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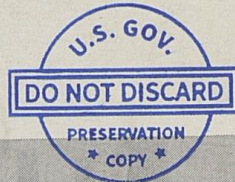
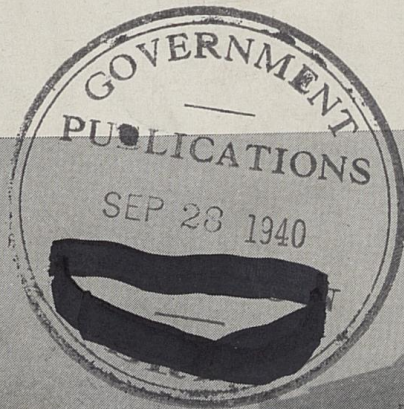
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UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY



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# PUBLIC ROADS AND THE WPA





## WHAT THE WPA HAS DONE TO IMPROVE OUR ROADS

Though the U. S. A. has nearly a third of all the road mileage in the world, most of our roads are still horse-and-buggy roads. Some 1,800,000 miles of our 3,000,000-mile total are unimproved rural roads which become badly clogged, if not impassable, after every storm or thaw. Many of our city streets are unfit for the high-speed, heavy motor traffic of today.

This situation would be considerably worse without the help given by the Work Projects Administration to communities and rural areas in every part of the nation. By putting the unemployed to work on road projects, the WPA has made it possible for State and local governments to build or improve over 457,000 miles of roads. That is one-seventh of all our roads.

### FARM-TO-MARKET ROADS

When bad weather turns our back-country roads into "sloughs," 17,000,000 people, or over half of our farm population, are affected. Many of them are temporarily isolated. Medical aid may not be obtained when needed; children may lose weeks of schooling; and social and recreational activities are sharply curtailed. Worst of all, it is difficult or impossible to take produce to market.

More WPA workers have been engaged in the task of "pulling the farmer out of the mud" than on any other kind of project. They have built or improved over 400,000 miles of farm-to-market and other rural roads. They have directly benefited over 3,500,000 men, women, and children, living on 750,000 farms, by giving them a more permanent link to the outside world.

### CITY STREETS

Cobblestones and traffic tangles are as costly and vexing to city motorists as mudholes to farmers. So the WPA has helped nearly every city in the nation to streamline and widen its thoroughfares. WPA workers have built or improved over 49,000 miles of urban streets and alleys, and over 7,000 miles of roads through parks and similar public areas.

Wherever there have been workers unemployed and road work to be done, the WPA has brought the workers and the work together.



THE WPA HELPS COMMUNITIES TO PUT THEIR UNEMPLOYED TO WORK ON USEFUL PUBLIC PROJECTS





**Failure or success** in farming depends not only on the farmer's skill and the fertility of his soil but on his contact with the outside world. Unimproved dirt lanes twist past many an abandoned farm and rural slum. When WPA workers turn these lanes into all-weather roads, the countryside revives. Land values rise, and farm families that seemed doomed to poverty are given an opportunity to improve their condition.

"WPA farm-to-market roads," a Southern State reports, "have opened new avenues of commerce and agriculture in localities which had previously been shut off from the world by impassable trails."



**Ignorance or education** is a choice which few American children need make. In many sparsely settled areas, however, the only education available for children of all ages is that offered by one teacher in an old-fashioned one-room school. When roads are choked with mud or snow, it is hard for children to walk to school.

WPA all-weather roads have enabled thousands of rural communities to send their children by bus to central, consolidated schools. Better education is the result; and from this our cities as well as our farms will benefit, since the cities look to the farms of today for their population of tomorrow.



**Old or new ways** of life for the farmer depend on his bridges as well as his roads. Bridges too narrow for cars to pass on them and fords unfordable at high water keep him living in the ways of the past.

WPA roads and bridges have brought 20th-century civilization to the backwoods and wide open spaces. They have hastened the development of small towns into modern community centers—where the farmer and his wife can do their shopping, go to the movies, send their children to high school, and take an active part in grange and church work. They mean a more abundant life for every member of the farmer's family.



**Growing traffic congestion** has emphasized the need for better streets in thousands of cities that are unable to obtain them without WPA help.

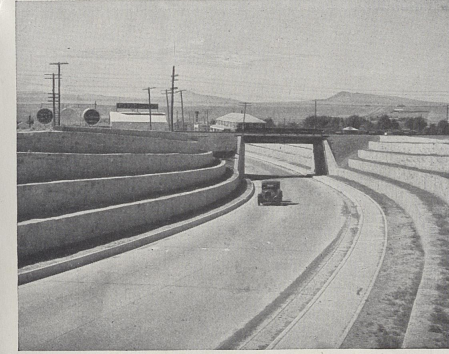
Street work done by project workers ranges all the way from laying pavements of asphalt or concrete to improving dirt streets that serve suburban homes. It includes the replacement of worn-out and inadequate surfaces, and repaving after the removal of car tracks; also the widening of main thoroughfares and construction of grade separations at busy intersections.

This work has done much to eliminate driving hazards and speed up the flow of traffic in our cities.



**Modern street construction** means more than providing a broad, smooth driving surface. It means also providing related facilities which are equally important in this motor age. Safety islands and other traffic guides must be constructed, and light standards erected. Street signs, so plain that he who drives may read, are needed, too. Gutters and curbs have to be built or reconstructed, and sidewalks laid.

