

Mr. Roosevelt Comes to Champaign County: An Examination of the New Deal

Fellowship Lesson 2009
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Lesson 4.2 : Works Progress Administration (WPA)--Urban

[“Relief Office Awaits Plans for PWA Here”](#) Urbana Daily Courier: July 8, 1935 (pg. 3)

- Given that the article is about the Works Progress Administration (WPA) what is wrong with the headline?
- Who was named the head of the district Works Progress office? Where would the district office be? ([District Map...origin unknown](#))
- Why was it advantageous that Champaign and Urbana were considered as one city by the WPA?
- Consider the wage scale indicated in this article. Do you believe that the discrepancy of wage levels between skilled and unskilled workers is fair? Why or why not?
- Where must proposed projects be referred before they are submitted to the WPA?
- According to the last paragraph, what projects will be approved first? Why would this be so?

[“Wilson Speaks to Supervisors”](#) Urbana Daily Courier: July 25, 1935 (pg. 3) ([photo](#))

- What position does Ralph Wilson hold?
- Who was he addressing at this meeting?
- What was the purpose of this meeting?
- According to Wilson, how would a proposal be met with more funds for materials and PWA services?
- The last paragraph involves the distinction between the PWA and the WPA. People back then were struggling to know the difference between these two important New Deal programs. Can you distinguish between the two parts of FDR’s “Alphabet Soup”?

[“Work for 3000 Men in County’s WPA”](#) Urbana Daily Courier: Sep. 7, 1935 (pg. 3)

- Given that 3,000 men had WPA jobs, what happened to the number of people dependent on public relief?
- What would be the path of a proposed project after it left the desk of WPA Engineer Fred Lohmann?
- What was the most common type of WPA project in Champaign County in September?

- What type of recreation programs were advanced by WPA projects?
- What impresses you most about this extensive list of projects?
- What types of jobs would be necessary to complete these projects? Skills involved?
- Do you possess the skills to complete these projects? What training would be necessary?

["WPA Worker Gets in Trouble Trying to Pick His 'Boss'"](#) Urbana Daily Courier: Dec 6, 1935 (pg. 1)

- What two jobs did Sidney Gard hold with the WPA in November of 1935?
- Why did Mr. Gard refuse to return to work for Henry Covert on the project between Sidney and Broadlands?
- Do you think it is fair that he was "discharged" by the WPA?
- What did the discharge report claim about Mr. Gard?
- What additional problem did Mr. Gard face because of his action?
- What does this article say about the rights of WPA workers?
- Should they have had the same rights and protections as other workers? More?

["WPA Projects Here Valued Over Million"](#) Urbana Daily Courier: Nov 2, 1936

- \$1,275,000 was the "total value (of WPA projects) to the county in worth of work and relief cost avoided" during the first year of operation. Why did the WPA add both to figure the value of the projects?
- Of the 50 projects in operation since the WPA started, how many were completed?
- Examine the list of Champaign County WPA projects. Choose five that would make sense to do again today as part of a new stimulus program.
- What was the largest job? Smallest job?
- What does the article consider a "major feature" of the WPA program in the county?
- How would projects like these affect life in the county as a whole?
- How many women were employed by the WPA at the time this article was printed?
- Why is this number relatively low in comparison to the number of men?
- Reviewing the list of projects, what types of jobs would you guess were done by women?
- Would the WPA see its next birthday? (See the last sentence.)