked the land, and it is moving off stage when conditions no longer demand its retention.

Millions of dollars, have been dumped into communities by the WPA, which is leaving a story of permanent construction without precedent or parallel, for never before did the nation face such a dilemma as that which confronted it when the Works Progress Administration, later the Work Projects Administration, came into being in 1935. The coffers of the federal treasury were opened to pay its bills, and the cost of its bills, and the cost of its operation was offset by the results achieved. Here as elsewhere the benefits have been too manifold to estimate. They will remain to mark the path of a receding depression that was converted into a prosperous era by the war.<sup>4</sup>

The physical benefits Daviess County received through WPA help are similar to those of other counties around the state and nation. The construction of streets and sewers and county roads would have been difficult without WPA aid. The budgets of the city and county governments could not have stood such a financial burden alone. Better roads also brought about better communication and cooperation among rural and city residents. All-weather roads and permanent bridges allowed the county residents to leave their homes

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<sup>4</sup>Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 3 January 1943.



year around for work or social activities.<sup>5</sup> The tangible proof of this benefit still exists and is used daily by persons living and traveling in Daviess County for business or pleasure.

Other tangible benefits produced by the WPA were medical and educational facilities. The Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital is probably the most beneficial of the Daviess County WPA projects. The hospital has grown tremendously, radiating out from the center section which was constructed by WPA workmen. The city and county school boards also took advantage of WPA aid to construct much needed educational facilities. The city-sponsored Technical High School served local and area students, as well as out of state pupils. Many people received training in defense work at the school which they used during World War II. The WPA-built facility served Owensboro well until its demolition in the Spring of 1976. Larry Depp stated the building was so well constructed that the demolition crew had a difficult time tearing it down.<sup>6</sup> Utica School, a county school built with WPA aid, still stands. Over the years thousands of young Daviess Countians have been educated in the WPA-built classrooms. The only major change is that Utica now houses only an elementary school.

Indeed, communities were very much aware of the financial advantages of WPA projects. Instead of financing the

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Depp interview.

total cost of the project, they usually supplied the smaller percentage. The idea of using less of their money and still receiving the same finished project appealed greatly to them. In addition, the local sponsor received a much needed new building, stimulated the business sector by purchasing building supplies, and lastly provided jobs for men on the relief rolls. The community had little to lose and much to gain by supporting the federal WPA program.

The individual working on a WPA project counted one of his benefits every two weeks when he cashed his check. The steady wage brought instant appreciation for the WPA's existence among the unemployed who needed the job to support a family. As Elizabeth Dennison pointed out, the \$24 her husband earned as a WPA laborer put food on the table and kept a family of four clothed.<sup>7</sup> WPA wages benefited the individual and had an immediate, but short term effect. The wages, if even adequate, provided the essential life sustaining items immediately. But, the wage was not sufficient enough to save any money for the future. Depp commented that the WPA also provided a benefit with a long term effect which involved job skills. He stated that many WPA employees benefited by learning trades or professions which they pursued in later years. As a partner of the Johnson, Depp, & Quisenberry engineering firm, Depp continually observed men using the skills they had learned on WPA projects.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Dennison interview.

<sup>8</sup>Depp interview.



If a worker did not learn a new skill on a WPA job, at least it probably helped him preserve his old job skills, keeping him prepared for future jobs.

Some critics referred to WPA jobs as nothing but a disguised dole.<sup>9</sup> In a sense, this was true--the government supplied the job, just as they supplied free food in a commodity giveaway line. However, by working on a WPA job the individual felt he was repaying the government in return for its help. Daviess Countians, such as Bernadine King, preferred to work rather than stand in line waiting for a humiliating handout. Her job on the WPA Sewing Project helped her maintain her pride. She had no desire to become a part of the government dole program, but would have done so to provide food for her children. Being a woman and a widow were two major obstacles to be overcome when searching for a job in a depressed economy. The WPA Sewing Project eased her financial situation and allowed her to be proud of her accomplishments.<sup>10</sup>

Robert Stiff's desire to provide for his family without the government dole or family handouts demonstrated the male side of the pride question. Traditionally, the male provided and protected the family; how was this possible without a job? A man felt even more embarrassed when waiting in a line for government handouts. Even if he recognized the fact that many other men were in the same situation, there was

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<sup>9</sup>Leuchtenburg, FDR and the New Deal, p. 130.

<sup>10</sup>King interview.

still the nagging thought that he had failed his family by not providing for them himself. WPA jobs allowed Stiff to retain his self-respect. With the WPA job, he adequately provided the necessities of life for his wife and children.<sup>11</sup>

Standing in line for a government handout week after week was demoralizing to many people. At first they were embarrassed, but soon they hardened their emotions and some eventually thought the government should support them. A WPA job helped keep their morale high. They felt the government actually cared about their plight during the depression and really wanted to help. In return, the majority of WPA employees took pride in their work and worked hard in appreciation of the opportunity to be employed and support themselves. As social worker Terry Coleman pointed out, a handout was not always the answer. People needed work to preserve their self-respect.<sup>12</sup>

Several of the Daviess County WPA Service Projects socially benefited individuals and the community. The Sewing Project provided clothing in all shapes and sizes for men, women, and children. The Welfare League distributed the articles of clothing to needy families. Often during the year local schools utilized the sewing program to keep needy children clothed in order to continue with their education. The WPA recreation program did much to unite the community by helping them find something to do with their

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<sup>11</sup>Stiff interview.

