THE IMPACT OF THE WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION (WPA) IN SONOMA COUNTY

by

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in

History

Donald Johnson, Chairman

Stephen Watrous

Victor A. Garlin

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Date
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ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study:
The purpose of this study is to examine the Work Projects Administration (WPA) and its many facets, the way it was organized, and how it worked nationally, statewide, and locally. The emphasis is on Sonoma County, California, and more specifically, on the way WPA has affected the County economically, socially, and politically. The study further examines the extent and character of the relief problem, identifies the County's WPA projects, and finally, evaluates the lasting influence of federal-work relief (WPA) in Sonoma County.

Procedure:
A comprehensive survey narrowed the field to local, state, and national government offices; public libraries in Sonoma County, and other libraries at the University of California (Berkeley), University of Southern California, San Jose State University, and California State College, Sonoma; California State Archives and The National Archives in Washington, D.C.; field observations of Sonoma County, and finally, personal interviews with County residents. Primary and secondary sources covering the New Deal era were studied.
The active life-span of Sonoma County's alliance with WPA (1935-1943) was embraced, and the information organized by cities, school districts, county, state, and other miscellaneous projects. Conclusions were based on verifiable data in possession of the writer.

Findings and Conclusions:
1. WPA's economic effects are in evidence throughout Sonoma County: roads, schools, municipal buildings, bridges, city streets, curbs and gutters, recreational
facilities, sewer systems, State Parks and Beaches, library materials, a museum, an airport, and better-organized official county records.

2. Because of WPA, the creativity of the County's writers, musicians, artists and craftspeople, received recognition, and their tremendous talents were salvaged, enhanced, and perpetuated.

3. The federal government's involvement in Sonoma County did not always indicate corruption, nor did it always leave negative feelings in its service-communities.

4. Work-relief did not degrade the recipients morally or socially, as did the "dole."

5. This study of "work-relief" offers tangible evidence of a program which indicates the continued advisability of its use.

6. The conclusions arrived at in WPA's published study were meant to be used as learning tools for future generations in the event of another depression.

7. The services provided by WPA were a complete departure from any previous social experiment, and encompassed workers—not just laborers—from every strata of human endeavor. In retrospect, the WPA, at least in Sonoma County, succeeded mightily.

Chairperson: 

Donald Johnson, Ph.D.

M.A. Program: History

Date: July 13, 1976
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We have learned again that eternal vigilance is necessary to preserve the constitutional rights of a free people. As Abraham Lincoln said at Cincinnati in 1859, 'the people of these United States are the rightful masters of both congresses and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.'

--Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Washington, D.C.
December 6, 1937
PREFACE

In a cool green Pacific-coastal area less than sixty miles north of San Francisco lies a Mediterranean-type region known as Sonoma County, California. The term "Mediterranean" refers to the climate and lush vegetation, but also to the county's ethnic heritage. According to the United States Census of 1930, the population of the area included nineteen different nationalities. Most of the people were of German and Italian descent. They resided, for the most part, on farms, in an area formerly under Spanish-mission influence, and on soil which had once been vast Spanish land grants.

These farmers formed an economy that enabled Sonoma County to be listed as one of the top farm income-producing counties of the nation in 1935.\(^1\) The Santa Rosa District Office of the National Re-employment Service shows that in 1935 and 1936, the harvesting required approximately 20,000 workers, which included 9,500 county residents.\(^2\) Yet, this

\(^1\)Myer Cohen, Sonoma County, A Preliminary Survey (San Francisco: NYA Project, School of Social Studies, U.S. WPA, 1940), p. 2.

\(^2\)Ernest L. Finley, History of Sonoma County (Santa Rosa: Press Democrat Publication, 1937), p. 371.
seeming prosperity masked a hidden and growing unrest that soon made it necessary for Sonoma County to apply for federal assistance in the form of food, clothing, and shelter, supplied to an ever-increasing number of unemployed who became a burden on local and state relief funds.

Some of the 10,000 migrant workers joined County residents in applying for welfare when their earnings ceased after the crops were in, but acceptance of this "dole" marked them as "idlers"—people who took money without working for it. This attitude toward welfare prevented the County Supervisors from applying for federal funds before 1936, but lack of their own funds overcame pride and they became eager applicants.

Millions of dollars began entering this area through federal relief legislation, and the Work Projects Administration (WPA) became the most important work-relief program in Sonoma County.3 The reactions of local residents to those employed by WPA were, at first negative, until it became apparent that recipients were not getting something

for nothing. "Work-relief" replaced the dole (direct relief) and gained a measure of social acceptance.

Because WPA workers earned their money, they kept their pride and dignity. Pride, perhaps, is what kept corruption from Sonoma County. Nevertheless, in contrast to some other parts of the United States, no report of corruption can be found in local newspapers, early county records, or in local, state, or national archives. All available resources indicate compliance with federal edicts, pride and pleasure in accomplishments, and gratitude for the opportunity to aid local unemployed who, in return, improved the County for those and future generations. The social and economic effects of WPA were many, varied, and for the most part, lasting.

The economic condition of the nation in 1929 helped set the stage for years to come. The disastrous American stock market crash in late 1929 marked the end of the prosperity of the 1920's. National income fell from $87.4 billion in 1929 to $41.7 billion in 1932, and unemployment soared to four million in 1930 and eight million in 1931. By 1932, seemingly the cruelest year of the Depression according to historian Frederick Allen, the National Industrial Conference Board estimated American unemployment at twelve and a half million, while the American Federation of Labor

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estimated the number to be over thirteen million. Other estimates varied from eight and one-half to seventeen million.\(^5\)

Millions had to ask for government relief, but as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., points out:

By 1932, only about one-quarter of the unemployed were actually receiving relief, limited in the main to food, with sometimes a little fuel. Voluntary funds had almost given out; ninety percent of relief came from public funds; and these funds too were diminishing.\(^6\)

Thus, the dark days of the thirties ushered in a call for drastic use of legislative powers by the Federal Government to relieve unemployment and provide correlative relief. This call spurred, in part, the creation of a nationwide work-relief program, known as the WPA. Work-relief, referred to many time in the following pages, meant working for relief funds—not relief from work. This distinguished the earning of one's welfare from getting something for nothing—called "the dole."

The WPA began amidst mass unemployment, and extended through the late thirties and early forties. During its comparatively short life, the WPA aided millions of people—four million by 1936. A tally on June 30, 1940, indicated that some 8,500,000 Americans with 30,000,000 dependents (a quarter of all American families) had benefited

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\(^6\) Schlesinger, Jr., Crisis of the Old Order, p. 249.
through the program which totaled more than 130,000,000 man-months on WPA projects.\(^7\) Nationally, monthly income for WPA workers averaged $54.33, and by the end of 1940, the Federal Government had expended some eleven billion dollars. The city, county, or state agencies provided an additional three billion and thereby became known as sponsors.\(^8\)

Listing the total accomplishments of the WPA and its sponsors would be an almost insurmountable task. Records show, however, that this agency built or improved 651,000 miles of roads, erected or improved 125,110 buildings of all kinds, installed 24,300 miles of sewerage facilities, installed 16,100 miles of water mains and distribution lines, and constructed and improved airport facilities, including landing fields, runways, and terminal buildings. Service projects covered a wide range, from providing hot school lunches and maintaining child-care and health centers, to the operating of recreation centers and literacy classes.\(^9\)

From construction work and social services, WPA went on to contribute to the war effort. With the outbreak of World War II, WPA began constructing airports, military roads, barracks, hospitals, mess halls, and other military facilities. Then, with the demand for labor in war-related

\(^9\) Ibid.
industries, the unemployment problem disappeared and the WPA disbanded in 1943.10

This essay will examine the WPA and its many facets, the way it was organized, and how it worked nationally, statewide, and locally. The emphasis will be on Sonoma County, California, and more specifically, on the way WPA affected the county economically, socially, and politically. We will examine the extent and character of the relief problem, identify the County's WPA projects, and finally, evaluate the lasting influence of federal work-relief in Sonoma County. Perhaps, in the process of enumeration, description, and exegesis, America may continue to learn from history or surely be condemned to repeat it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Jack, whose patience, encouragement, and devotion, has made this study a reality.

I am indebted and grateful to Ruth Sealey for her valuable contributions in reading this study, and to Drs. Johnson and Watrous whose encouragement and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

And, to Kay Smith, my gratitude for her conscientious efforts.
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CHAPTER I

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WPA IN SONOMA COUNTY

Although the New Deal would eventually have an enormous impact on Sonoma County, local officials refused, at first, to accept aid from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). They preferred to remain independent by appropriating their own funds for unemployment relief.¹

The first Federal aid came into the County through the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA or SRA).² The CWA, a temporary agency, provided work-relief for some of the unemployed from October, 1933, until March, 1934. Then SERA, a State program, replaced CWA in the following month, April, 1934. SERA gave way to the WPA when it appeared on the horizon in October, 1935.³ Many effects of these "alphabet agencies"

¹Myer Cohen, Sonoma County, A Preliminary Survey (San Francisco: NYA Project, School of Social Studies, U.S. WPA, 1940), pp. 32-33.
²Ibid.
remain in Sonoma County, and its current inhabitants still enjoy the fruits of those early labors.

Farmers were among the first to benefit from the earlier labors of federally-funded workers. Sonoma County, in the thirties, might well be described as a huge diversified farm. Farmers and their families cultivated a quarter-million acres and accounted for over one-third of the 77,610 population. Agrarian in income, as well as population, Sonoma County ranked tenth in agricultural income in the nation—per capita—in 1935. Its rural population of 25,639 had a farm income of $21,452,877, but Sonoma County farmers, hard hit, and actually devastated by the depression, showed an average annual gross income of only $3,106. These farmers still faced interest payments, taxes, and mortgages. According to Myer Cohen, the mortgage problem in Sonoma County was one of the most serious in the nation. Raw materials and supplies, added to taxes and mortgage payments, left the average farmer with a net income of only $711.29 for 1935. Although this minimal income rated Sonoma County's farmers a tenth place in the nation, it gave small comfort to those who invested time and money in a crop

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4Cohen, Sonoma County, pp. 1-4 and Ernest L. Finley, History of Sonoma County (Santa Rosa: Press Democrat Publication, 1937), p. 371.
5Cohen, Sonoma County, p. 4.
6Finley, History, p. 371.
with little or no market.

The business and industrial groups fared somewhat better than farmers in income, although they ranked twenty-first in all of California's counties. The 1930 County Census indicated average wages in manufacturing to be $1,113.78 per year, and in 1935, only $1,037.90. The business and industrial population in 1935 totaled 7,761--2,143 employers and 5,618 employees. 7

Of course no section of the nation went unaffected by depression in the nineteen-thirties. The number of Sonoma County applications for Federal funds, recorded in 1935, indicates that Sonoma County's private and public agencies, after trying to get by with their own funds for three years, lost little time in applying for the various recovery projects offered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his so-called "New Deal" approach to economic stability. 8

On Sunday, March 5, 1933, the day after his inauguration, Roosevelt had ordered the banks closed in order to alleviate the banking crisis. 9 Also, he urged Congress to

7 Cohen, Sonoma County, pp. 1-8.
8 Cohen, Sonoma County, pp. 22-33; and Microfilm T935-6, The National Archives of the United States (Washington, D.C.).
pass far-reaching economic recovery legislation. According to historian Louis M. Hacker, these moves by the President indicated the New Deal's philosophy: "the relief of distress is an imminent public duty." The voters, and Congress, breathed a collective sigh of relief; their decision to turn to the Democratic Party now seemed to be justified.

The New Deal's philosophy materialized when the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of 1933, together with FERA, became the vehicles through which the Federal government planned to relieve unemployment and help industry. NIRA, intended primarily to balance production and consumption, embodied three aims: to stimulate a revival of industrial activity; to increase purchasing power; and, at the same time, advance the cause of social justice. FERA supplied food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and cash to the needy. Roosevelt and Congress agreed however, that direct relief, i.e., FERA, should become a state and local responsibility. Therefore, they phased out the FERA, turned direct-relief back to state and local governments, and concentrated solving the problem of "economic insecurity" through a larger "work" program for the able-bodied

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On April 8, 1935, Roosevelt signed another Federal Emergency Relief Act (ERA) with an appropriation of $4 billion for work-relief. Roosevelt, under the law, could also use $880 million from unexpended balances of previous relief appropriations, at his discretion. At this point, the historian Otis L. Graham noted that "the entrance of the Federal Government into a vast program of relief work was an abrupt departure from all previous practice but it proved enduring." Although FERA had also been a departure, it could not begin to approximate the scope and complexity of the new work-relief programs.

"The Works Program" is the term used to designate the entire program of emergency work provided by the Emergency Relief Acts of 1935, 1936 and 1937. This program is not to be confused with the WPA, although it encompassed that agency as well as some forty others, including the Resettlement Administration (RA), the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Public Works

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Administration (PWA). However, the Works Progress Administration, or WPA, became the key agency in this Federal Works Program and materialized as the great challenge to New Deal ingenuity.

Roosevelt appointed Harry L. Hopkins to administer the WPA and Harold Ickes to direct the PWA. In contrast to WPA, as an employer, the PWA acted as a money-lender and purchasing agency to public or quasi-public authorities to finance long-term construction projects to "prime the pump." PWA did not have the goal of direct relief or work-relief. They spent funds indirectly by contracting, for example, to construct a dam. This required a private contractor to recruit employees, and order tons of cement, which might put a cement company back in business. Participating companies could then hire unemployed people at regular wages. In this way, money moved out through PWA into the hands of contractors, manufacturers, engineers, laborers, truckers, carpenters and architects, and went "deep into the arteries of

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15 Rosenman, Public Papers, p. 167.
17 Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt, p. 70 and p. 125.
the economy."\(^{19}\) Roosevelt assumed complete responsibility for the coordination of all the participating agencies, but he rested great hopes on the WPA. In his Executive Order 7034 (May, 1935) Roosevelt declared that the WPA would be responsible for the

\[\ldots\] honest, efficient, speedy and coordinated execution of the work relief program as a whole, and for the execution of that program 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.\(^{20}\)

The PWA programs, on the other hand, moved more slowly, taking some time before a program materialized that could handle a substantial number of unemployed. Because of Hopkins' attitude that the PWA did not create employment quickly enough to lessen the critical need for jobs, rivalry arose between the two organizations. Ickes spoke out openly against using Federal funds, as he put it, to "hire grown men to chase tumbleweeds on windy days."\(^{21}\) Corrington Gill, Assistant Administrator of the WPA, tried to keep peace between the two factions. He emphasized that the projects were meant to be complementary, not competitive.\(^{22}\) Workers


\(^{22}\) Macmahon, et al., Administration of Federal Relief, p. 68.
under PWA projects received the going wage from their own employers, while WPA employees earned federal-fund-wages, which were considerably less. The PWA was, primarily, a materials-purchasing agency planned to stimulate and/or revive heavy industry; the WPA provided direct employment. 23

Although the liberals in Congress disagreed about the justice of it among themselves, WPA wages were set below those of PWA and of private industry. This action satisfied FDR's edict that WPA projects must be "useful and necessary, yet not competitive with private industry." 24 The monthly earnings of WPA workers averaged about $52 ($624 yearly) across the nation, while private industry paid an average wage of $94.75 ($1,137 yearly). 25 New Dealers tried to talk down the rivalry, but several projects did appear to overlap.

Under these guidelines, WPA built highways, roads, streets, buildings, parks and other recreational facilities; activated or established electric, sewer, and water systems; constructed airports and other transportation facilities; directed flood control, drainage, irrigation and conservation

23Rosenman, Public Papers, p. 241.
24Ibid.
projects, and took charge of production and service projects, and of educational, professional, clerical, cultural, and recreational needs. The largest employer among the various government groups, the WPA employed more than seven million persons between 1935 and 1939. By 1943, the total rose to eight and one-half million, with the years 1936 and 1939 each accounting for three million employed persons. Eighty-five percent of WPA funds went for wages, with local funds supplying the remainder; work-supplies and administrative costs accounted for the remaining fifteen percent of WPA funds.

