Liberty University

The Lone Star on Relief: The Story of the Texas Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943

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by

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Preface

My academic interest in the Federal Writers' Project (FWP) began in 1993. I have been interested in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) from the time I was in my middle school years listening to stories from my grandmother. As a result, I grew up feeling that the WPA represented a part of a remarkable time and was a fascinating attempt by the far-away national government to help ordinary people in Texas struck down by the Great Depression. While conducting research on my master's thesis, I met an archivist at the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina who suggested that I study the Southern Life Histories collected by the North Carolina FWP. I read some of these stories and became quite enthralled. This led me to researching and writing my master's thesis (*Writers on Relief: The Role of the Writers on the North Carolina Federal Writers' Project*) during which I examined how the Federal writers influenced the interviews that they conducted. This led me to my current investigation of the FWP in Texas when I observed that no comparable study had been done on the Lone Star State.

My interest in Texas is personal. I am a native Texan who wants to contribute to a better understanding of the history of my state. One reason I undertook this project was to fill a gap in that understanding by providing a study of the Texas FWP. In this examination, I intend to show how New Deal optimism, cultural nationalism, and push for diversity influenced the Federal Writers' Project in Texas. I will show how white Texas resisted the approach of the New Deal's Federal Writers' Project and how these contrasting and at times contradicting forces helped to forge a synthesis that made the Guides, the Ex-slave Narratives, and stories of Texas folklore appealing and acceptable to both white citizens and local governments while incorporating some, if not all, of the New Deal ideal of inclusion and diversity. The contrasting views of national

FWP officials and those who directed the Texas project are reflected in the Texas guides, ex-slave narrative, and folklore and oral history. The result included some of the New Deal emphasis on inclusion and diversity, while not challenging too much the racial and class hierarchy of Texas. Thus, the products of the Texas FWP produced work that both ratified and somewhat challenged the Texas social order. In this way, the Texas FWP worked out a compromise that the national FWP office could accept and still keep their publications appealing to local elites and government officials in Texas.

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Introduction

The Federal Writers' Project (FWP) was a program established in 1935 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), an agency of the United States Federal government, as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal effort to create jobs and restore a national economy devastated by the Great Depression.[1] Specifically, the FWP was intended to provide jobs for unemployed writers, editors, and research workers. Directed by Henry G. Alsberg, the FWP operated in all forty-eight states and employed 6,600 men and women at one time. Some states, such as New York, had a city and state project. One of the project's most significant achievements was the *American Guide* series, which included encyclopedic guidebooks for every state and territory (except Hawaii), as well as the cities of Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Philadelphia. Guides were also produced for several major highways, and scores of towns, villages, and counties throughout the United States. Overall, these guides—in what the *New Republic* called the "greatest writing and publishing venture of the decade" -- were comprehensive in scope and combined travel information with essays on geography, architecture, history, and commerce. In addition to the guides, the FWP produced ethnic studies, folklore collections, local histories, and nature studies, totaling more than 1,000 books and pamphlets. Without question one of the largest efforts of the FWP at the state level was that of Texas. Geographically vast and culturally diverse, Texas offered the FWP both great

[1] The Work Projects Administration was initially named the Works Progress Administration when it was established as a national agency on May 6, 1935, by an executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Harry Hopkins, chief of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Civil Works Administration during 1933 and 1934, was appointed head of the new WPA, which succeeded these organizations. The agency's name was changed to Work Projects Administration on July 1, 1939, when it was part of the Federal Works Agency. It lasted until it was phased out in 1943, after it was rendered unnecessary by increased employment and reduced relief rolls.

challenges and opportunities—especially as it related to race—in its quest to produce *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State* (1940).[2]

State guidebooks, of course, did not originate with the FWP. Indeed, guidebooks—i.e., books "of information about a place, designed for the use of visitors or tourists" -- were first popularized in Europe by London publisher John Murray (1778-1843). His 1836, *Murray's Handbook for Travelers*—which included volumes on various places in Europe, Asia, and Africa-- moved beyond traditional travel diaries and travelogues and included practical information such as popular "sights," activities, and restaurants. One of the first significant handbooks for travelers in the United States was *The United States with An Excursion into Mexico,* developed by the publishing firm of Karl Baedeker (1801-1859) and written by Findlay Muirhead in 1893. The Baedeker handbooks, which began publication in the late 1820s, set the standard for authoritative guidebooks for tourists and included information on routes and accommodations.[3]