<sup>12</sup>Coleman interview.



extra time. In many counties the recreation program was the only common interest shared by the population. The public often rallied around the local teams in sports tournaments, especially the baseball teams, or so it seemed in Daviess County. Above all else, the WPA recreation leaders tried to instill rules of sportsmanship and fair play into the participants. School officials and parents often commented that the lessons learned by the children at the playground were evident at school and home.<sup>13</sup> The seeds of Daviess County's current recreation program were planted with the WPA Recreation Project. At the close of the WPA, local officials watered and nurtured the recreation program, watching it develop and grow into the fine program of today.

Education of the mind was another social benefit of the WPA program. The agency introduced mass education for those across the nation past high school age. The WPA Adult Education Project was not only for the illiterate, but also for women wishing to improve their homemaking skills, people desiring to sharpen their present working skills or be reeducated in a new field to keep pace with advancing technology, and simply for those interested in learning for the sake of knowledge. Qualified judges declared the WPA Adult Education Project to be one of the best programs of the New Deal. It is certainly interesting to note that America could only

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<sup>13</sup>Shiver interview; Owensboro (Ky.) Messenger, 19 May 1940, sec. 2, p. 5; Final Reports of Service Projects, "Record of Program Operation and Accomplishment: Recreation Project," Series 14, Box 23, Archives Division, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Ky.

afford to begin such a worthwhile educational program during the midst of a great economic depression.<sup>14</sup> The Owensboro City School System continued the local adult education program in the years following the WPA's demise. Today the program continues to combat illiteracy and provide needed or simply interesting classes for the population of Daviess County.

In Daviess County the WPA may have inadvertently erased a small part of segregation. Mrs. Mary Ruth Shiver's insistence that black and white WPA recreation leaders meet together for training sessions forced some bigoted whites to realize that blacks could contribute good ideas and teach a white person something. Mrs. Shiver also worked closely with members of the Colored Recreation Council.<sup>15</sup> In years past a white woman may not have been welcomed by blacks or allowed by unwritten white laws to work with any programs benefiting the black community. Granted, the service projects in Daviess County, such as the Recreation Project, were totally segregated units that operated at different locations. But, at least the leaders worked together, sharing similar administrative problems. Possibly their cooperation set an example for the community to follow.

The WPA construction supervisors random assignment of workers also helped bridge the racial barriers between blacks and whites. The white workmen's attitudes of superiority

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<sup>14</sup>"Adult Education," Current History, May 1938, pp. 58-59.

<sup>15</sup>Shiver interview.



probably began to crumble as they witnessed the excellent workmanship among black WPA employees. Depp and Girvin both were sufficiently impressed with the black workers that they remembered the skilled work the blacks performed on some of the local WPA projects.<sup>16</sup> Working side by side is one way to get acquainted with an individual and to learn to appreciate his abilities, regardless of his color.

The WPA was a very controversial agency. While one person enumerated its benefits, another noted its faults. The WPA was a tremendous work program for those able to meet eligibility requirements, but those unable to meet the requirements, such as the immigrant or alien with no citizenship papers, were out of luck. They fell between the cracks of the rules and regulations and were left to survive the Depression with little or no aid. The eligible person on the relief roll that missed a WPA job because the quota for jobs was filled recognized the inadequacy of the WPA program in providing jobs for all the unemployed. While one segment of the population praised the government's efforts in work relief despite its cost, those preferring direct relief via the dole screamed that the program was a hideous, expensive mistake by Roosevelt and his cohorts.<sup>17</sup>

Searle Charles presented five points in his biography of Harry Hopkins that rebutted the view that the whole WPA program was a disastrous failure. He contended that if the

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<sup>16</sup>Depp interview; Girvin interview.

<sup>17</sup>Charles, Minister of Relief, p. 234.

WPA had been a failure, Congress in all probability would have ended the program long before May 1943. Perhaps to retain their jobs Congressmen listened to their constituents and voted to keep the works program. Local politicians observed first hand how the WPA benefited their area and may also have applied some political pressure. At times the vote to continue the WPA was very close, but it always prevailed. In fact, the WPA died only when the nation was well on the way to economic stability due to World War II. Also, the WPA was not a major campaign issue in 1940. The Republicans did not recommend that federal relief stop, but that approaches to the relief problem be improved. Charles also pointed out that if the WPA was a complete failure, the American people's reaction against it probably would have been stronger. In every opinion poll taken during its first five years the majority of people desired the WPA program to continue. This majority, just as the Daviess Countians who worked for WPA, felt the work performed by the agency was needed and a valuable asset to their community. Congressional committee investigations of the WPA during the years 1938-1940 failed to detect any clear cut evidence of poor administration or any serious scandals. And lastly, Charles stated that scholarly studies have also failed to conclusively prove that the WPA program was poorly administered.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Charles, Minister of Relief, pp. 134-35; Howard, The WPA, pp. 808, 825-26.