Four levels of operation made up the WPA structure from its inception, namely 1) the Central Administration in Washington, 2) Regional Offices, 3) State Administration, and 4) District Offices. The first level's responsibilities entailed determination and regulation of policies. The Regional Offices directed and coordinated the program in their own states. State administrators took responsibility for general administration of the WPA programs within their state, and included the securing of Federal approval and funds for local needs. District offices directed the management of project operations, and of such related activities as the assignment of certified workers, timekeeping,

27 Rosenman, Public Papers, p. 167.
and of the scheduling, terminating, and completing of projects, and they cooperated with local sponsors in the timing and management of project operations.28

"State Administrations" became the major operating units for the WPA, because state divisions enabled sponsorships of projects to be processed more easily. Due to its size, California was divided into Northern and Southern "state" WPA's, in February, 1937. These administrators supervised district offices whose structures reflected geographical areas.29

Organizational structure of state and district offices became simplified and uniform by December, 1935. The structure consisted of a state deputy administrator (and, if needed, an office manager) and four divisions: finance and statistics, employment, operations, and women's and professional projects. District offices reproduced the same structure. The head of a unit became Supervisor, the head of the district office became Manager, and the functional head of a district office, the District Director. "Area 6" encompassed Sonoma, Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Napa, and Marin Counties. The Rosenberg Building, 4th Street, Santa Rosa, housed the district office.

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

STATE OFFICE 42-4TH ST., SAN FRANCISCO.
STATE ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF

READING LEFT TO RIGHT:

F. M. Holley - Assistant State Director of Operations
R. H. Bradshaw - Administrative Assistant
Emily Wooley - State Director of Employment
Ralph G. Wadsworth - Deputy Administrator
William R. Lawson - State Administrator
William M. Sanborn - State Director of Finance
Elizabeth Clauss - State Director of Women's & Prof. Projs.
N. C. Buckhart - State Director of Education
Sigurd B. Nylander - State Director of Recreation
office. 30

The WPA, then, took care of needy employables through short-term projects with immediate goals, and furthermore, it hired people to dig ditches, cut trees, paint murals, and even to write and play music. WPA put to work not only blue collar workers, but artists, writers, actors and teachers, and it did so in jobs that helped them keep their self-respect as professionals. 31

Despite general unemployment among professionals in Sonoma County, local officials resisted acceptance of federal aid for about three years. Skilled and unskilled workers joined the professionals in the ranks of unemployed in the early thirties, while farm income continued to deteriorate. The County appropriated $20,000 of its own monies for relief (the dole) in 1933, and another $10,000 for each of the two following years. This resistance to federal aid typified community feeling that any aid coming from outside their own bailiwick constituted a dole, and beneath the dignity of hardworking, God-fearing men. Sonoma County fathers did allow their sons to join the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), although no records exist to show how


many young men participated. During the years when Sonoma County supported its own relief program, 1933-1935, the CCC was financed with federal monies and administered by SERA until 1936. At that time its responsibility shifted to the aegis of County Social Services. However, in spite of community feeling, some federal aid did come into the county through the Civil Works Administration (CWA) which provided work for a few unemployed persons between November, 1933, and March, 1934. 32

According to David A. Sweeney, social worker for the State Relief Administration (SRA) during the years 1938-1941, eligibility for relief was determined by SRA, formerly SERA. If eligible, the person was then referred to WPA for certification. In a larger family, since WPA wages averaged only $44 per month in Sonoma County, the head-of-the-household returned to SRA for supplementary assistance in the form of vouchers for food and clothing. 33

Mrs. Frances Williams, certifying officer for Sonoma County Social Services, recalls that only those persons receiving no income and having no employment of any kind, could be certified to WPA. To qualify, a person also had to be head of a household or be responsible for a household.

32 Cohen, Sonoma County, pp. 32-33.
33 David A. Sweeney, private interview held in Santa Rosa, Calif., July 30, 1974.
In addition to the WPA check, families received an order which they presented to a local distribution center in return for a designated allowance of clothing (cf. Sweeney, above). Single men were not certified for WPA work, but were assigned to Forest Service or CCC jobs, according to age.\(^{34}\) Nora Giblin, another county certifying officer, remembers being sent to Monte Rio to certify single men for forest-clearing.\(^{35}\)

Because of its forestry and agriculture, the county's needs for relief or employment varied greatly with the seasons. Full employment in the fields and orchards during the harvest season resulted in the suspension of practically all WPA projects, although project-employment increased to as many as eight hundred persons due to lack of farm work throughout the winter months.\(^{36}\) Perhaps this fluctuation in need for workers prolonged the period during which the County attempted to remain self-sufficient.

The turning point in the County's full acceptance of Federal Work Projects coincided with President Roosevelt's

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\(^{34}\) Frances Williams, retired teacher and long-time county resident, private interview held in Santa Rosa, California, February 14, 1974.

\(^{35}\) Nora Giblin, private interview held in Santa Rosa, California, February 14, 1974.

address to the nation on January 4, 1935. He reflected aforementioned sentiment in Sonoma County when he promised that the WPA aimed toward elimination of the dole while encouraging the vitality of the people through "useful" employment instead of hand-outs. 37 A local news release in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat encouraged approval of federal funds by enumerating some of the benefits:

Public projects to be started are a new post office building in Sebastopol, a new high school and two new school buildings in Healdsburg, a new school in Cloverdale, repaving of Fourth Street and Mendocino Avenue in Santa Rosa, rerouting of the highway through Petaluma and other highway improvements. Housing campaigns throughout the county are expected to result in hundreds of private modernization or alteration jobs. Another big project is the development of the coast highway.

Sonoma County's officials, led by the Board of Supervisors, now seemed very happy about accepting federal funds. Another press-release on January 29, in the Press Democrat, also indicated rising employment, construction projects not affordable previously, and permanent improvements to be enjoyed through WPA:

If the $4,880,000 appropriation is approved by Congress, Mayor George R. Cadan announced that the city administration has compiled eight large city projects that will be proposed at once if the new program is placed into effect.... Construction of the long-discussed parking plan [SIC] of turning Santa Rosa and Matanzas Creeks into public parks through acquisition of land on either side of the creek and construction of scenic drives along the stream for their full distance in the city limits was proposed. This proposal would

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cost a total of $43,000 with 3,000 man days of work.

Other projects include construction of new storm sewers leading from the western part of the city to Santa Rosa Creek, $10,000. Construction of new water mains in both north and south parts of the city, $35,000. Airport development project, $24,000. Cleaning of water mains, $10,000. Opening of "A" Street, $55,000. New Olive Street bridge, $35,000. City power plant, $30,000, [etc.]. 39

In the meantime, by February, 1935, PWA loans boosted the economy throughout the county. The North Coast Council's Regional State Chamber of Commerce reported that PWA loans for Sonoma County already totaled $698,000, with two other loans totaling $900,000 still pending: one, $650,000 for commercial development at the mouth of the Russian River, and the other, $250,000 for the Geyser Development Company. Sonoma County then led Northern California with the greatest number of PWA projects approved. 40 One of the County's first PWA projects became the construction of Analy High School in Sebastopol. By February 4, 1935, forty men--with a peak of sixty men--began building the $220,000 structure. 41

Although officials of the cities, and the County of Sonoma, resisted acceptance of full federal funding for three years, once convinced of the efficacy of that aid, the applications for assistance proliferated. By October, 1935, the WPA had fully and officially arrived--by indirect

invitation—through those applications. The increasing volume of applications demanded the continuous attention of a perceptive, local facilitator to oversee their processing. W.C. "Cap" Woodward, a Cotati resident, retired military man, former County Supervisor and seed farm operator, seemed the ideal choice for Branch Manager of this Division of Operations. Assisting him were Mrs. Helen A. Neal, Supervisor, Division of Professional and Service Projects; Harwood Stump, Supervisor, Division of Employment; and F.C. Feliz, Supervisor, Division of Finance.42

The WPA began operating a wide variety of projects in Sonoma County, with various cities, school districts, and county and state agencies participating as sponsors. Types of work included improvements of streets, curbs, gutters, and water mains; building-construction; building rehabilitation; airport reconstruction; park improvements; and road improvements; and manufacture of clothing; clerical; and other miscellaneous projects.

An official progress report in 1938 indicated that from August, 1935, to February, 1938, the WPA operated some seventy-three projects in Sonoma County. Federal wages on these projects totaled $574,760 and provided 1,251,606 man-hours of employment to Sonoma County residents. Federal expenditures for materials, equipment, and other costs,

amounted to $189,731. Sponsors expended $293,618.43

An itemized summary of the work accomplished under WPA for the period August, 1935 to January, 1938, listed below, indicates the scope of this employment program: 44

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roads improved</td>
<td>112 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culverts installed</td>
<td>448 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing and grubbing</td>
<td>61 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges constructed, wood</td>
<td>29 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges constructed, masonry</td>
<td>3 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges constructed, steel</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural concrete, miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,324 cub. yds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing schools, parks, etc.</td>
<td>6,248 lin. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaining walls, masonry</td>
<td>2,290 lin. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rip-rap</td>
<td>2,100 sq. yds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets improved</td>
<td>10,147 lin. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curb and gutter construction</td>
<td>35,128 lin. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks, concrete</td>
<td>26,583 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water pipe installed</td>
<td>14,089 lin. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewer pipe installed</td>
<td>11,979 lin. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm sewers constructed</td>
<td>4,629 lin. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings constructed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>2 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>4 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouses, etc.</td>
<td>5 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School buildings painted</td>
<td>7 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings improved:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>2 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>2 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dormitories</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>5 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>39 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School playgrounds</td>
<td>5 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic fields constructed,</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


44 Records of the WPA, Report on WPA in Sonoma County, August, 1935 to January, 1938, no pagination.
To understand more clearly the historical significance of the WPA impact on Sonoma County, narrative descriptions will follow after titular headings.
Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa, the seat of county government, accounted for 10,636 persons in the United States Census of 1930. The following narration is designed to delineate the activities of the WPA and relate those activities to local people and to the physical area of the city. The total impact of Roosevelt's precedent-setting social programs can best be appreciated and visualized in terms of dollars expended and persons employed, and in relation to the agricultural and service economy of this city.

Santa Rosa City projects, during the years 1935 through 1938, included nine construction jobs, requiring federal expenditure of $104,965, plus sponsor (i.e., city) expenditure of $47,105. These endeavors alone provided employment for 150 workers and resulted in numerous permanent improvements in the City of Santa Rosa. One of the largest and most significant of these was the reconstruction and development of the Santa Rosa Municipal Airport.¹

¹Records of the Work Projects Administration, Information Division, Press Information and Other Publicity,
In 1929, the Richfield Oil Company had leased the airport land, and then, after purchasing nearby land, made a number of improvements. In 1933, the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce opened negotiations with Richfield for buying the lease and additional land. The property, 88.5 acres in size, contained one steel-frame hangar and an office building. The existing runways, little more than strips of mowed grass, were extremely hazardous, especially during the winter months. The Chamber completed negotiations and received title to all of the property by August, 1934. The project to improve this area qualified for WPA funds on March 18, 1936.²

WPA graded the entire field and constructed an extensive system of culverts and ditches to provide proper drainage. In addition, the runways, built up with material from nearby quarries to a depth of eight inches, provided a surface which could be used for flying operations throughout the year. The main runway became 300 feet by 3,000 feet,

BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED

RECREATION CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO

STATE COLLEGE, SAN FRANCISCO

FIRE BUILDING, MERCED COUNTY

REDWOOD AUDITORIUM, SONOMA COUNTY

FISH HATCHERY, HUMBOLDT COUNTY

SANTA ROSA AIRPORT, SONOMA COUNTY
and two cross-runways 250 feet by 2,000 feet each. WPA workers also constructed new fences and repaired old ones; they painted fences, airport markers, and the hangar roof, and paved the entrance from Old Redwood Highway, to the airport. The portion of the field adjacent to the hangar, used for airplane parking, reached completion when surfaced with asphalt. Cost of this project totaled $71,596. WPA furnished $51,039 and the City of Santa Rosa expended $20,557 and provided work for eighty men for a period of eight months.³ Santa Rosa could then boast of one of the best airports in the west for a city of its size, and according to standards of the day. It received favorable mention from the U.S. Bureau of Air Commerce Inspectors as one of the best of its class on the Pacific Coast. U.S. Army Inspectors marked it as an important unit in future air defense of the Bay Region, and as the major complement to existing Hamilton Field in nearby Novato.⁴

In addition to construction projects such as the airport, the City of Santa Rosa sponsored several projects for street improvement, and for curb, gutter, and sidewalk construction. These projects resulted in an addition to the city of 8,875 linear feet of graded and surfaced streets, 20,122 linear feet of curbs and gutters, and 15,792 square


feet of sidewalks. Unfortunately, of the four available work-orders, only one project identified the improved streets by name, and that one shows the smallest expenditure of street funds. Streets so identified are "Mendocino Avenue from College Avenue to North city limit, and Fourth Street from E. Street to East city limit." These projects, of significant value to the City, could not have been realized without the money, organization, and direction provided by the Federal Works Program.

Another large WPA undertaking of lasting value was the improvement to Juilliard Park. The park, now a horticulturist's delight and shining jewel of auto row, then gained lasting improvements by virtue of the WPA. The appropriations, approved September 15, 1936, enabled city fathers to hire thirty-three men whose labors made reality of plans long idle due to lack of money.

James R. Wilson, Santa Rosa Park Supervisor, relates that the original landscaping ideas are due to the efforts of Howard Gilkey, whose architectural plans date back to

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6 Microfilm, T935 #6, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.


1933.9

Nearly $6,000 went into labor and materials (sponsor: $1,461, and WPA: $4,437) to construct "asphalitic [sic] sidewalks with brick curbs set in concrete, and to build and erect a redwood pergola on a masonry foundation."10 The pergola, locally known as the "arbor" still stands, although the top eroded "about eight years ago (c. 1967)." Located at the West end of the park, it is covered by wisteria. A stone drinking fountain, stone spray fountain, and a stone retaining wall, complement the immediate area. Wilson believes the stonework to be attributable to the WPA, although verification is lacking that would support his belief. He also observes that the walks and curbing are deteriorating and that the WPA would be received with open arms if they could come forward with the wherewithal to, "again rejuvenate Santa Rosa's southernmost oasis."11

The manual irrigation system in Juilliard Park also believed to be due to WPA funds, gave way to a completely automatic system in 1973. Wilson notes that when the old system needed repairs, all the park employees "gathered 'round to inspect the many odd sizes of pipe, joined together

9James Wilson, private interview held in Santa Rosa, California, February 25, 1975.

10Cohen, p. 43 and Microfilmay, T935 #6.

11James Wilson, private interview held in Santa Rosa, California, February 25, 1975.
in most ingenious ways, to form the previous system." He admits to "assuming" WPA responsibility because of the odd sized pipes, believing the WPA tried to utilize spare parts. 12

A statement signed by A.P. Noyes, Santa Rosa City Manager in 1938, is in complete agreement with Wilson insofar as utilization of existing materials is concerned, although Noyes omits specific mention of "pipes:"

Regarding use of native and waste materials, we have had...outstanding success in our gravel production program, whereby thousands of yards of creek gravel have been produced at nominal cost, and in the satisfactory use of waste material, an ornamental and enduring bridge has been built at the entrance to one of our City Parks [identified in Doyle Park]. The materials were salvaged from paving operations, and consisted of basalt paving blocks, basalt curbs, and old street railway rails for reinforcement, while the gravel for the concrete was taken from the site, and the materials purchased were the metal part-circle culvert and the Portland cement. 13

The Doyle Park Bridge, identifiable by a small metal plaque as a WPA project, does not have its own work order included in the records from the National Archives.

The only white collar workers hired through WPA in Santa Rosa were kept busy by indexing, cataloging, cross-filing, and preparing new files for the Health Department, for City and County Government officials, and for the Division of Vital Statistics. According to Noyes, finding

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12 Ibid.
qualified help in such a small community presented the only
difficulty with this type of employment. Little difficulty
arose, however, in securing competent help for specialized
trades such as stone cutters, asphalt rakers, and cement
finishers. A good case for WPA's employment of people in
specialized trades is made in a letter to William R. Lawson,
WPA Administrator, Northern California, from Archer B.
Stuart, City Engineer of Healdsburg, and refutes the oft-
heard complaints of WPA critics who object to "competition
with private industry." That which may have been true
in some areas apparently did not apply to Sonoma County:
Noyes, obviously answering a WPA questionnaire, says,

Coverage of Need.
We would say that coverage has been complete, as
we are usually short of men for the work in hand
[sic].