All of these phases of modern street construction are included in the work done by WPA workers. The result is greater safety and convenience both for motorists and for pedestrians.



**Our great highways** are built and improved with WPA funds as well as with funds made available through the Public Roads Administration. Most State highway departments have sponsored WPA road projects.

Thus WPA workers have worked on all types of roads, from multiple-lane thoroughfares to "feeders." More than two-fifths of all WPA workers have been employed on road work of one kind or another.

WPA workers are doing work that would not otherwise be done for years to come. They are helping to make America's road system the best as well as the biggest in the world.



**THE WPA HELPS COMMUNITIES TO PUT THEIR UNEMPLOYED TO WORK ON USEFUL PUBLIC PROJECTS**





Before the WPA comes to his aid, many a farmer sees his profits reduced by hours of driving in low gear over bad roads. Sometimes, with perishable produce to sell, he loses it through spoilage because he cannot get to market. He is mud-bound as often as he is snow-bound.

After WPA road work is done, the farmer can speed to town at will. This work includes straightening and broadening the road, reducing steep grades, providing adequate drainage, building culverts and bridges, and surfacing the road (with local materials if possible).



TO ACCOMPLISH USEFUL WORK

### WPA ROAD WORK

**Roads.** 457,734 miles built or improved, including 400,887 miles of rural, 49,783 miles of urban, and 7,484 miles of other roads.  
**Bridges and viaducts.** 55,604 new, and 37,020 improved.  
**Culverts.** 673,233 new, and 84,437 improved.  
**Roadside drainage.** 42,994 miles of new drainage ditches and pipes, and 68,130 miles improved.  
**Sidewalks and paths.** 15,341 miles built, and 5,470 miles improved.  
**Curbs.** 14,403 miles built, and 2,688 miles improved.  
**Gutters.** 4,100 miles built, and 623 miles improved.  
**Guardrails and guardwalls.** 1,705 miles built, 854 miles improved.  
**Street lighting.** 21,696 new light standards, 55,312 improved.  
**Traffic signs.** 638,548 erected.  
**Roadside landscaping.** 49,001 miles.

### OTHER WPA WORK

**Public buildings.** 23,003 erected, 62,468 renovated, and 2,784 additions built. These include schools, libraries, administrative and recreational buildings, hospitals, fire houses, armories, etc.  
**Airports.** 197 new, 337 improved, and 35 additions built.  
**Water and sewer systems.** 12,383 miles of water lines and 18,241 miles of sewers built or improved.  
**Dams.** 1,863 storage dams built, 291 improved; also 25,548 dams built for erosion control and general conservation, 796 improved.  
**Recreational areas and facilities.** Some 21,500 parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields built or improved; and 16,500 recreational facilities, including swimming pools, golf courses, tennis courts, skating rinks, ski jumps, outdoor theaters and bandshells.  
**Ground improvements.** Nearly 78,000 acres of public grounds, other than parks, landscaped.  
**Educational workers** have conducted over 100,000 classes a month, with average monthly attendance of some 1,250,000 people.  
**Library workers** have established thousands of new branch libraries, traveling libraries, and reading rooms. Last December they were operating or assisting to operate 9,609 library units.  
**Recreational workers** have operated and assisted to operate thousands of community centers and supervised recreational activities totaling as much as 15,000,000 participant-hours per week.  
**Artists** have conducted art classes with average monthly attendance of 80,000; operated civic art centers with aggregate attendance of 7,000,000; produced some 223,000 art objects.  
**Musicians** have conducted music classes with average monthly attendance of 150,000, and given an average of 4,400 musical performances a month with average monthly attendance of 3,000,000.  
**Writers** have completed 418 books and pamphlets, mostly guidebooks.  
**Survey workers** have preserved many thousands of valuable records from neglect, decay, and destruction.  
**Medical, dental, and nursing services** have been provided for millions of adults and children unable to pay for them.  
**Workers on school lunch projects** have prepared and served over 386,000,000 meals to undernourished children.  
**Housekeeping aides** have made over 17,000,000 visits to help poor families stricken by illness, injury, or other misfortune.  
**Women on sewing projects** have made 284,799,000 garments and household articles for needy families and public institutions.  
**Workers on canning projects** have canned 43,333,000 quarts and dried 1,680,000 pounds of food for distribution to the needy.

All accomplishment figures, unless otherwise stated, cover 4 1/2 years of WPA operation—from July 1933 to December 1938, inclusive.

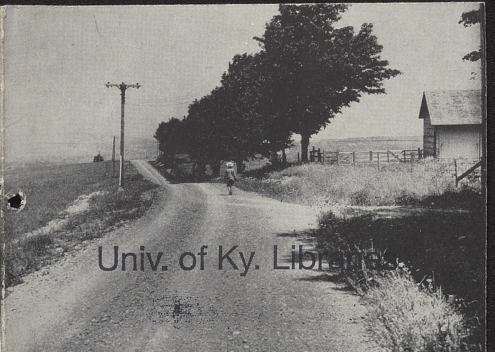
FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY  
 JOHN M. CARMODY, Administrator

WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION  
 F. C. HARRINGTON, Commissioner

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