As the 20th century dawned, Muirhead's volume was the premiere travel guide for the United States. Muirhead guideeker volumes, Muirhead provided a comprehensive guide that included statistical data and comprehensive travel information illustrated with maps.[4] The Muirhead guide, was not without problems. First, it was written from an outsider's point of view—Muirhead was an English writer—and did not examine American culture or its wildlife,

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[2] Davis to Alsberg, July 15, 1938, FWPNA, RG 69, Texas Box; Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project 1935-1943,* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 47; Monty Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Government Patronage of the Arts,* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 29-31. Alaska and Hawaii were territories at the time.

[3] Wendy Griswold, *American Guides: The Federal Writers' Project and the Casting of American Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 64.

[4] Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 46-47; Penkower, *The Federal Writer's Project*, 22-23.

vegetation, and natural beauty. And second, its last revised edition was published in 1909 and was thus seriously outdated by the 1930s and meant for the pre-automobile era.[5]

Kathrine Kellock, tour editor in the national FWP office, recognized these deficiencies with the Muirhead handbook. Therefore, when discussions about a national WPA project for writers began early in the New Deal, she proposed an American-produced national guidebook for the United States. Such a guide, she believed, should combine history and culture with the usual information that tourists look for in a guide. The nation, Kellock insisted, needed an up-to-date guide that showed themselves to themselves; a mirror, as it were, to see who they were, where they came from, and where they were going. It was Kellock who first suggested the idea to Henry Alsberg, the eventual director of the national office, well before the FWP was created in 1935.[6]

Initially, the mission of the FWP was to create three general guides: a single *national* guidebook, five regional guides, and forty-eight state guides. "Although work on the American Guide was first begun only some four and half years ago, the idea of a guide-book for the United States dates back to the early days of the Federal Writers' Project of the WPA. When that organization envisaged a plan for its State Guides, which was eventually completed, the project's director and editorial staff also considered doing a national guide as the logical capstone to the whole undertaking. By the time the State Guides were well underway, the first steps were taken to lay the groundwork for this final volume:" This single national guide, entitled *The American Guide,* was not published until 1949. The five regional guides, in contrast, were never completed. In the end, the primary focus of the FWP was on the publication of state guides-each

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[5] Griswold, *American Guides*, 64.

[6] Griswold, *American Guides*, 93.

consisting of three parts: history, cities, and tours. One modern historian noted, that FWP leaders, “envisioned the audience to be *readers*: students, Americana buffs, and anyone else who wanted to explore the nation’s diversity. They saw people using the Guides from their chairs not from their cars.”[7] In 1937, the first of the state guides, *Idaho: A Guide in Word and Picture*, was published. The state guides were completed by 1942 with the publication of *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State. Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State,* published in 1940, was one of the last. While sales were never a priority for the FWP, the state guides—published not by the Government Printing Office but by individual, private sponsors/publishers-- were well received. Each copy—all hardbound—sold for fifteen cents each. From January through March 1941, 351 copies were sold to the public (and ten to the WPA), earning $52.65. Then, from April through June, 325 copies were sold, earning $48.73.[8]

In addition to the state guides, the FWP launched one of the first significant efforts at collecting oral history in the United States, the “Life History and Folklore Projects.” Between 1935 and 1940, the FWP, collected thousands of stories “portraying the quality of life” and “real workings of institutions, customs, [and] habits” of the American people. The folklore initiative paved the way for another FWP project, the Slave Narrative Collection. Initially, only four states involved in the national folklore project (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia) focused on collecting the stories of former slaves. In 1937, the initiative was expanded, and all the states were directed to interview former slaves. While some states (including Virginia and Georgia) published manuscripts from their work collecting slave narratives, Texas never did. B.A Botkin

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[7] Griswold, *American Guides*, 94.