As opposed to competing with private industry, WPA trained
men who left their jobs to earn more in private industry.
Thus private industry became the aggressor in competition
with WPA, at least in Sonoma County. Noyes adds,

Local Planning.
We have fitted (and therefore lost) many city-and

14 Records of the WPA, Info. Div., "Community Appraisal Reports--California," p.5 and Microfilm, T935 #6,
T936 #2 and T937 #3, The National Archives.


16 Records of the WPA, Information Division, "Community Appraisal Reports," no pn.
Noyes echoed Stuart's sentiments in the following manner:

All of this work has been accomplished under direct supervision of the city. ... [and] very rarely indeed has the necessity arisen to employ other than aid furnished from the relief rolls.

We have had little trouble in developing competent workmen from the men furnished by the relief agencies. It is believed that the majority of such workmen are in every way fitted to return to normal employment when it becomes available [my emphasis], and the individual has not become degraded through his association with relief work.18

In addition to complaints from other parts of the United States about competition with private industry, Ickes (for one) complained about make-work. In Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, and Healdsburg, sponsors each commented in some detail on the value to the community of the work performed: "improvements in all cases designed to benefit the entire population, pride in workmanship, and the preference of work-relief over direct-relief."19 Noyes and Stuart also made reference to beauty, usefulness and service, and to the value of their respective communities being forced into better and more comprehensive planning. In addition, they used the terms "degrading" or "degradation" when referring to direct relief.20 Convinced that acceptance of Federal funds did

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid, p. 3.
BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED

CITY HALL, SONOMA COUNTY

ARMORY, SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

BELMONT FIRE HOUSE, SAN MATEO COUNTY

BOY SCOUT CAMP, TEHAMA COUNTY

THANKS TO WPA

LINCOLN PARK CLUB HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO

OROVILLE AUDITORIUM, BUTTE COUNTY
not mean accepting a dole, Santa Rosa and Healdsburg City fathers joined other Sonoma County officials in becoming more than enthusiastic about the benefits accruing to their constituents via WPA.21

Healdsburg

In the City of Healdsburg various sponsors actively participated in the work program. Participants included the elementary school district, the high school district, and the City itself. Through 1938, eight construction projects operated within the city at a federal cost of $96,215 and provided employment for six to ninety-four persons at one time, from the total population of 2,296.* The sponsors expended $46,968 on these projects between 1935 and 1938. Work included improvements to the grammar school playgrounds, interior finishing of the grammar school auditorium, construction of an athletic field at the high school, including a football field, and of a small two-story City office building, curb and gutter construction, the installation of sewer and water mains, improvements to the municipal golf course and the construction of a storm sewer.22

21 Records of the WPA, "Appraisal," A.P. Noyes' Report, City Manager, Santa Rosa, March 8, 1938, Archer B. Stuart, City Engineer, Healdsburg, March 5, 1938, final page, no pn.


*According to the U.S. Census, 1930.
The sewer and water-main projects provided the city with an extensive system of new mains in addition to the replacement of old ones, no longer large enough to meet the requirements of the city. By 1938, eighty-five hundred linear feet of sewer mains and 9,160 linear feet of water mains were installed. From a total cost of $35,786 for this work, the city spent $15,388, which included purchase of the major portion of the materials. 23

The Healdsburg storm-sewer project installed 2,300 linear feet of reinforced concrete pipe, fifty-four inches in diameter. Water entering the city from the northeastern hills could now drain directly into the Russian River. The fifty-four inch sections of concrete pipe, fabricated on the job in four-foot lengths, each weighed 5,900 pounds. Fabrication took place in a field plant located on city property adjoining the upper end of the storm sewer. After proper curing, each section—hauled by truck and lowered by chain blocks into its final position—was cemented to the adjoining section. Upon completion, this procedure eliminated an excessive flow of storm waters through the existing curb and gutter system. 24

Healdsburg owned and operated its own water works and electric distribution system during the thirties, and

23 Ibid.

used local indigent employables in proportion to City needs for improvement of the utilities and other municipal betterment. Archer B. Stuart, Healdsburg City Engineer, explained that keeping sixty men busy, even part-time (before federal funding), had taxed the City's financial resources. The advent of Federal funds, as he put it, "was even more a relief to us than to the down-and-outers."25

Financing its share of improvements remained a problem to the City, as sponsors, but Stuart's expression of pride in the accomplishments seemed to outweigh the difficulties incurred. Some of the results (as shown in Records of the WPA) were,

- 67 acres park and golf course [Tayman Park] 26
- 30,000 linear feet of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks
- modern sewage and disposal plant
- storm drains hitherto impracticable, financially
- expansion and improvement of our water system
- construction of civic buildings
- standard night-lighted tennis courts27

Stuart admitted to severe criticism (apparently from taxpayers, but he did not specify) of Healdsburg's financial status, which was poor because of "not inconceivable expense" in paying its share of the $157,200 improvements to the city. "But," he related, "we shall

27Records of the WPA, "Community Appraisal," letter, Archer B. Stuart to William R. Lawson, Mr. 5, 1938.
continue our efforts as long as the Government makes possible the high class of improvements." The various Healdsburg sponsors contributed thirty to forty percent of the cost of these programs, and, according to Stuart's letter, "increased the contribution lately, although we could hardly afford to do so."28

**Petaluma**

Work accomplished under the Federal Works program for the 8,245 citizens (U.S. Census, 1930) of Petaluma included the grading of 1,292 linear feet of city streets, painting of seven city schools, and construction of two small storm sewers and one larger one in Thompson Creek. From April, 1936, to February, 1938, Federal expenditures totaled $44,163 and sponsors contributed $17,396.29

The Thompson Creek storm and water-drain project represented an outstanding accomplishment of the WPA in Petaluma, because of its scope and the many collateral gains enjoyed. The large storm sewer, an arch-shaped reinforced concrete construction fourteen feet in diameter, in the bed of Thompson Creek, now runs through residential

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28 Ibid.

and business districts in the southern part of Petaluma. Approximately 1,200 linear feet, of the total 2,500 installed, reached completion by 1938 under three separate projects, each covering certain sections between street crossings. A fourth proposal, submitted in time to continue the work without interruption and completed shortly thereafter, covered the one remaining section. The completed project provided a permanent and highly useful public improvement, and removed an unsightly open channel. Because the completed tube was backfilled with earth, the strip of valuable land formerly occupied by the channel became available for use. The project operated continuously from September 21, 1936, to February 1, 1938, employing from eighteen to fifty men. Federal expenditures for labor totaled $19,955 plus $4,365 for materials. In addition, the City of Petaluma expended $11,195. This project provided 39,033 man-hours of employment.  

At about the time of the completion of this project, J.S. Woodson, Mayor of Petaluma, compared Federal agencies, FERA, CWA and PWA, to WPA:

Of all the various agencies of the Federal Government through which work has been done in our City, we believe that the Works Progress Administration permits the employment of more men and women who are on the unemployment lists and who could not qualify for other

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work, than through the other Federal Agencies. In our opinion, the Works Progress Administration has accomplished a great deal in this community and at the same time has provided a livelihood for many men and their families.

We believe it is far better to have the unemployed at work accomplishing some good for the cities, counties, and states, than to furnish them with a dole that would reduce the morale of those who are unfortunate enough to be out of employment.\(^3^1\)

Mayor Woodson's remarks parallel those found in letters from all other cities: WPA brought lasting and semi-permanent improvements that aroused feelings of civic pride having little to do with, but not negating, the actual cash benefits to individuals and to property values.

**Cloverdale**

Construction of Cloverdale's city hall and fire station as one unit began with SERA and ended with WPA labor. However, construction of Cloverdale Union High school required only WPA support. Other permanent work included grading and building oil and gravel walks in the cemetery; street improvements throughout the city by grading, excavating, backfilling and paving; constructing sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and driveway approaches; extending sewer mains, and all incidental work pertinent to these permanent works.\(^3^2\)


Temporary work in the form of street and gutter cleaning brought unemployment relief to "quite a number of needy people," according to E.E. Gibbons, City Clerk. In an appraisal in 1938, Gibbons acknowledged that all needy unemployed gained suitable employment under these programs, and that the "quality of workmanship on these jobs is good." He stated that all the work, "very necessary," and "benefiting approximately 1500 people," would have been impossible with only local funds. The population of 759 (U.S. Census, 1930) and the "1500 people" referred to can be explained by another sentence, "The entire City and surrounding territory [my emphasis] will receive a benefit from these improvements."

Gibbons' final philosophical statement reflects—to one degree or another—the sentiments of most of Sonoma County toward federal funds:

Work relief is far preferable to direct relief, as it gives the worker a chance to earn the money he receives and does not destroy altogether his feeling of independence.

Records of total expenditures, man hours, even of individual project-costs, are lacking except for two minor work orders. Gibbons reports a forty percent contribution by Cloverdale sponsors, but neither he nor the Sonoma County Report adds any other statistical data to Cloverdale's

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34 Ibid.
comparatively terse account. 36

Eldridge

One hundred thousand dollars went into various projects prior to March, 1936, at Sonoma State Home, Eldridge. 37 Of the four available work orders only $12,701 can be verified, and they are dated almost a year after mention of the $100,000. The two orders dated September and October, 1935, are only applications; they do not show other figures to support the total expenditure. On the assumption that they did reach completion, figures on microfilm still only account for $23,793, with no orders in evidence for 1936. 38

Then known as Sonoma State Home, this institution was, and is, Eldridge. All the structures, streets, even the Post Office, form what is now "Sonoma State Hospital, Eldridge." A letter to J.M. Holley from Dr. F.O. Butler and H.W. Waterhouse expressed appreciation for the projects completed with WPA's seventy percent share of the $100,000 total costs [California, therefore, paid only $30,000 for the entire hospital-community.] It states,

36 Ibid.
37 Records of the WPA, "Appraisal Reports," letter, Dr. F.O. Butler, Medical Superintendent, and H.W. Waterhouse, Business Manager, Sonoma State Home, to J.M. Holley, District Six Director, WPA, Rosenberg Building, Santa Rosa, Ca., April 17, 1936.
38 Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3. The National Archives, Washington, D.C.
That there can be no question of preference of work to dole or idleness. That the nature of the work accomplished at our institution is certainly useful and was very much needed.39

One can only add, in retrospect, that the $100,000 still benefits our State's physically- and mentally-handicapped. In a park-like setting, the entire buildings and grounds seem ideal for housing and treating the kinds of patients who populate the "hospital-community."

**Sebastopol**

From February 4, 1935, when construction of Analy High School began, through May 8, 1941, with completion of an intensive street renewal project, federal and sponsor funds provided almost $400,000 worth of improvements, to the comfort, betterment, and delight, of Sebastopol's 1,762 inhabitants (U.S. Census, 1930).40 The high school building began with the employment of forty men, reaching a peak of sixty at the height of activity. In November, 1940, the high school grounds and facilities received an addition of sidewalks, curbs, gutters, retaining walls, a sprinkler system, playground equipment, plus grading, and


40Records of the WPA, "Community Appraisal Reports," letter, A.P. Sweetnam, Sebastopol Mayor, March 2, 1938 and Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, the National Archives, Washington, D.C.
landscaping incidental to the other works.\textsuperscript{41} Built to accommodate five hundred students, the plant facilities currently provide services for more than thirteen hundred students.\textsuperscript{42} The sidewalk still bears the inscription "WPA/1935-1941."*

The Grammar School (now Parkside School) benefited from terracing and landscaping, construction of playgrounds and playground fences, and erection of bleachers.\textsuperscript{43}

A project which provided for demolition of the old wood-frame city hall also constructed a new reinforced concrete City Hall and Fire Station on the same site—one block from Main Street, on Bodega Avenue. In the early sixties the fire department moved three blocks away to McKinley Street, although emergency fire equipment is still dispatched from the police department located in the original WPA building. Now known as City Hall, the building remained virtually unchanged otherwise, until it gained a new redwood facade in 1974.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41}Press Democrat, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 8; Records of The WPA, "Appraisal Reports," letter, A.P. Sweetnam, Mar. 2, 1938; Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, The National Archives.


\textsuperscript{43}Records of the WPA, letter, A.P. Sweetnam, Mar. 2, 1938; Records of the WPA, "Report on the WPA in Sonoma County," no pn. and Microfilm, same as above.

\textsuperscript{44}Ernest M. Joiner, editor, Sebastopol Times (Sebastopol, CA.), private interview held in Sebastopol, CA.,
Other work included repairing and improving the municipal water system and installation of new water mains, valves, and fittings; construction of a warehouse and corporation yard; and reroofing of the reservoir after demolition of the existing warehouse and pumphouse. A new fence around the reservoir, and repaving of adjacent streets, added much to the aesthetics as well as to the efficiency of this vital city service.⁴⁵

In addition to these obvious improvements, many other works also reached completion in Sebastopol from 1936 to 1941. Needy professional, educational, and clerical persons gained employment (cf. Petaluma statistics) by preserving and repairing books and library materials, and by checking and arranging accumulated municipal materials (pamphlets, clippings, pictures, and photographic collections). They also shelved and maintained free reading rooms, assisted in compilation of bibliographies and concordances, and indexed costumes and portraits for the library.⁴⁶

A letter (already cited) from Mayor Sweetnam indicates the degree to which the community appreciated and benefited from the school, as well as WPA's other

July 1975.

⁴⁵ Records of the WPA, "Report on the WPA in Sonoma County," no pn. and Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.
⁴⁶ Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3.
contribution to the local payroll. The letter also confirms what other officials said about the dole, permanence, benefits to all residents, and quality of workmanship:

All of these projects have accomplished permanent work of inestimable value, almost none of which we could have accomplished without federal assistance.

The programs have provided proper types of work for the needy employables in our community. However, we discovered during construction of our City Hall that sufficient skilled workers were not available on the WPA rolls and we were obliged to provide a considerable portion of the skilled labor ourselves [competition with private industry not verified or denied].

To date we have contributed in local funds approximately 40% of the total. We will be unable to continue such a very high contribution. We expect the cost of maintenance will be less than at the outset of the works program because of the greatly improved condition of these facilities.

Every resident will be benefited. The quality of workmanship has been comparable in every way to that obtained on work done by any other means.

In our opinion, work should by all means be provided for all the able-bodied, needy unemployed. The dole should in no case be given to any except physically incapacitated persons.

Mayor Sweetnam's statement that only physically incapacitated persons should receive the dole, still reverberates throughout Sonoma County. There are still people who would limit any kind of financial aid (food stamps, Medi-Cal, Medi-Care, etc.) to those who are physically unable to work. However, the State now recognizes mental as well as financial incapacity when determining need.

Sonoma

Water-related improvements accounted for two-thirds of the money spent for the City of Sonoma by WPA, according to available work orders. Thirty-five hundred and ninety dollars went for mosquito abatement, through construction of drainage ditches and canals. A description of the mosquito-project, which accompanied the dollar-figures, earmarked the funds "for the eradication of injurious pests by the elimination of mosquito breeding areas in the tidelands south of the town of Sonoma." Of all the permanent or long-lasting results of WPA funds, this one had to be the biggest failure; mosquito abatement districts still flourish, but now they are all over Sonoma County. The districts still abide, but so do the mosquitoes.

Other money spent in Sonoma were for school and park improvement, although improvement at Scnoma Valley High School also included culverts, catch basins, and tile drains on private property to keep the athletic field dry. Sonoma's outdoor theater, still in use, gained new concrete steps, bleachers and park benches, and a face-lift from grading and landscaping of the immediate grounds.

All of the preceding information came from work orders, but the most interesting and informative story came

48 Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.
49 Ibid.
from Mayor Jep Valente in a letter to Lawson dated February 28, 1938. Most letters merely enumerate answers with the addition, without exception of reference to work-relief as being superior to the dole. However, the letter from Valente is an admirable exception, not only because of the detailed information offered, but because he took time to include background information, thus making the City and those days come alive today. 50

Valente is explicit about unemployment, mentioning that the township of 5000 persons suffered considerably from this problem, but that the incorporated city of 980 (exactly the same figure as U.S. Census, 1930) felt no employment pains. He goes on to say that prior to WPA, "about five years ago," more than 100 unemployed people could compare to the fifteen or sixteen without work after WPA, and that they were "all men who are worthy of work and need it." 51

Valente emphasizes that funds spent were treated as though the entire cost came from Sonomans, and that local contractors and their employees worked with the same spirit—as if the money were from their own pockets. Except for the first year, when the government paid part of

50Records of the WPA, "Community Appraisal Reports," letter, Jep Valente, Sonoma Mayor, February 28, 1938, Sonoma. (Apparently Mr. Lawson sent form letters to all the cities receiving federal assistance, because available letters all indicate responses to the same questions.)