Was the WPA a failure, deserving of the accusations that the initials actually stood for "We Piddle Around"? At least in Daviess County this was not true. The tangible projects produced by the WPA in Daviess County benefited the population greatly. WPA streets and roads improved accessibility. The new WPA educational and medical facilities educated the people and cared for their ills. Without WPA aid, city and county officials would have postponed these needed projects until more prosperous times. Daviess County received a two-fold blessing from the WPA program--the useful, tangible roads and buildings and work for the unemployed. The WPA enabled some Daviess Countians to leave the dole, return to productive work, and preserve their pride. In Daviess County, WPA stood for "We Proudly Achieve."

APPENDIX 1

CITY STREETS IMPROVED WITH WPA FUNDS

January 1936-December 1937

Ford Avenue  
Freeman Avenue  
Griffith Avenue  
Griffith Place  
Griffith Place East

Lexington Avenue  
Littlewood Drive  
McCreery Avenue  
Ninth Street

January 1938-May 1943

Allen Court  
Benita Avenue  
Bolivar Street  
Cary Court  
Cedar Street  
Clay Street  
Cloverdale Drive  
Dublin Lane  
Eighteenth Street  
Eleventh Street  
Emerson Court  
Fifteenth Street  
First Street  
Fourteenth Street  
Fourth Street  
Frederica Court  
Geary Court  
Hickman Avenue  
Hill Avenue  
Hospital Drive East  
Independence Avenue  
Locust Court  
Locust Street

Maple Avenue  
Maplewood Drive  
Moreland Avenue  
Moseley Street  
Nineteenth Street  
Ninth Street  
Pearl Street  
St. Ann Court  
Second Street  
Tenth Street  
Third Street  
Thirteenth Street  
Twelfth Street  
Twentieth Street  
Twenty-Fifth Street  
Twenty-First Street  
Twenty-Fourth Street  
Twenty-Second Street  
Twenty-Third Street  
Walnut Street  
Waverly Place  
Werner Avenue



## APPENDIX 2

## COUNTY ROADS IMPROVED WITH WPA FUNDS

1935

Veatch Road

1936Graves Lane  
Miller's Mill Road  
Panther to Guffie Road1937Blue Run  
Brown's Valley-Sutherland  
Curdsville-Deleware  
Gobbler Ford  
Greenback  
Hill's BridgeKnottsville-Gatewood  
Lyddane Bridge Road  
Rockport-Maceo  
Towler Road  
Yelvington Camp Grounds Road1938Berry Road  
Burton Road  
Byers Avenue Road  
Cane Run Road  
Cullen Road  
Fields Road  
Ford Road  
Free Silver Road  
Grassy Flat Road  
Harl Road  
Haynes Station RoadLittle Hickory Road  
Moseley-Ashbyburg Road  
Mulligan Road  
Petit Road  
Pleasant Valley Road  
Red Hill-Brown's Valley Road  
Sauer Road  
Weir Road  
Yelvington Camp Grounds Road  
Zogleman Road1941Cummings Road  
Green Brier Road  
Knottsville-Hawesville Road  
Lower Masonville Road  
Lower River RoadMulligan Road  
Stanley-Curdsville Road  
Toler Bridge Road  
Waltrip Lane Road

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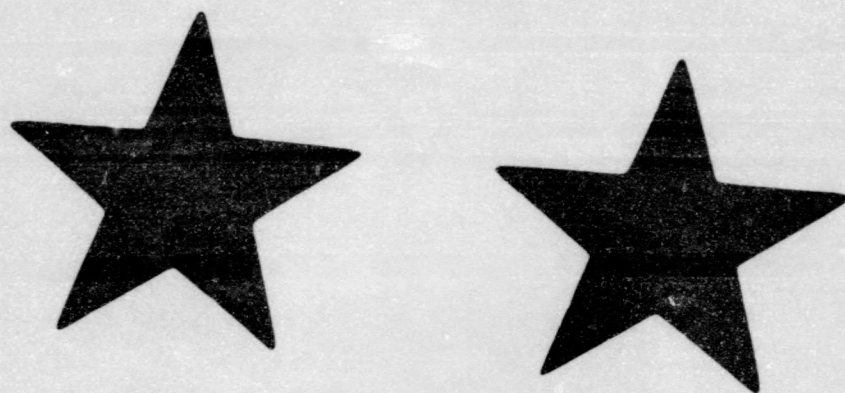


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# **CORRECTION**



**PRECEDING IMAGE HAS BEEN  
REFILMED  
TO ASSURE LEGIBILITY OR TO  
CORRECT A POSSIBLE ERROR**



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