51Ibid.
it, the City of Sonoma always paid for the material, foreman, and contractor. The fact that the County and State also provided the few welfare benefits available to residents before WPA, may help explain their antipathy to the dole: it did come from their own pockets.

The mayor expressed appreciation for federal funds by telling of two bond issues, "so necessary and important," yet defeated for lack of money. Completed with federal money, the sewer project and the City Park ("an eyesore"), eliminated the need for continued indebtedness to bonds, provided work for unemployed, and added beauty and permanence to the lives of many more than the few residents of the city. In reference to the dole, he saw the value of useful work as did all the other respondents, but ended his remarks with, "Respect should be built up, not torn down."

A letter from Councilman A.L. Pinelli to Lawson, and dated two years previous to Mayor Valente's, offers credit to the WPA in that, "one-tenth of it could not have been accomplished without [that] assistance." Pinelli suggested that people should be told of WPA assistance, "not in dollars and cents, but in terms of material furnished, yards of earth moved, etc."  

52 Ibid.  
54 Records of the WPA, "Report on the WPA in Sonoma County," no pn.
Although most of the WPA dollars were spent on water-related improvements, the lasting affects and other resultant benefits should not be considered minimal. The schools still stand and serve the community's educational needs. The park and theater also attract and entertain visitors, who still add to the city's economy. Valente's letter, however, is probably the best indicator of local sentiment which also still prevails: All was accomplished as if the money came from their own pockets, and by men who were worthy of the work and needed it (no handouts--dole).

Guerneville

Guerneville, in 1930, was the principal city in what was then known as "Redwood Township," and represented 887 people. This area covered 28,060 acres, and included Rio Nido, Monte Rio, Cazadero and other small settlements. It was then known as the finest timber region in Sonoma County. Some of that timber still stands and much has been preserved for posterity in Armstrong Grove, a State Park.

A county road foreman for the WPA Camp at Armstrong Woods (now Armstrong Grove), Thomas W. King, recalls in an interview:

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Sonoma County people were quite hesitant, at first, in applying for jobs with the WPA, but after seeing some accomplishments and assuring themselves that it was USEFUL work [not a dole], many of the residents changed their views and became ardent supporters of the WPA.

W.C. "Cap" Woodward, branch manager for Area 6, Northern California, did as much as anyone to promote good-will for the WPA. Also, he worked to keep it strong while improving its image and preventing political manipulation by those who would try to use the program for their personal benefit.

For the residents of Guerneville, any remaining vestiges of opposition to the WPA disappeared totally with the receding flood waters of the Russian River in 1940. The area residents, many of whom had no insurance, experienced great damage and loss of property. The WPA went in, cleared debris, repaired the damage, and cleaned up the river.56 [No population or dollar figures available.]

The entire interview with King reflected his personal pride in the accomplishments of the work program in Sonoma County.

In another interview, Burl Howell, former liaison man between the County and the WPA Area 6 office in Santa Rosa, offered his recollections of the "Redwood Township" area,

Sonoma County residents did not resent the WPA nor did they feel a social stigma connected with working for it. Some workers hesitated momentarily, on their first day, but after that all went well. A prime example was the pride felt after completion of the Harrison Grade Road, a WPA project running from Occidental Road down to Green Valley Road.57

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56 Thomas W. King, private interview held in Guerneville, California, May 28, 1973.

Work orders are not available from the National Archives, or locally, but improvements are gratefully acknowledged in two letters written locally and found in the National Archives. One letter to Mr. G. Snyder, North Bay Supervisor, is dated August 14, 1937, and signed by G.R. Starrett, President, and by Frank Gori, Secretary of the Guerneville Rotary Club. The other letter (same addressee and date) is signed by P. Pascoe, President, and George Clarr, Secretary, of the Guerneville Chamber of Commerce. Copies of each were sent at the same time to "Mr. Fred Trevitt, Russian River Area Supervisor, Federal Recreational Programme [sic]," a WPA employee.

Starrett and Gori wrote:

Sports activities as well as some other phase of a recreational nature prompts us to express to you and through you our sincere appreciation in such matters carried on thus far here in the River area.58

Pascoe and Clarr add:

The Board of Directors of the Guerneville Chamber of Commerce desire to express our appreciation of activities carried on during the past few weeks by the Federal Recreation Programme. ... accomplishments thus far have been most commendable.59

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WPA, then helped area residents by covering otherwise irretrievable personal losses due to floods. It provided intensive training programs to qualify recreation workers for permanent year-round employment. The lifeguards —trained and assigned by WPA—put an end to seasonal drownings in 1938. A permanent Department of Recreation came about through WPA auspices. The entire River area leaned heavily on recreation and tourist-dollars to fill out the economy. In this context, WPA accomplishments—"useful work"—did much more than provide funds for able-bodied men to chase tumble-weeds on windy days; they actually salvaged an entire community, its people and resources. No wonder the letters of gratitude and appreciation.

60 William R. Lawson, Northern California's Three Years of Achievement Under the Works Progress Administration 1935-1938 (California: Locally mimeographed, 1938), no pn.
Temporary work in the form of street and gutter cleaning brought unemployment relief to "quite a number of needy people," according to E.E. Gibbons, City Clerk. In an appraisal in 1938, Gibbons acknowledged that all needy unemployed gained suitable employment under these programs, and that the "quality of workmanship on these jobs is good." He stated that all the work, "very necessary," and "benefiting approximately 1500 people," would have been impossible with only local funds. The population of 759 (U.S. Census, 1930) and the "1500 people" referred to can be explained by another sentence, "The entire City and surrounding territory [my emphasis] will receive a benefit from these improvements."34

Gibbons' final philosophical statement reflects—to one degree or another—the sentiments of most of Sonoma County toward federal funds:

Work relief is far preferable to direct relief, as it gives the worker a chance to earn the money he receives and does not destroy altogether his feeling of independence.35

Records of total expenditures, man hours, even of individual project-costs, are lacking except for two minor work orders. Gibbons reports a forty percent contribution by Cloverdale sponsors, but neither he nor the Sonoma County Report adds any other statistical data to Cloverdale's

34 Ibid.

comparatively terse account.  

**Eldridge**

One hundred thousand dollars went into various projects prior to March, 1936, at Sonoma State Home, Eldridge. Of the four available work orders only $12,701 can be verified, and they are dated almost a year after mention of the $100,000. The two orders dated September and October, 1935, are only applications; they do not show other figures to support the total expenditure. On the assumption that they did reach completion, figures on microfilm still only account for $23,793, with no orders in evidence for 1936.

Then known as Sonoma State Home, this institution was, and is, Eldridge. All the structures, streets, even the Post Office, form what is now "Sonoma State Hospital, Eldridge." A letter to J.M. Holley from Dr. F.O. Butler and H.W. Waterhouse expressed appreciation for the projects completed with WPA's seventy percent share of the $100,000 total costs [California, therefore, paid only $30,000 for the entire hospital-community.] It states,

36 Ibid.

37 Records of the WPA, "Appraisal Reports," letter, Dr. F.O. Butler, Medical Superintendent, and H.W. Waterhouse, Business Manager, Sonoma State Home, to J.M. Holley, District Six Director, WPA, Rosenberg Building, Santa Rosa, Ca., April 17, 1936.

38 Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3. The National Archives, Washington, D.C.
That there can be no question of preference of work to dole or idleness.
That the nature of the work accomplished at our institution is certainly useful and was very much needed.\(^{39}\)

One can only add, in retrospect, that the $100,000 still benefits our State's physically- and mentally-handicapped. In a park-like setting, the entire buildings and grounds seem ideal for housing and treating the kinds of patients who populate the "hospital-community."

Sebastopol

From February 4, 1935, when construction of Analy High School began, through May 8, 1941, with completion of an intensive street renewal project, federal and sponsor funds provided almost $400,000 worth of improvements, to the comfort, betterment, and delight, of Sebastopol's 1,762 inhabitants (U.S. Census, 1930).\(^{40}\) The high school building began with the employment of forty men, reaching a peak of sixty at the height of activity. In November, 1940, the high school grounds and facilities received an addition of sidewalks, curbs, gutters, retaining walls, a sprinkler system, playground equipment, plus grading, and


\(^{40}\)Records of the WPA, "Community Appraisal Reports," letter, A.P. Sweetnam, Sebastopol Mayor, March 2, 1938 and Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, the National Archives, Washington, D.C.
landscaping incidental to the other works.\textsuperscript{41} Built to accommodate five hundred students, the plant facilities currently provide services for more than thirteen hundred students.\textsuperscript{42} The sidewalk still bears the inscription "WPA/1935-1941."* 

The Grammar School (now Parkside School) benefited from terracing and landscaping, construction of playgrounds and playground fences, and erection of bleachers.\textsuperscript{43}

A project which provided for demolition of the old wood-frame city hall also constructed a new reinforced concrete City Hall and Fire Station on the same site—one block from Main Street, on Bodega Avenue. In the early sixties the fire department moved three blocks away to McKinley Street, although emergency fire equipment is still dispatched from the police department located in the original WPA building. Now known as City Hall, the building remained virtually unchanged otherwise, until it gained a new redwood facade in 1974.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41}Press Democrat, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 8; Records of The WPA, "Appraisal Reports," letter, A.P. Sweetnam, Mar. 2, 1938; Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, The National Archives.


\textsuperscript{43}Records of the WPA, letter, A.P. Sweetnam, Mar. 2, 1938; Records of the WPA, "Report on the WPA in Sonoma County," no pn. and Microfilm, same as above.

\textsuperscript{44}Ernest M. Joiner, editor, Sebastopol Times (Sebastopol, CA.), private interview held in Sebastopol, CA.,
Other work included repairing and improving the municipal water system and installation of new water mains, valves, and fittings; construction of a warehouse and corporation yard; and reroofing of the reservoir after demolition of the existing warehouse and pumphouse. A new fence around the reservoir, and repaving of adjacent streets, added much to the aesthetics as well as to the efficiency of this vital city service.45

In addition to these obvious improvements, many other works also reached completion in Sebastopol from 1936 to 1941. Needy professional, educational, and clerical persons gained employment (cf. Petaluma statistics) by preserving and repairing books and library materials, and by checking and arranging accumulated municipal materials (pamphlets, clippings, pictures, and photographic collections). They also shelved and maintained free reading rooms, assisted in compilation of bibliographies and concordances, and indexed costumes and portraits for the library.46

A letter (already cited) from Mayor Sweetnam indicates the degree to which the community appreciated and benefited from the school, as well as WPA's other

July 1975.

45 Records of the WPA, "Report on the WPA in Sonoma County," no pn. and Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

46 Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3.
contribution to the local payroll. The letter also confirms what other officials said about the dole, permanence, benefits to all residents, and quality of workmanship:

All of these projects have accomplished permanent work of inestimable value, almost none of which we could have accomplished without federal assistance.

The programs have provided proper types of work for the needy employables in our community. ...however, we discovered during construction of our City Hall that sufficient skilled workers were not available on the WPA rolls and we were obliged to provide a considerable portion of the skilled labor ourselves [competition with private industry not verified or denied].

To date we have contributed in local funds approximately 40% of the total.... we will be unable to continue such a very high contribution.... We expect the cost of maintenance...will be less than at the outset of the works program because of the greatly improved condition of these facilities.

Every resident...will be benefited.... The quality of workmanship...has been comparable in every way to that obtained on work done by any other means.

In our opinion, work should by all means be provided for all the able-bodied, needy unemployed. The dole should in no case be given to any except physically incapacitated persons.47

Mayor Sweetnam's statement that only physically incapacitated persons should receive the dole, still reverberates throughout Sonoma County. There are still people who would limit any kind of financial aid (food stamps, Medi-Cal, Medi-Care, etc.) to those who are physically unable to work. However, the State now recognizes mental as well as financial incapacity when determining need.

Sonoma

Water-related improvements accounted for two-thirds of the money spent for the City of Sonoma by WPA, according to available work orders. Thirty-five hundred and ninety dollars went for mosquito abatement, through construction of drainage ditches and canals. A description of the mosquito-project, which accompanied the dollar-figures, earmarked the funds "for the eradication of injurious pests by the elimination of mosquito breeding areas in the tidelands south of the town of Sonoma." Of all the permanent or long-lasting results of WPA funds, this one had to be the biggest failure; mosquito abatement districts still flourish, but now they are all over Sonoma County. The districts still abide, but so do the mosquitoes.

Other money spent in Sonoma were for school and park improvement, although improvement at Sonoma Valley High School also included culverts, catch basins, and tile drains on private property to keep the athletic field dry. Sonoma's outdoor theater, still in use, gained new concrete steps, bleachers and park benches, and a face-lift from grading and landscaping of the immediate grounds.

All of the preceding information came from work orders, but the most interesting and informative story came

48 Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2 and T937 #3, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.  
49 Ibid.
from Mayor Jep Valente in a letter to Lawson dated February 28, 1938. Most letters merely enumerate answers with the addition, without exception of reference to work-relief as being superior to the dole. However, the letter from Valente is an admirable exception, not only because of the detailed information offered, but because he took time to include background information, thus making the City and those days come alive today.  

Valente is explicit about unemployment, mentioning that the township of 5000 persons suffered considerably from this problem, but that the incorporated city of 980 (exactly the same figure as U.S. Census, 1930) felt no employment pains. He goes on to say that prior to WPA, "about five years ago," more than 100 unemployed people could compare to the fifteen or sixteen without work after WPA, and that they were "all men who are worthy of work and need it."  

Valente emphasizes that funds spent were treated as though the entire cost came from Sonomans, and that local contractors and their employees worked with the same spirit—as if the money were from their own pockets. Except for the first year, when the government paid part of

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50 Records of the WPA, "Community Appraisal Reports," letter, Jep Valente, Sonoma Mayor, February 28, 1938, Sonoma. (Apparently Mr. Lawson sent form letters to all the cities receiving federal assistance, because available letters all indicate responses to the same questions.)

51 Ibid.
it, the City of Sonoma always paid for the material, foreman, and contractor.\textsuperscript{52} The fact that the County and State also provided the few welfare benefits available to residents before WPA, may help explain their antipathy to the dole: it did come from their own pockets.

The mayor expressed appreciation for federal funds by telling of two bond issues, "so necessary and important," yet defeated for lack of money. Completed with federal money, the sewer project and the City Park ("an eyesore"), eliminated the need for continued indebtedness to bonds, provided work for unemployed, and added beauty and permanence to the lives of many more than the few residents of the city. In reference to the dole, he saw the value of useful work as did all the other respondents, but ended his remarks with, "Respect should be built up, not torn down."\textsuperscript{53}

A letter from Councilman A.L. Pinelli to Lawson, and dated two years previous to Mayor Valente's, offers credit to the WPA in that, "one-tenth of it could not have been accomplished without [that] assistance." Pinelli suggested that people should be told of WPA assistance, "not in dollars and cents, but in terms of material furnished, yards of earth moved, etc."\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54}Records of the WPA, "Report on the WPA in Sonoma County," no pn.
VALLEY OF THE MOON
FIRE DISTRICT

1936

O.P. No. 65-3-5336 VALLEY OF THE MOON FIRE STATION AT BOTES SPRINGS-BONNEVA COUNTY
Although most of the WPA dollars were spent on water-related improvements, the lasting affects and other resultant benefits should not be considered minimal. The schools still stand and serve the community's educational needs. The park and theater also attract and entertain visitors, who still add to the city's economy. Valente's letter, however, is probably the best indicator of local sentiment which also still prevails: All was accomplished as if the money came from their own pockets, and by men who were worthy of the work and needed it (no handouts--dole).

Guerneville

Guerneville, in 1930, was the principal city in what was then known as "Redwood Township," and represented 887 people. This area covered 28,060 acres, and included Rio Nido, Monte Rio, Cazadero and other small settlements. It was then known as the finest timber region in Sonoma County. Some of that timber still stands and much has been preserved for posterity in Armstrong Grove, a State Park.

A county road foreman for the WPA Camp at Armstrong Woods (now Armstrong Grove), Thomas W. King, recalls in an interview:

Sonoma County people were quite hesitant, at first, in applying for jobs with the WPA, but after seeing some accomplishments and assuring themselves that it was USEFUL work [not a dole], many of the residents changed their views and became ardent supporters of the WPA.

W.C. "Cap" Woodward, branch manager for Area 6, Northern California, did as much as anyone to promote good-will for the WPA. Also, he worked to keep it strong while improving its image and preventing political manipulation by those who would try to use the program for their personal benefit.

For the residents of Guerneville, any remaining vestiges of opposition to the WPA disappeared totally with the receding flood waters of the Russian River in 1940. The area residents, many of whom had no insurance, experienced great damage and loss of property. The WPA went in, cleared debris, repaired the damage, and cleaned up the river.56 [No population or dollar figures available.]

The entire interview with King reflected his personal pride in the accomplishments of the work program in Sonoma County.

In another interview, Burl Howell, former liaison man between the County and the WPA Area 6 office in Santa Rosa, offered his recollections of the "Redwood Township" area,

Sonoma County residents did not resent the WPA nor did they feel a social stigma connected with working for it. Some workers hesitated momentarily, on their first day, but after that all went well. A prime example was the pride felt after completion of the Harrison Grade Road, a WPA project running from Occidental Road down to Green Valley Road.57

56 Thomas W. King, private interview held in Guerneville, California, May 28, 1973.

Work orders are not available from the National Archives, or locally, but improvements are gratefully acknowledged in two letters written locally and found in the National Archives. One letter to Mr. G. Snyder, North Bay Supervisor, is dated August 14, 1937, and signed by G.R. Starrett, President, and by Frank Gori, Secretary of the Guerneville Rotary Club. The other letter (same addressee and date) is signed by P. Pascoe, President, and George Clarr, Secretary, of the Guerneville Chamber of Commerce. Copies of each were sent at the same time to "Mr. Fred Trevitt, Russian River Area Supervisor, Federal Recreational Programme [sic]," a WPA employee.

Starrett and Gori wrote:

Sports activities as well as some other phase of a recreational nature prompts us to express to you and through you our sincere appreciation in such matters carried on thus far here in the River area.\(^{58}\)

Pascoe and Clarr add:

The Board of Directors of the Guerneville Chamber of Commerce desire to express our appreciation of activities carried on during the past few weeks by the Federal Recreation Programme. ...accomplishments thus far have been most commendable.\(^{59}\)

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WPA, then helped area residents by covering otherwise irretrievable personal losses due to floods. It provided intensive training programs to qualify recreation workers for permanent year-round employment. The lifeguards --trained and assigned by WPA--put an end to seasonal drownings in 1938. A permanent Department of Recreation came about through WPA auspices. 60 The entire River area leaned heavily on recreation and tourist-dollars to fill out the economy. In this context, WPA accomplishments--"useful work"--did much more than provide funds for able-bodied men to chase tumble-weeds on windy days; they actually salvaged an entire community, its people and resources. No wonder the letters of gratitude and appreciation.

60 William R. Lawson, Northern California's Three Years of Achievement Under the Works Progress Administration 1935-1938 (California: Locally mimeographed, 1938), no pn.
NOT A LIFE LOST IN 1938

Life guards are trained and assigned by the Works Progress Administration to those aquatic areas in Northern California which in the past have annually taken many lives by drowning.

It is significant to note that no such tragedies occurred in the 32 areas served by the Recreation Division of the Works Progress Administration in 1938.

Thanks to WPA
CHAPTER III

WPA PROJECTS: COUNTY-WIDE

The county of Sonoma benefited to a great extent through the operation of many useful projects under the aegis of the WPA, and with the Board of Supervisors as sponsors. The Community Appraisal Report lists some activities and their results, resolved into two outstanding divisions: 1) Improvement and Construction of Highways, Roads, and Bridges, and 2) Humanitarian and Public Health Project of Building and Equipping a New County Hospital to Replace an Old and Inadequate Plant. Construction of highways, roads, and bridges earned major consideration because so much of the county depended on transportation and communication.

The county's highway system in 1938, consisting of over 1,100 miles of road, presented a double burden owing to the following factors: a) As a heavy-producing agricultural community there was a need for numerous farm-to-market roads adequate for heavy-trucking demands; b) Sonoma County enjoyed the position of being an all-year playground for thousands of dwellers in the San Francisco Bay region and the Sacramento Valley, and experienced heavy
tourist traffic over the Redwood Highway and along the Russian River. This traffic demanded good wide roads in the congested centers, and roads costly to construct and maintain in the mountain areas.¹

The County-Wide Road and Bridge Project began on February 12, 1936, and employed from fifty to two hundred seventy-five men. As many as twelve sub-projects operated in different locations at the same time. Because of a fluctuating labor supply and the necessities of construction, men and/or equipment went to whichever project or sub-project conditions dictated.² Improvements to seventy-three miles of county roads, the construction of eighteen bridges, and the installation of two hundred concrete and corrugated metal culverts, constituted the principal accomplishments under this category. Federal funds amounted to $111,122 for labor, and $33,696 for materials and equipment rentals. The county contributed $61,003 or thirty percent of the total expenditure.³


³Ibid.
ROADS and BRIDGES

- Heavy Equipment - San Mateo Co.
- Street Widening - Oakland
- Boulevard Repair - S.F.
- Lincoln Blvd Underpass - San Francisco
- Road Grading
- Improved Roads - Sonoma Co.
- Road Realignment - Placer Co.
Highway and Bridge Construction deserved a separate heading and entry in the Appraisal, and shows $747,420 expended up to December 31, 1937. The county spent $137,365 or forty-three percent of the outlay. Most of the funds went for road construction or reconstruction and the rest went for bridges.

Some of the principal projects and their individual statistics taken from the Appraisal show: a) the Annapolis Road Project consisting of grading and widening a portion of mountainous road along the canyon of Gualala River; b) construction of a major bridge at Clark's Crossing; and c) improvement of a recreational and farm-to-market road in the adjoining valley and coastal districts. These projects employed an average of twenty men, mostly from the Kashia Indian Reservation. For the three projects, the federal government allocated $13,712 and county funds came to $14,098.

The Appraisal shows that another Annapolis Road project in 1938 widened and improved roads in the northwestern mountainous area of the county, also using an average of twenty men from the Kashia Reservation. Federal

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5 Appraisal Reports, p. 3. 6 Ibid.
expenses totaled $4,468 and the sponsors paid $3,923 by March 8, 1938. 7

A Geysers Road project attacked the problem of opening up a highly scenic tourist and health resort area (in northeastern Sonoma County) by widening and realigning twenty-four miles of a narrow road. The project also helped grazing and mining interests in the area. It employed an average of eighty workers from the State Relief Administration (SRA) transient camps. 8 Of the total expenditures--$104,809--WPA contributed more than fifty-six percent. 9

The development in recent years of the Geysers as a source of energy, certainly not foreseen in 1936, adds to the current interest, and lends further credence to the advisability of the WPA expenditures. A major project in 1936, the road qualifies as little more than a long black-topped driveway forty years later. Further realignment seems called for to accommodate the increased activity in the area: the road is still so narrow that one car must pull over and completely stop when meeting a truck or a full-sized car. The hairpin curves are a series of connected esses, each of which, one is positive, will be the

7 Appraisal Reports, p. 3.
8 Ernest L. Finley, History of Sonoma County (Santa Rosa: Press Democrat Publication, 1937), p. 195.
9 Appraisal Reports, p. 3.
last; it goes on for more than twenty miles.

WPA built or improved many other roads under the same title: Mays, Neeley, Oregon Canyon, Old and New Cazadero, Rio Nido, and Austin Creek in the Guerneville area of Sonoma County. Other projects included the building of a powder magazine (a structure to hold explosives) on the Walker Ranch near Guerneville, and a drainage ditch on Rio Nido Road. The sturdy, careful construction of this rock ditch, two hundred to three hundred feet in length and some six feet in width, is evidenced by the excellent state of preservation observable to this day.10

The Humanitarian and Public Health Project gave aid to the County Hospital, now called Community Hospital, and, according to the Appraisal, helped it become a "highly modern unit . . . costing over $321,000." Federal funds "applied to building costs and certain portions of equipment" amounted to 40.7 percent of the $321,045 total.11 In addition to its enormous value to the community in health care, the new space and facilities allowed for utilization of the old structure as a roomy and well-equipped tuberculosis sanitarium. The new building, fire- and earthquake-proof, provided administrative and surgical facilities "adequate," says the Appraisal, "for years to come, and

10 Thomas W. King, private interview held in Guerneville, California, May 28, 1973.
11 Appraisal Reports, pp. 1-4.

*Field observation.
BELLVUE-NORTHFORK ROAD, MADERA CO.
WIDENING MARIPOSA COUNTY ROAD
WIDENING FAIRFAX ROAD, MARIN CO.

ROAD IMPROVEMENT, KERN COUNTY
ROAD IMPROVEMENT, FRESNO COUNTY
DAYLIGHTING CURVE, SONOMA CO. ROAD

THANKS TO WPA
room and ward facilities are adequate for present needs, but capable of being expanded at minimum cost to meet future needs." \(^{12}\)

A seasonal surplus of building-trades workers, and a wide range of crafts-people available in the county's "urban centers," enjoyed the collateral benefits of the employment which accounted for a large percentage of the remaining $190,210 supplied by sponsors. \(^{13}\) According to the *Press Democrat*, this project provided work for fifty-two men for six months. \(^{14}\)

Sonoma County made wide use of federal funds for road improvements, as this seemed to spread the benefits among the greatest number of people. Utilization of PWA funds, while not directly affecting such a large percentage of people, did supply a direct and widespread benefit to the county's economic structure by lightening the load on existing resources, and allowing other services the county would have been forced to curtail or drop. \(^{15}\)

The roads and the hospital project typify the overlapping and complementary functions of WPA and PWA: PWA loaned an unspecified amount of money to the sponsors

\(^{12}\) *Appraisal Reports*, p. 3.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., pp. 1-4.

\(^{14}\) *Press Democrat* (Santa Rosa), Oct. 4, 1940, p.15.

\(^{15}\) *Appraisal Reports*, p. 4.
for financing long-term construction projects, thereby planning for the future. In other words, the PWA functioned as money-lenders and as a materials-purchasing agency; WPA functioned as the employment agency. PWA provided for long-term goals; WPA projects served immediate goals. Both New Deal programs tried to feed the hungry of the present, and build to prevent hunger in the future. Any one of the county projects in this section, impossible without federal funds, circumvented an otherwise unbearable financial burden on each community. Neither the WPA nor the PWA could have affected the total picture, individually, to the extent of their combined efforts. 


17 Appraisal Reports, passim.
CHAPTER IV

WPA BUILDS AND IMPROVES COUNTY SCHOOLS AND WPA EMPLOYS PROFESSIONAL AND CLERICAL WORKERS

Santa Rosa Junior College, now one of Sonoma County's most beautiful scenic attractions, felt the helpful hand of WPA in the late thirties. Beginning with the construction of permanent bleachers for the football stadium (now Bailey Field) in April, 1936, alterations and improvements continued into 1939. October 15, 1936, heralded approval of Federal funds for groundswork which included tree-trimming and surgery, and, according to Lawson, "incidental" work on the campus.¹

January 31, 1939, saw approval of additional WPA funds for installation of the first permanent exhibit in the Jesse Peter Museum on the Junior College campus. California and Indian artifacts, plus flora, fauna, and rock specimens, gained a permanent home and grew into a biological, cultural and historical center. Federal funds also covered the classification, labeling, cataloging, and

homogeneous grouping in suitable settings, which enabled the entire collection to be properly displayed.²

The museum work employed nine men who provided appropriate backgrounds and settings for the valuable and historical specimens that might otherwise have remained in storage for many more years. Setting up and labeling displays, plus cataloging and classifying the entire collection, earned $9,060 for the men involved, and filled 6,760 otherwise unproductive man-hours in the early months of 1939.³ From 1939 to 1974, many more donations threatened to push back the walls of the museum. Finally in 1974, the walls did move, architecturally, and the expansion provided room for an art gallery to share honors with the museum.

Santa Rosa Junior College also became the scene for California's first WPA archeological project, under the direction of Helen A. Neal, District Director of the Professional and Service Division of the Works Progress Administration. The project called for the expenditure of $10,000 annually in excavation and research work. Jesse Peter, curator of the junior college museum, and in charge of the

²Microfilm T936 #2, The National Archives and Lawson, Achievements, FWA, WPA, Northern California, p. 122, and Press Democrat (Santa Rosa, Calif.), Nov. 9, 1940, p. 5.

work, revealed that the objective of the search was to unravel the entire history of prehistoric civilization in Sonoma, Napa, and Marin counties. This endeavor provided work for twenty-five men. 4

Floyd P. Bailey, first president of the Junior College, reported that the "Luther Burbank Memorial Auditorium was completed on January 11, 1940, with PWA funds which were a vital supplement to a bond issue which could not cover the entire cost." 5 The auditorium is still in use five days a week for year round classes, and is the site of many memorable stage shows, forensic meets, Wednesday night movies, weekend events and guest lecturers.

The college projects contributed lasting beauty, utility and culture, to the community at a total cost of a mere $13,084. The sources do not delineate total man-hours nor sponsor's contributions.* Today, these projects bear silent testimony to the foresight of an American President and to the careful craftsmanship of men—until then, too long idle. 6

Of the elementary schools, the Waugh School, on Corona Road in Petaluma, became an example of "recycling"

4 Press Democrat (Santa Rosa), Nov. 9, 1940, p. 5.
5 Bailey, SRJC, 1918-1957, pp. 30-33.
6 Microfilm, T936 #2, The National Archives.
*Bailey's statement covers 1940, for which no microfilm is available.
to gladden the heart of the most ardent conservationist. Because of structural weaknesses and unfavorable ground conditions, the school had settled in such a way and become so badly warped that condemnation loomed as a probability. On February 6, 1937, WPA moved in with men, materials, and money, to save the school for another generation of learning. Workers installed a new foundation, strengthened and reinforced the framing, applied a new stucco exterior, re-roofed, repainted, and renovated the entire building. To complete the picture, the grounds received extensive improvements. These labors negated condemnation, and saved a school.

Seven months later, WPA returned to Waugh School for some final touches. WPA Records tell of men who constructed new partitioning, installed flues, plastered their work, and performed other incidental work. In addition to some skilled labor hired from the open job market, six to nineteen unskilled laborers earned wages and stayed off "the dole" for the year. In all, the project cost $3,284 for materials and equipment, and, according to the final report, provided 12,870 man-hours of labor.  

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8 Records of the WPA, "Sonoma County," no pn. and
Jonive [pronounced hoe nee' va] School still stands west of Sebastopol, but is not being used at present. Before the school year began in 1936, WPA funds enabled WPA workers to clear brush and debris from the playground, which also corrected a severe drainage problem. After draining and leveling the grounds, and moving the garage to a more suitable spot, a real playground became a fact—for the first time. Youngsters no longer stayed in the building all winter, but spent recesses, lunch periods, and after-school hours, in the fresh air—on their own school grounds. Eighteen hundred dollars may seem a small amount by today's standards, and it is doubtful that anyone knew, then, about the adverse mental and physical effects of overheating and overcrowding, but teachers and students surely must have felt joy at being able to stretch-out, breathe fresh air, and move around without feeling space-stress.

WPA Records also indicate extensive playground improvement at Brush School, although no statistics are available for verification. A one-room school on Brush Creek Road, east of Santa Rosa, Brush School comprised an entire school district in the early Thirties. In the late Thirties,

Microfilm, T935 #6, The National Archives.

9 Microfilm, T935 #6, The National Archives.

10 Ibid.

11 Records of the WPA, "Sonoma County," no. pn.
the Santa Rosa High School District reorganized and arranged schools to accommodate only kindergartners through sixth grades in one school, grades seven through nine in another, and ten through twelve in another (the six-three-three plan, still in use today). At this point, Brush School became part of the Rincon Valley Union School District. The school, later converted to a private residence, still houses a family. The sturdy retaining wall, well preserved to date, also owes its existence to the WPA. 12

Between six and nineteen laborers kept busy on school improvements during this three-year period for 12,870 hours, and at a cost of less than $25,000. 13 Despite the minimal cost, each project added considerably to improvement of the county's educational facilities. Perhaps more important, however, it added immeasurably to the improvement of life itself for many more than the few workmen involved.

Employment of physical labor received much attention in Sonoma County's farming and laboring area, but not to the exclusion of white-collar workers. From February 15, 1937, through August 26, 1938, approximately $28,000 went to jobs for professional and clerical workers. Those unemployed

12 Douglas Campbell, Director of Secondary Education, Santa Rosa City Schools, private interview held in Santa Rosa, California, fall of 1974.

13 Microfilm, T935 #6, The National Archives.
people transcribed data on the physically handicapped children of Sonoma County. The information came from many sources and in different forms, but went to the State Department of Education on standardized forms which enabled the data to be analyzed, compared and studied, and consequently, provided increased educational services for the handicapped in Sonoma County. 14

Other clerical persons worked in public libraries, repairing and binding books; a project long neglected for lack of funds. Sponsor-funds, fleshed out with Federal monies, again benefited more persons than merely those employed. This work also included cataloging, indexing, typing and filing index cards. Throughout Sonoma County, local people earned salaries and at the same time updated many of our libraries, and preserved books and materials for their own and future generations. Wherever books needed repair, or books and other library materials needed preserving or shelving, those needy clerical and professional workers made important, long-term contributions. 15

From August 31, 1936, to January 31, 1939, many more WPA dollars entered Sonoma County to improve education. Although the sums seem insignificant compared to today's

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14 Microfilm, T937 #3, T936 #2 and T935 #6, The National Archives.

15 Ibid.
costs, and the number of people employed represented only a small part of the population, the long term benefits endure to the present. William Lawson, WPA Administrator, then wrote,

Through our WPA efforts, educational advantages have been extended to thousands of children who hitherto were denied them either on account of inadequate facilities or because none whatever existed. Educational buildings account for the greatest expenditure of funds, and probably no other facilities created by the WPA have contributed a greater and more enduring benefit to the public.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} Lawson, Achievements, FWA, WPA, Northern California, p. 39.
CHAPTER V

STATE PROJECTS IN SONOMA COUNTY

That area which is known only as Sonoma Coast State Beach was called Bodega State Park in the Thirties. Actually a series of beaches separated by rocky bluffs, the area extends thirteen miles between Bodega Head and the Russian River in Sonoma County. It is accessible to beachcombers, fishermen, sunbathers, and picnickers from more than a dozen points along Coast Highway One.

Without the intervention of the WPA, this area could have remained a mere beach instead of the popular—and profitable
--resort area of today.

Several park and beach projects operated in Sonoma County under the sponsorship of state agencies (as opposed to city or county agencies). These improvements in the state parks provided far-reaching and long-lasting benefits far-surpassing the mere income paid to some local unemployed. Additional benefits included a boost to the economy through the purchase and dispersal of supplies and equipment. Unforeseen dividends yielded lasting, living, historical sites where today’s citizens still congregate and enrich their lives while absorbing history and culture.

Another part of the park system, the beaches and redwood groves, also felt the benign hand of WPA, thereby preserving and perpetuating Sonoma County as a resort-recreation-scenic area. The WPA constructed pit latrines and developed springs at Salmon Creek, Portuguese, and Schoolhouse Beaches. WPA workers also cut trails at those beaches and at Wright’s Beach and Goat Rock. Improvements

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2 M.L. Badger, Supervising Ranger, Sonoma Coast State Beach, interview held at Ranger Headquarters, July 23, 1974.
at Bodega State Park included transplantation of grasses that prevented further wind erosion of sand dunes.\textsuperscript{3}

Armstrong Redwoods Grove (now known as Armstrong Redwoods State Park)\textsuperscript{*} also realized extensive improvements, among which were an outdoor amphitheater, a combination community building and wardens’ quarters, barbecue pits, picnic tables from native redwood, one timber bridge, two miles of road improvement, clearing of underbrush, and general improvements to the park grounds.\textsuperscript{4} Completed units of work included construction of a garage, dressing rooms for the amphitheater, a water distribution system, and bridle paths. Timber was cleared, and the labor camp buildings and facilities "rehabilitated." Building-stone and logs from privately owned property were added to indigenous rock for use on this project.\textsuperscript{5}

The outdoor amphitheater was centered in a glade near the tallest redwood tree in Sonoma County, the Parson Jones tree, named for Colonel Armstrong’s son-in-law, a

\textsuperscript{3}Records of the WPA, "WPA in Sonoma County, August 1935-January 1938," no. pn.; Finley, History of Sonoma County, p. 195; and Microfilm T936 #2, T937 #3, and T935 #6 (The National Archives of the United States, Washington, D.C.)


\textsuperscript{5}Ibid, and Microfilm T936 #2, The National Archives.
Methodist Minister. The stage was a natural elevated ledge, with backdrops of evergreen shrubs, boulders, and lower trunks of redwoods. Redwood logs, beveled on one side and placed in rows, formed natural seats and completed this ecologist's paradise.\(^6\) The California State Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, joined with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to sponsor this project at an estimated cost of $75,000 for the amphitheater and the community building. WPA workmen also modernized nearby roads which serve this Russian River area.\(^7\)

California State Division of Natural Resources Division also included the Division of Forestry, which received much needed assistance from Federal funds, while providing 112,000 man-hours of labor. The forestry station on West College Avenue in Santa Rosa acquired a new ranger's residence. The existing station gained new water and sewer pipes, an equipment warehouse, a tank house, and finally, public utilities, which served the entire station.\(^8\) Landscaping of grounds and construction of walks and fences

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\(^7\) Finley, History of Sonoma County, p. 200 and Lawson, Achievements 1935-1939, p. 57, (work orders not available).

\(^8\) Records of the WPA, "WPA in Sonoma County," no pn.
further enhanced this vital facility. Labor for the Forestry Station project cost WPA $35,892: $12,500 for subsistence in lieu of wages, and $15,480 for materials, equipment, and related costs. Sponsor's expenditures totaled $5,866. Federal expenditures for the entire park-forestry project amounted to $91,297, of which sponsors' contributions came to $15,229.*

Restoration and renovation of the buildings and grounds of General Vallejo's Home began on April 6, 1936, and ended in the spring of 1938. In deference to the park as an historical shrine, the buildings were restored, as nearly as possible, to their original condition. A crew of ten to eighteen workers completely renovated the residence, the servants' quarters, the brick Swiss Chalet, and the fountains and grounds. The entrance road underwent repair, the grounds given a face-lift, boundary fences erected, and a water system installed. Construction of a garage and rest-room, welcome additions, also reached

9 Records of the WPA, "WPA in Sonoma County," no pn. Finley, History of Sonoma County, p. 195; and Microfilm T935 #6, The National Archives.

10 Lawson, Achievements 1935-1939; Lawson, Northern California's Three Years of Achievement, passim; and Myer Cohen, Sonoma County, A Preliminary Survey (San Francisco: NYA Project, School of Social Studies, U.S. WPA, 1940), passim.

*There is no available breakdown of figures to show how much went for labor or supplies; the individual work orders used are incomplete. Total figures come from footnote 9.
completion during the period of restoration.\textsuperscript{11}

The two-story chalet, situated behind the main building, came from Switzerland---around the Horn---in pieces, pre-cut and marked. Brick walls concealed timbers joined with wooden pins, and bolstered the metal frames of the windows. After restoration, the chalet became a museum to house relics of the General and of earlier days in California.\textsuperscript{12}

Deeded to the State of California in June 1933, through public subscription, the $250,000 property built by General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo in 1850, remained the home of his sole surviving child, Mrs. Louisa Emparan, who became the Custodian of the Park.

Acquisition by the state enabled Sonoma County to retain this historical property. If left to local financing, the property may have been lost forever. Approval of the restoration project allowed for $14,211 from the government, and $5,325 from state funds.\textsuperscript{13} When completed,


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., passim and Microfilm, T935 #6, The National Archives.

\textsuperscript{13}Records of the WPA, "Restoration of Historic Shrines," p. 3.
the cost exceeded the original funding by $1,511.

Federal expenditures: $13,452 for 21,900 man-hours of labor and $2,314 for materials. Sponsors' contributions amounted to $5,281 for other materials, for equipment, and supervision.  

The estate is still open to the public in the 1970's and thousands of tourists visit this shrine annually.

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14 Records of the WPA, "Restoration of Historic Shrines," p. 3.
CHAPTER VI

WOMEN AND THE WPA: SEWING

With the SRA and Sonoma County as sponsors, the Division of Women's and Professional Projects initiated a sewing project in November, 1935.¹ The County WPA Report states that, "From the first, emphasis was placed on training, and special attention was given to women who had no knowledge of sewing."² Utilization of an overalls factory, idle for several years, enabled those women responsible for maintenance of a family unit to gain employment. The factory, with fifty-eight power sewing machines, easily converted to use by the sixty-seven persons employed on this project in Sonoma County.³ The factory, which is still standing and used as a storehouse, sits


opposite to what is now "Albers Milling Company" at Number 1, Sebastopol Road, in Santa Rosa. 4

The project accomplished more than mere temporary employment, however. It trained women for work in private factories; it attempted to relate this work with the women's home-lives, in that it enabled women to sew for their families; and, finally, it produced a decided improvement in the physical, mental, and cosmetic well-being of those employed.

The WPA Records indicates that, "most of the women, when first assigned ... were fearful of the future, despondent from weary hours of job-hunting, and careless regarding their appearance." 6 But the women began, almost immediately, to improve their appearance by paying more attention to personal hygiene, giving more care to their clothing, and taking advantage of free permanent waves from the local training-school for beauticians. 7 Each act of self-improvement surely preceded, or accompanied, an upward surge of hope for the future of these once-disconsolate women.

A training course gave aid in making-over used

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4 Frances Williams, private interview held in Santa Rosa, California, February 14, 1974.


6 Ibid. 7 Ibid.
garments and materials, in addition to the garments made from new materials. Both kinds were distributed free to the needy. The women displayed varied and ingenious talent in the presentation of their handiwork. A "good-looking" coat for a child, made-over from a woolen overcoat that had been hanging in a shed for twelve years, demonstrated this talent. The Records shows a picture of dresses, blouses, skirts, and aprons, displayed for public viewing. ⁸

The sewing project did more than employ unskilled workers from Sonoma County's relief rolls. The seamstresses, as well as other qualified poor, acquired much-needed clothing at no cost to themselves, through the Surplus Commodities Division (SCD) of the WPA. Frances Williams, a certifying officer, cleared the way for needy persons of Sonoma County to enable them to receive the clothing. A certified need, once verified, preceded issuance of the clothing order, and thus allowed for more food money from WPA checks. ⁹

The total number of garments made exceeded 92,000, and at an average cost of only $.6623 per unit. The dollar-figure included labor, overhead, and materials. The


⁹Frances Williams, private interview held in Santa Rosa, California, February 14, 1974.
scraps, also utilized, took final form in quilts, patchwork covers for pillows, entire rugs, stuffed animals, dolls, and toys. Distributed by the SCD, these items brought joy and comfort to the underprivileged and their children in the county. The smallest scraps, reduced to "feathers," found their resting-place inside the patchwork pillow-covers. Besides elimination of waste, many homes became, again, sources of pride to their occupants because of these by-products.\(^\text{10}\)

The Sonoma County WPA Report indicates that new clothing included "men's, women's, and children's bathrobes, suede jackets, and pajamas; women's smocks and two-piece suits; men's and boys' shorts, T-shirts, and pants; women's and girls' slips, skirts, blouses, dresses, and woolen coats." Sheets and towels found their place on the much-needed list of manufactured products.\(^\text{11}\)

The WPA report states that:

Improvement in the moral of these previously unemployed heads-of-households affected their entire families, and their attitudes toward society at a cost of:

Federal funds for labor . . . . . . . . . $60,389.54

\(^{10}\) Records of the WPA, "Sonoma County, August 1935-1938," no pn.

Federal funds other than labor . . . $30,938.90
Sponsors' contributions . . . . . . . . $5,064.98
Man-hours . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 130,920

CHAPTER VII

WPA ORGANIZES RECREATION

Originally, women's projects arose from a desire to expand and extend educational services initiated by FERA. To that end WPA appointed education leaders and aides in the summer of 1935. Arthur W. Macmahon, et al., writing for the Public Administration Service found education leaders in Washington to be "natural enthusiasts with crusader instincts."¹ Their zeal and single-mindedness eventually provided courses, according to the authors, in "vocational training, arts and crafts, home-nursing, child care, home hygiene, home economics, health education, parent education, commercial training, vocational guidance, first aid, workers' education, and recreational leadership."² By May, 1937, these WPA educational programs had reached two million persons in the United States.³

All of the professional and service projects tended to create employment, but an unplanned side-effect of


²Ibid., p. 250. ³Ibid.
recreational employment actually created, or re-kindled, a
desire for a better life among those employees and for
their children. From this desire, it seemed a natural and
logical move toward a formal education for the 250,000
grown men and women who entered WPA literacy classes. 4
As these people learned more about their own problems and
their place in society, they began to feel qualified to
discuss theories and practices of social, political, and
economic organizations, thus adding another dimension to
their lives. 5

Their physical needs met, their minds (and there-
fore their horizons) broadened, a continuing thirst for
culture now ensued. "Culture" included everything from
basketball games to violin concerts, and that is where
organized recreation took over and became a reality for
65,904 adults and children in Sonoma County during the
three and a half-year period. 6 This thirst became slaked
through the auspices of WPA. No one ever said the Women's

4 Harry L. Hopkins, Spending to Save (New York:
5 Records of the Work Projects Administration, In-
formation Division, Press Information and Other Publicity,
"California: Report on the Works Progress Administration
Program in Sonoma County, California, August 1935-January
1938" (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives, Record
Group No. 69.), no pn.
6 Ibid., and William R. Lawson, Northern Cali-
ifornia's Three Years of Achievement Under the Works Pro-
gress Administration 1935-1938 (San Francisco, Calif.: Fede-
ral Works Agency, 1938), no pn.
and Professional Projects gave birth to Public Recreation and the concomitant facilities now enjoyed and taken for granted nationwide, but research shows that, historically, if not intentionally, this thesis is not without validity. Beginning with the sewing rooms, the Women's and Professional Projects seemed to take on a form and life of their own.

Hot lunches for school children and WPA nursery schools, bedside nursing and public health services, were a few of the benefits which made our depressed populace begin to feel like living again, instead of merely submitting to the indignities forced on them by the Depression. After heads-of-households became employed and after people began to fill the hollows in their stomachs, they began to hold up their heads and straighten their backs, take a collective deep breath and reach toward other amenities which many believe should be rights, instead of privileges, for all human beings. Harry Hopkins saw it thus: "The consumer has learned of another way to purchase more life, and he is going to have it." 7

According to Arthur Macmahon, recreation as a specialty "was partly fused with education," and "the task was truly one of pioneering." Also, by October, 1937, divisions of recreation reported to the director of Women's

7 Hopkins, Spending to Save, p. 170.
and Professional Projects from "twenty states and one city. In another nineteen states and another city, a combined division of education and recreation was directly responsible to the WPA administrator." 

In their book about the NYA, Betty and Ernest Lindley note: "As in other service jobs, the development of recreation began as a means to salvage workers, rather than to create permanent employment, but the trend into permanent employment has been most pronounced among recreational workers." Again we find a double-haloed angel: Public Recreation partly fulfilled the increasing desire for a better life, heretofore reserved for a privileged few, but perhaps most important, people now gained employment to provide what other newly-employed people desired.

In Sonoma County, on March 1, 1937, W.C. "Cap Woodward, Branch Manager, and head of the District Office, assigned four recreation leaders to Santa Rosa, four to Petaluma, and two to Healdsburg." During the summer

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*"The district offices were responsible for ... assigning certified workers to projects ... ."
THE RECREATION PROGRAM
OF THE WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
SERVES CALIFORNIA

NORTHERN DISTRICT

HUMBOLDT CO.
MENDOCINO CO.
SACRAMENTO CO.
SANTA ROSA CO.
MENDOCINO CO.
	HUMBOLDT CO.
	MENDOCINO CO.
	MARIN CO.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

KERN CO.

SCOPE OF SERVICE

A. THE RECREATION PROGRAM HAS:
1. SERVED 346 COMMUNITIES
2. OPERATED 1214 RECREATION CENTERS
3. DIRECTED 18 SUMMER VACATION CAMPS
4. PROVIDED TRAINED RECREATION LEADERS FOR:
   (a) 32 CCC CAMPS
   (b) 33 SRA CAMPS
   (c) 4 F.S.A. CAMPS
   (d) 5 STATE PARK AREAS
B. THE DIVISION OF RECREATION PROJECTS:
1. EMPLOYED APPROXIMATELY 2200 WORKERS
2. SUPERVISED AND CONDUCTED 106 REGULAR WEEKLY IN-SERVICE TRAINING INSTITUTES
3. SUPERVISED AND CONDUCTED 18 PRE-ENTRY TRAINING UNITS
4. CONDUCTED TWO LEADERSHIP TRAINING CAMPS
A BALANCED PROGRAM OF RECREATION IS CONDUCTED IN EACH COMMUNITY SERVED

DIVISION OF RECREATION - WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
NORTHERN DISTRICT, LAUGHRIN, 49 FORTY STREET, SAN FRANCISCO
WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE - ADMINISTRATION

LEGEND:
1. **INDICATES COMMUNITY SERVED AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 1936.
2. **INDICATES NUMBER OF RECREATION CENTERS OPERATED IN THE COMMUNITY.
3. **INDICATES NUMBER OF RECREATION PROJECTS OPERATED IN THE COMMUNITY.
4. **INDICATES NUMBER OF RECREATION LEADERSHIP TRAINING CAMPS OPERATED IN THE COMMUNITY.
vacation season, fourteen recreation leaders received assignments to Guerneville, Guernewood, Monte Rio, and Little Sandy Beach; another leader went to Cotati.  

Public Recreation also carried over into the smaller unincorporated areas and rural districts. Introduction of the WPA Recreation Projects became the first instance of organized recreational programming under regularly appointed and trained leadership in Sonoma County. Leaders came from relief rolls, and received on-the-job training. This necessitated much study and research on the leaders' parts. Their duties included organization and supervision of sports and games, teaching of handicrafts, and guarding the physical safety of the younger participants.

Once thought of as "playing," and reserved for children too young to do manual labor, recreation finally came of age, and attained respectability as a healthy and wholesome outlet for adults. Unemployed men and women of the Thirties found no place in their lives for frivolity while the exigencies of mere survival threatened their very existence. Any activity not related to earning a

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12 Ibid.

13 Lindley, A New Deal, pp. 49-50.
living equaled play—frivolity. "The devil finds work for idle hands" got a lot of mileage, and flexing muscles for FUN, pleasure in any form, even laughing, met with disapproval. Although the genesis of this Protestant work ethic pre-dates the Depression by many years, sneers that currently accompany that expression usually allude to the many who still feel uneasy when not engaged in "useful" activity.*

Nevertheless, "play" did begin to enter the lives of the depression-ridden populace at a time when its therapy was most needed. If not blessed by the Federal government, however, one may wonder if play would yet be respectable in the Seventies. In the Thirties, WPA parks and playgrounds rang with laughter all through Sonoma County. Many Santa Rosa residents experienced happy healthy tiredness from their exertions on the WPA tennis court. The WPA bleachers at Santa Rosa Junior College and the golf course in Healdsburg provided many enjoyable hours for the poor and the not-so-poor. Local people

14Lawson, Northern California's Three Years of Achievement Under WPA, no pn.

*Not confined to the poor or recipients of welfare, those who still live by the Protestant work ethic are seldom applauded. The rebellious Sixties found our young and college-age people so "anti-work" that many of them called the word "work" an obscenity. History reversed itself for a time with respect to the work ethic, but it now seems to be on the verge of repeating itself: as our bi-centennial nears, and our current (1974-76) recession seems to be lifting, more and more of our young citizens have been eschewing the idle life and actively seeking employment.
returned to their homes from these activities with sparkling eyes, flushed cheeks, and a spring in steps that recently dragged and faltered with hopelessness.

Harry Hopkins predicted in 1936:

Within the next five years there should be many thousands of jobs opening up in the field of recreation. Later, when there is more demand for his services, the recreation leader will become as necessary as the grade school teacher.\(^{15}\)

His prediction proved accurate, and most cities now consider a Park and Recreation (or Park, Beach and Recreation) Department a necessity. Parents and children in the United States today benefit from child care centers, hot school lunches—even breakfasts in some schools. Our government presently supports a national Health, Education, and Welfare Department, which also began in the early Thirties and through WPA.

Hopkins further observed that the six billion dollars spent from 1933 to 1936 "bought more of courage than it every bought of goods."\(^{16}\) In retrospect, one may or may not agree—if the frame of reference is only the period of which Hopkins speaks. If one includes the benefits and privileges that still accrue from those fumbling, experimental years, and from the "psychological" dollars spent, surely there must be agreement that it took a mere pittance to purchase more courage than of goods.

\(^{15}\) Hopkins, *Spending to Save*, p. 171.  \(^{16}\) Ibid., p. IX.
The service jobs, created to salvage workers rather than provide jobs, did provide jobs--lasting ones--as well as entire new careers in Public Health, Recreation, and Education. The money spent bought courage in Sonoma County, true, but it also bought life, if one is to believe the many letters from public officials who enumerate the immediate and long-term benefits realized in Sonoma County during those years.*

Lindley, A New Deal for Youth, p. 171.

*No records can be found for the recreation dollars spent by WPA solely in Sonoma County; they are included in a total dollar-figure for all of Northern California. Available are work orders marked "canceled," "denied," or "postponed."
CHAPTER VIII

THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION (NYA) ARRIVES

It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

If it is true that a nation's future rests in the hands of its youth, then during the Depression of the Thirties, many of those hands were idle. Beginning with the first summer of the Depression, officials wondered what to do with the 150,000 young people who were no longer in school, unable to find gainful employment, and seemingly, without direction. They also wondered what to do with 327,000 college and high school students on the verge of pauperism, and how to keep them in school. The National Youth Administration (NYA)* attempted to find a solution, or a partial solution, for these shortcomings in our social and economic life.¹

The NYA became a semi-independent organization, linked with, and partly parallel to the WPA.² FDR directed


*Created by Executive Order 7086, June 26, 1935.
that the new agency operate under the "general supervision of the Administrator of the Works Progress Administration and under the immediate supervision of an executive director."\(^3\) However, the NYA did not begin on that date; the Order merely gave recognition to services already being provided under FERA. NYA became one of ten recipients for limited funds per the ERA of 1936. Not until the following year did authorities allocate a maximum funding of $75,000,000. This money then came directly from ERA funds until the NYA became a separate entity in 1939.\(^4\)

Also in 1939, a Sonoma County adult education group began research into their own community. Although no one involved could be considered a trainee investigator, their one and one-half year study captured the attention of the NYA who then prepared and published the composite works. Titled, Sonoma County: A Preliminary Survey by Members of a Study Group in the School of Social Studies (1940), the project itself became possible through funds from the Rosenberg Foundation of San Francisco, and by Myer Cohen, who authored the report. Cohen, as director, says the significance of the study

\[\ldots\] lies in the fact that it represents the

\(^3\)Macmahon, et al., Administration of Federal Relief, p. 258.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 138.
beginning of a study of their own community by the School's [School of Social Studies] entire Sonoma County student-body.  

This year-and-a-half project in adult education in Sonoma County began with the following objectives:

1) to establish study-discussion groups similar to those already in operation in The School of Social Studies in San Francisco; 2) to determine to what extent the School's program--both in terms of methods and materials--could be transplanted to a suburban and rural community; and, 3) to start the process by which people inhabiting a certain locality begin to get a sense of living in a community.  

Study groups operated in Petaluma, Sebastopol, Healdsburg, Windsor, and Santa Rosa, but the 280-page report cited herein resulted from a Santa Rosa group who met once a week for two hours at a time. This group produced a composite picture of the county, of far-reaching value and interest. The study covered Sonoma County's population, businesses, religions, income, and a dozen other subjects, using Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown in Transition* as a guide, à la social anthropology. The nineteen Sonoma County individuals involved in this project just happened to include five teachers, four housewives, two social workers, and one, each of the following: physician, lawyer, minister, real estate broker, merchant, coffee peddler, pharmacist, and farmer. This study

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furnished insight into the tenor of the times and a look into what the County was like during the Thirties.  

As in most of the nation, Sonoma County's out-of-school young people (ages eighteen to twenty-five) received on-the-job training in a wide variety of work experiences: clerical, research, laboratory, and recreational, plus nursery school work which came under the aegis of local schools. The training program provided double benefits in that trainees were paid while learning, then were absorbed into the regular work force as they gained experience and expertise. Some of these activities duplicated the ones in which WPA heads-of-households experienced employment, although the wages differed somewhat: WPA workers received an average of $44, while NYA employees, according to Cohen, received "about $18 per month in Sonoma County."  

During the time of the Cohen study, Sonoma County hired about eighty of these trainees for six different assignments; as library assistants and clerical workers, in automotive trades, at the county hospital, in Burbank Gardens, and in the nursery schools. From September 1938 to September 1939, the NYA payroll listed 581 youngsters, and their earnings of $9,296. From January 1940 to January 1941, the payroll soared to $12,291.20 for 668

7 Myer Cohen, Sonoma County, p. v-vii.
8 Ibid., p. 34 and p. 45.
trades-learners.9

NYA also gave student aid to young people enrolled at Santa Rosa Junior College and in the local high schools. This assistance not only kept them in school, but provided an incentive to stay in, and to learn. Santa Rosa High School received about $240 per month to employ fifty students, and the Junior College gained $1,125 per month for employment of another hundred and twenty-four. Each student earned not less than $10 nor more than $20 per month.10

Historians tend to agree on the value of NYA. William Leuchtenberg notes that the NYA "served as a safety valve to keep young people out of the labor market," and cites one congressman as urging the general public to take advantage of the cheap labor to be had.11 Leuchtenberg considers it more important, however, to be aware that the conservative New Deal actually was a radical departure from past governments, and quotes Carl Degler to support his contention: "The New Deal," says Degler, "was a revolutionary response to a revolutionary situation."12 Leuchtenberg finds further support from David Shannon, who claims it was less costly to send youths to college, and keep them out of the labor market at the same time,

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9 Cohen, Sonoma County, p. 46.  
10 Ibid.  
than to send them to CCC camps. Shannon also feels that, "college probably held the greatest promise of gain for society as a whole."\textsuperscript{13} The Lindleys state, "The Roosevelt administration's FERA and NYA did more than any national measure undertaken before to make a college education possible for young people from poor families."\textsuperscript{14} Wherever the NYA is mentioned, the latter sentiments arise, if not always prevail.

In retrospect, the New Deal's attitude toward, and provisions for, youth and education may be viewed as a precursor to today's student-loans and Veterans' education funds--two more benefits taken for granted today by the beneficiaries, with little if any knowledge of their genesis.


\textsuperscript{14}Betty and Ernest Lindley, \textit{A New Deal for Youth}, pp. 156-163.
CHAPTER IX

WPA: TRIUMPH AND SUCCESS

The WPA officially ceased its operations in Sonoma County in 1943. Enduring effects of the agency's involvement are in evidence all over the county. State parks, municipal buildings, roads, schools, bridges, sewer systems, an airport, recreational facilities, and numerous other projects, still function and give aid and comfort to visitors, as well as to county residents.

The WPA took responsibility for employing all who needed work. The Federal law stated that the projects must be useful but not competitive with private industry. The Santa Rosa City Manager, A.P. Noyes, summed up the relief program in this manner:

We find that work relief adds something of definite value to the community in the form of new facilities and the improvement of old ones. We find that work relief does not degrade the recipient, but preserves him as a useful and necessary unit to be later absorbed into the proper place with returning employment and normal conditions.\(^1\)

Perhaps the best possible summation of the entire

WPA involvement in Sonoma County can be found in a Sonoma Index-Tribune newspaper column of 1940:

During the five years covered in the report—1935 to 1940—Sonoma County was made richer by 159 miles of highways, roads and streets, of which 147 were of the rural classification; 84 wood, steel and masonry bridges; 63 new or improved public buildings; 1,197 culverts having a total length of 40,981 feet; over 11 miles of drainage ditch and pipe; 15.59 miles of sidewalks and paths; 29 miles of curbs and gutters; 14 new and modernized recreational facilities of various types; 3 utility plants; drainage of 28,200 acres of land for mosquito control; and improvements to the Santa Rosa Municipal Airport, where 5,000 feet of runways were built.2

Unlike other parts of the country, little, if any negativism is to be found in any Sonoma County records since the winter of 1935, when residents decided that work-relief was not a "dole." Once the work orders began pouring into the WPA district office, Sonoma County records exhibit no more reluctance, let alone animosity, toward WPA. Public and private sentiments speak for themselves per a Press Democrat editorial on November 3, 1940, which strongly defended the WPA. The editorial stated:

Misuse of facts and figures for campaign purposes is often unfair criticism . . . . An example is the recent politically inspired blast of State Senator Jerry Seawell, California's campaign manager for Wilkie, who lambasted almost every governmental agency striving to carry on its necessary work . . . . Seawell said that in 1939 ten administrators headed a crew of sixty-six men in Sonoma County WPA projects. The records disagree.

In 1939 there were 439 certified workers on WPA projects in Sonoma County, with fifteen supervisory

2Index-Tribune (Sonoma, California), November 1, 1940.
workers. Even during the interval of the peak harvest season, the rolls dropped only to 157 projects due to the necessity of keeping some road projects going to avoid loss of county-sponsored investment in the undertakings.

Where, then, does Seawell get his figures that an "administrator" was hired for each six workers?

The answer is simple. The entire set of statistics used by Seawell was based upon mere guesswork, obviously colored to gain votes for the anti-Administration candidate.

The WPA administration here has been efficient and economical in view of the big task handled. It is unfair to cast reflections upon it with untrue figures used for political purposes. 3

Now passing into legend and history, one finds New Deal policies painted in the blackest of blacks or the most dazzling whites. Recent generations, with no memory of those years, seem to take for granted the changes made through the herculean efforts of some thoughtful persons, now long gone. It is well worth remembering the severity of those years; not to relive, wallow in misery, or nitpick to death, but to help avert another, similar, disaster. Recent pressures for change in our social, political, and economic structure may be better understood when measured against those bleak years.

According to historian Frank Freidel, Herbert Hoover, "more than any other president," took steps to bring about recovery. 4 As opposed to Roosevelt, whose

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3 Press Democrat (Santa Rosa, California), November 3, 1940, p. 16.

efforts "worked upward, like a seed in the soil," President Hoover directed his efforts from the top down, from banks and industries, hoping to slow unemployment and prevent "further collapse." He was afraid of creating a centralized government which would evolve into socialism.\(^5\) Unfortunately for Hoover, his efforts drew little applause from the unemployed, destitute, and debt-ridden people.

From living with a president (Hoover) who seemed to have forgotten them, the people elected a president who, as Governor of New York, demonstrated an obvious lack of confidence in public works spending. Governor Roosevelt, after establishing the first state relief agency in the United States in 1931, tried to finance it through higher taxes, then abandoned it with some regret, as unworkable. Always a believer in a balanced budget, FDR in 1932 charged Hoover with a final two-year deficit of $3,750,000,000.\(^6\) Cautious as his previous record showed him to be, Roosevelt is still pictured by many as a prof­ligate opportunist and a demagogue.

Few of the important leaders or economists visualized the goal attempted by the government, in the Thirties, or the attainment taken for granted today. Freidel observes that, "the term 'built-in stabilizers' had yet

\(^5\) Freidel, The New Deal, p. 3.

\(^6\) Ibid.
to be coined."\textsuperscript{7} The fact that Roosevelt and his contemporaries were products of the Progressive Era, with belief in the free enterprise system and a humanitarian belief in social justice, may well be the basic reasons for the economic recovery our nation did experience. Two characteristics that distinguished Roosevelt were his innate political skill, and his willingness, sometimes noted as rashness, to experiment; he was not afraid of new ideas.\textsuperscript{8}

True, he experimented with the lives of an entire nation. True, if met with failure, it is impossible to visualize the situation worsening, short of lemming-like behavior from the few survivors. Yet, despite criticisms that still flourish when Roosevelt, the New Deal, the Depression, or other such topics enter a discussion, Roosevelt and his adherents triumphed—perhaps beyond their own expectations.

If the WPA needs a defense in Sonoma County, the construction and reconstruction of public buildings left a heritage for all residents and visitors to enjoy. When added to the road work and water-related improvements, and compared to the relatively short time it took, no defense seems necessary.

Succeeding generations still take sides—on the offense and defense—but then, as now, it was easier to

\textsuperscript{7}Freidel, The New Deal, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., p. 5.
criticize than to offer an alternative. Victor Adams, a Massachusetts selectman, offered an alternative, "simple to an extreme," he says in his highly critical blast at the WPA, which was read into the Congressional Record on January 24, 1938:

... direct payment to local welfare boards ... would have required relatively few administrative employees [and] would have diverted hundreds of millions now spent for administration into relief channels or into a direct saving to the Federal Government.

His theory sounds naive--in the extreme--to this chronicler. Adams' criticisms of red tape and inflexible regulations (possibly rare in those days), now taken more or less for granted when dealing with government on any level, are envisioned by some as the checks and balances built into our democratic form of government. One may wonder how much less graft and corruption would arise, how much less it would cost, if each local welfare board did as they pleased. One may well ask whether business and the American people could have survived or revived under another program such as Hoover's or Adams'. Adams seems to take both sides, for he continues:

But no matter how heartily we may disapprove of WPA and its methods, we must in justice to the taxpayers of our towns fight for our share of the money spent. If our Congress and President see fit to throw the taxpayers' money into the street, we must scramble for it with the crowd and salvage what we

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can. 10

Closer to Sonoma County, the San Francisco Chronicle, claimed to have found "racketeering, favoritism, and bossism" in San Francisco County, and headlined a story, "WPA Waste Leaves Only Dribbles to San Francisco Jobless." 11 Three days later, the headline "Red Tape Robs WPA Worker of Living" greeted Chronicle-readers. 12 Yet on July 24, 1936, even the Chronicle seemed infected by the new enthusiasm:

Aquatic Park will be one of the beauty spots and show places of the city . . . San Francisco wants the project to go on . . . . It is a project that San Francisco has waited for, for many years. 13

But San Francisco's undulant fever did not enter the media nor the feelings of Sonoma County residents. For example, it took seventeen column-inches of type for the Sonoma Index-Tribune to detail the physical accomplishments of the WPA's previous five years. The article ended with a quotation from W.C. Woodward, Federal Works Agency District Manager, who said,

The social assets that come from a program which utilizes the manpower of the unemployed residents of a community for the preservation and creation of

10 Freidel, The New Deal, p. 76.
11 Chronicle (San Francisco, California), January 18, 1936, p. 13.
12 Ibid., January 21, 1936, p. 4.
resources beneficial to the citizenry as a whole cannot be ignored.¹⁴

Perhaps Sonoma County residents fared better than the rest of the country; perhaps further research will show other areas as well-satisfied as Sonoma County. In any event, neither Sonoma County taxpayers nor WPA workers showed the bitterness found in some other areas. Research from newspapers, public letters, answers to WPA questionnaires, and personal interviews with participants—to be found throughout this study— all attest to the gratitude and appreciation with which WPA is remembered in Sonoma County.

¹⁴Index-Tribune (Sonoma, California), November 1, 1940.
ESSAY ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original reports, articles and correspondence from dozens of officials writing about the WPA in Sonoma County, providing the most accurate month-by-month data about the WPA in the County, are to be found in the following primary sources: Records of the Work Projects Administration, Information Division, "Community Appraisal Reports--California: Sonoma County" (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives, Record Group No. 69) and Records of the Work Projects Administration, Information Division, Press Information and Other Publicity, "California: Report on the Works Progress Administration Program in Sonoma County, California, August 1935 to January 1938" (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives, Record Group No. 69). These documents, although not all-inclusive, present the best possible overview. These materials offer an insight into the tenor of the times and contain factual evidence not available in any other sources. These firsthand accounts evaluate the WPA program, and show the feelings and attitudes toward WPA's accomplishments in Sonoma County.

Another important primary source is the U.S. Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, Report on Progress of the WPA Program June 30, 1939 (Washington,
D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939). This 185-page document presents a comprehensive study of the WPA program from a favorable viewpoint. Transmitted to the President by F.C. Harrington, Commissioner of Work Projects, December 15, 1939, the report shows the scope of the WPA in the light of its main objective—that of providing work for the unemployed on useful public projects. It summarizes, by states, the WPA projects, operations, employment, and expenditures. Included in the document are many illustrations of the WPA activities and how they are adapted to local conditions and local needs. The statistical data—employment, financial and project-tables, by states—prove very valuable in gaining perspective on the nationwide impact of WPA. The U.S. Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, Final Report of the WPA Program, 1935-1943 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), is the final report on the WPA. Delayed because of World War II, the publication organizes WPA data according to types of projects. The statistical data, arranged by states, include those people employed, types of projects, and financial contribution. Other informative data include the important contributions made by WPA for the defense and military needs of World War II.

The objective of the Final Report is to present the WPA experience as a learning instrument for future guidance—to present the problems encountered, and show
the way WPA solved them. Although the report admits the presence of criticism about the agency (its methods, its lack of planning, the alleged malingering of WPA workers and their refusal to accept private employment), the document is clearly favorable to WPA. It sees WPA work projects as an advance over traditional methods of providing relief, and asserts that the Federal government's acceptance of responsibility for work-assistance, during a time of mass unemployment, seems to have been a step forward. Although attempting neither praise nor blame, the report relates the facts—in a praiseworthy manner—for the contributions made by the WPA.

Two enlightening primary sources are reports by William R. Lawson, Northern California WPA Administrator. The first, *Northern California's Three Years of Achievements Under the Works Progress Administration, 1935-1938* (California: Locally mimeographed, 1938) gives the reader a pictorial panorama of the achievements of WPA in Northern California. A pictorial organization chart of the administrative staff for Northern California, along with area maps showing the branch managers, their addresses and the counties they served, prove helpful. Briefly given are expenditures, both Federal and sponsor; employment, and a breakdown of the types of projects, by county, which makes it possible to record hard data for Sonoma County. The photographs showing WPA projects completed in Sonoma County
became highlights of the document. Lawson's report, although pro-WPA, presents data difficult to refute when he shows that every one of the fifty counties throughout Northern California benefited through the physical accomplishments of the work program in the form of public improvements: new roads, schools, recreational buildings, public utilities, flood control, parks, airports, etc. The photographs are tangible evidence of accomplishments.

Lawson's second report, Achievements, Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, Northern California, 1935-1939 (San Francisco, CA: U.S. Federal Works Agency, 1940), furnishes other comprehensive data for Sonoma County and another detailed analysis for the many WPA projects. Again, this document's objective is to furnish concrete examples of physical accomplishments of WPA through illustrations and statistical data. Lawson appears to believe that the WPA did restore human values of self-respect and self-reliance. He feels that WPA renewed the faith and hope of the people, because it provided practical assurance that American ideas, and the ideal of the work ethic, still persist. In this publication he reiterates his thesis that all fifty counties in Northern California benefited through the WPA program. Interesting data include pictures and names of local administrators involved in the Sonoma County WPA. This material is excellent as a primary source.

Microfilm, T935 #6, T936 #2, T937 #3, (General
Services Administration, The National Archives of the United States, Washington, D.C.), showing original work-orders of WPA projects, is vital for research on Sonoma County.

Personal interviews with individuals who participated in or know about the WPA in Sonoma County have been indispensable. Those interviewed are Mrs. Madeline Emparan, David A. Sweeney, Frances Williams, Nora Giblin, James Wilson, M.L. Badger, Thomas A. King, Burl Howell, Ernest M. Joiner, Mrs. Thorne Gale, Mrs. Trussell, Dr. A.A. Thurlow, Jack Gerboth, Dr. Benjamin Davis and Helen McAboy.

The Santa Rosa Press Democrat, and Sonoma Index-Tribune include valuable original resource material.

One other primary source, Records of the Work Projects Administration, Information Division "Records Concerning the Restoration of Historic Shrines, 1937-1938--California: General Vallejo's Home" (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives, Record Group No. 69), reports the WPA's vital role in restoring this important part of California's past. Although I did not quote Mrs. Madeline Emparan (General Vallejo's granddaughter), she confirmed the truth of the above report. Mrs. Emparan's attitude toward WPA's role in the restoration of her grandfather's home is favorable (personal interview held on January 15, 1974).

A valuable source, for official speeches, and introductions to the various legislative recovery measures,
is Samuel I. Roseman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1938) Volume IV. For an overall view of the New Deal, one needs all four volumes, since each volume deals with a certain period. The chronological listing of FDR's Executive Orders is useful. These books contain a complete list of the Proclamations and Executive Orders issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during his first term in office, with the date and subject of each. The full text of each Proclamation may be found in Part 2 of Volumes 48 and 49, *United States Statutes* for the 73rd and 74th Congresses, respectively, for the appropriate years. Copies of the Executive Orders are on file at the Division of Federal Register, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

An exceptional document presents Sonoma County in "local color" and is authored by Myer Cohen: *Sonoma County, A Preliminary Survey* (San Francisco: NYA Project, School of Social Studies, U.S. WPA, 1940). This document, although not to be compared to the work of trained scientific investigators, is the best I have found to cover the day-by-day living in Sonoma County during the depression years. The survey attempts to show how Sonoma County worked and played. It covers: making a living, caring for the disabled, making a home, spending leisure time, training the young, government, news media, keeping healthy, and religion, all in Sonoma County. Statistical data of value
relate to population and to types of business and agriculture. It also covers WPA projects, radio-guide schedules, educational issues, a survey on Sonoma County graduates, the electorate, taxation, and Sonoma County organizational structure. This survey provides a nostalgic glimpse of Sonoma County during the Thirties. I highly recommend this survey and believe it should be brought up to date.

Surveys of the New Deal period are legion, but several indispensable secondary sources on the New Deal should be covered for background. One is William E. Leuchtenburg's *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1936), and another is James M. Burns' *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956). Liberals who had grown up during the New Deal, both men cover areas where broad agreements exist and which arouse very little argument among New Deal historians such as Freidel and Schlesinger. Leuchtenburg shows the social forces which influence government. He draws substance and illustrative material from an impressive number of primary and original sources. The material is comprehensive, logically organized, and written with clarity and objectivity. However, he never makes clear how he would categorize the New Deal, historically. The author's bias is pro-Roosevelt, but the New Deal's failures are described, as well as its successes. Leuchtenburg relates the New Deal as a political, social, and
cultural history, but omits the economic aspect, which limits his study. Not to be overlooked is Leuchtenburg's *Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). It is an admirable survey of politics, diplomacy, and social and economic changes, during the years 1914-1932. Its independent evaluations, extensive documentation and reference sources, are written clearly and vigorously, and the survey is excellent for general background.

Burns writes from the viewpoint of a political scientist, but in an historical dimension. He addresses himself to searching for meaning and coming up with useful conclusions. Burns' biography is scholarly and incisive in its analysis, but one misses the warmth of admiration that colors most books by New Deal historians. Those who worship FDR will not love this book; neither will his haters. It is meticulous, objective and perceptive. The factual information is of worth to those interested in politics or in political history. Burns is Keynesian, but also critical of Roosevelt's leadership. He emphasizes FDR's ultimate failure to institute "substantial" political and social reforms.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order, 1913-1933* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957), shows meticulous research, good documentation, and is a history that addresses itself to ideas which are
well-organized and sequential. Again, this book is a good source for understanding of New Deal domestic policies, but especially good for its portrayal of Roosevelt, the man. Schlesinger, taking a favorable Keynesian view, interprets the New Deal as an exciting, worthwhile, successful venture. Although frankly and deliberately partisan, he exhibits scholarly discipline and incorporates abundant and valuable factual detail, much of which is not available elsewhere.

Frederick Lewis Allen, *Since Yesterday 1929-1939* (New York: Bantam Books, 1965), is an extremely useful book for insight into the prelude of the stock market crash. Considered by many to be one of the country's leading social historians, Allen offers a penetrating panorama of the Thirties.

Frank Freidel, *The New Deal in Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Society, 1959), points out FDR's assets and liabilities, his successes and failures. Freidel is noted to be scholarly and definitive. His work is honest and balanced. However, it should be noted that he is sympathetic toward the New Deal. His work parallels the earlier Schlesinger work. Freidel's bibliographical essay appearing in the Thirty-First Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies, 1961 is very useful.

Portraying a vivid social history of the era is Dixon Wecter, *The Age of the Great Depression* (New York:

David M. Shannon, The Great Depression (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), tells the story of the Depression in terms of the human beings who lived through it. The subject of the book does not concentrate upon economics, nor politics, nor social and intellectual matters, although these areas are inherent in the content. Rather, Shannon's emphasis is on the effects of the Depression upon its victims, thus enabling the reader to see the events of the Thirties through their eyes. His chapter dealing with the farmer in the Depression presents an excellent overview of the rural plight.

Contemporary historians writing about the 1920's and 1930's, focused mainly on Franklin D. Roosevelt and political history, rather than on the mainstream of American social and economic life. Consequently, the historiography of the period is somewhat limited in scope. Some progress has been made recently, but the best attempts to comprehend
these years are still the work of the New Deal historians such as Leuchtenburg and Schlesinger.

Because of the great mass of literature on the agencies, policies, and effects of the New Deal, no bibliography could be considered complete. General works selected for background are listed below. Works are not listed in historical preference.


Warren A. Beck and David A. Williams, California, A History of the Golden State (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972), have one interesting item on the Santa Rosa labor dispute. I used this for general information on California's depression years.

A good overview for Sonoma County history is Ernest L. Finley, History of Sonoma County (Santa Rosa: Press Democrat Publication, 1937). This history briefly covers several WPA projects completed in Sonoma County.

Arthur W. Macmahon, John D. Millett and Gladys Ogden, The Administration of Federal Work Relief (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), is excellent for a complete overview
of the Federal relief concept. Its objective is to learn how to avoid making the same mistakes twice. Government leaders could well benefit by a study of this document (reprint of the Chicago, Public Administration Services, 1941 edition).

Harry L. Hopkins, *Spending to Save* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1936), presents a pro-New Dealer's view of the government's action. One can visualize the personality of Hopkins by reading his book. The text is informative.

David M. Potter and William Goetzmann, in *The New Deal and Employment* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1960), address themselves to the most bitterly disputed, frustrating, and often discouraging way in which WPA dealt with the problems of unemployment. Potter and Goetzmann feel that WPA made a lasting impression upon public economic policy. They further believe that certain measures of the Second New Deal (Wagner, WPA, etc.) brought about forces which may prevent Americans from attacking economic and political problems without first considering their social impact.

William E. Davies & William Goetzmann, in *The New Deal and Business Recovery* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1960), discuss the New Deal approach to business recovery by analyzing the psychological effects of the New Deal programs in general, the NRA, and AAA. They point out that both agriculture and industry are tied to the general
prosperity of the consumer, and that the key to prosperity is an expanding economy. Further, they indicate that the economy depends not only upon big business, government, or foreign trade, but upon solving the problem of underconsumption by raising our economically distressed and depressed peoples to the status of first-class consumers.

Otis L. Graham, Jr., *The New Deal* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), compiles an anthology presenting what he considers to be the best and most recent literature of the New Deal. He believes that the interpretation of recent history is influenced by contemporary pressures, and this stance enhances the value of his work. The anthology's evidence is drawn from primary and secondary sources, and illuminates the New Deal's effect in five areas: politics, labor, income distribution, race and business. The book includes excellent interpretive essays on the New Deal.

Paul R. Conkin, in *The New Deal* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1967), offers a general survey of the New Deal era through a factual and narrative account which will help the reader perceive the larger dimensions of the New Deal.

The most comprehensive study on the NYA is Betty and Ernest K. Lindley's, *A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration* (New York: Viking Press, 1938). The Lindleys lay an appropriate groundwork
for the NYA, then build a layer at a time through its inception, internal workings, and its benefits and beneficiaries. They end with a critical look backward but also look to future rewards based upon NYA's past performance.

Floyd P. Bailey's *Santa Rosa Junior College 1918-1957, A Personal History* (Santa Rosa: locally reproduced, 1967), includes comments on the WPA and PWA impact.

Newspapers: The *New York Times* usually presents only nationwide views. The *San Francisco Chronicle* concentrates on San Francisco, but occasionally covers another area in Northern California. Both are useful for perspective, and for comparison to local facts and conditions.

In the decades since the FDR era, there appears a vast amount of literature dealing with aspects of the New Deal--some analytical, some partisan. At the present time, there is no history of the total relief program. In another few years, it is hoped that specific agency and regional studies will be done.