[8] Henry Alsberg, *The American Guide: A Source Book and Complete Travel Guide for the United States*, (New York: Hastings House, 1949), Preface; Kerr from Davis, March 25, 1941, RG 69 Box 651.3172 Jan. 1941 Box 2644; Bobbitt from Frese, August 1, 1941, RG 69 Texas State Guide Box 11, NARA Archives, Washington, DC.

published *Lay My Burden Down* in 1945, the first general work to use material from the entire Slave Narrative Collection. Then in 1970, *Voices from Slavery* was published. In 1972, Greenwood Press published *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, edited by George P. Rawick, the first published account of the narratives. In Texas, there was no slave narrative publications released during the New Deal era. It was not until the publication of *The Slave Narratives of Texas* by Ron Tyler and Lawrence Murphy in 1974.[9]

An examination of the FWP in Texas is valuable for at least four reasons. First, it reveals the extent of New Deal influence at the most local of levels—and especially in the South. The New Deal was President Franklin Roosevelt's prescription for combating the Great Depression, and it consisted of—in what some critics dismissed as a "Frankenstein of Federal bureaucracy"--relief for the poor and unemployed, economic stimulus, and social security.[10] A key component in "the honest, efficient, speedy, and coordinated execution of the work relief program as a whole, and for the execution of that program in such a manner as to move from the relief rolls to work," was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), established by Roosevelt in May 1935.[11] Among other things, the WPA was tasked to "Recommend and carry on small useful projects designed to assure a maximum of employment in all localities."[12] Toward this end, the WPA—in a program called Federal Project Number One-- sponsored projects that employed out of work

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[9] The Virginia Federal Writers' Project, *The Negro in Virginia*, (Winston-Salem: J.F Blair, 1940); Charles Joyner, *Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

[10] Harry F. Byrd, "Economy in Government," *Vital Speeches of the Day* (May 1, 1944), 424-430.

[11] Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Public Papers of Franklin Delano Roosevelt: 1935*, (New York: Random House, 1935), 164.

[12] Roosevelt, *Public Papers of Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 166.

artists (Federal Art Project), musicians (Federal Music Project), actors and actresses (Federal Theatre Project) and writers (Federal Writers' Project).

Overall, under the WPA, over 600,000 Texans were provided employment assistance. According to its regulations, anyone employed by the WPA had to be the economic head of his family and be certified as impoverished on the rolls of the Texas Relief Commission. People of both sexes and all races were employed. WPA wages in Texas ranged from forty-five to seventy-five dollars per month. Peak employment under the Texas WPA program was 120,000 persons in February 1936.[13] Then, in September 1939, the name of the state relief organization was changed by a legislative act to the State Department of Public Welfare. State WPA administrator H.P. Drought blamed the increase in caseload in 1939 on widespread crop failure in Texas that year. The caseload remained high from 1939 through 1942, always staying between 120,000 and 150,000, while the number of workers employed by the WPA was never more than half of the caseload figure. The most significant drop in caseload in Texas came in February-October 1942, when a reduction of 75% occurred, with a proportional drop in WPA employment. The primary reason for a worker's leaving WPA relief employment was that he found other work, although some were forced off by lack of project funds. The 1942 drop in Texas WPA employment was undoubtedly due to increased business activity following the United States' entry into the Second World War.[14]

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[13] This figure reflects the level of administrative efficiency at that time rather than the need for employment since the peak caseload of the relief commission came later, in February 1939, when 218,291 of the unemployed were on relief rolls.

[14] Michael Barr, "A Comparative Examination of Federal Work Relief in Fredericksburg and Gillespie County," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (January 1993). Roger Biles, "The New Deal in Dallas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 95 (July 1991). Lionel V. Patenaude, "The New Deal in Texas" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas, 1953). Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959). Texas WPA Papers, Record Group 69, National Archives, Washington.

Activities of the Work Projects Administration in any given area of the country depended on the needs and skills of the persons on relief since the main prerequisite for WPA employment was one's certified relief status. In Texas, this had the effect of limiting projects in the arts. There was only one attempt at a theater project, and that lasted only a month. There were no programs in painting or sculpture.[15] However, the Lone Star state did conduct an excellent survey of folk art objects for the Index of American Design—"a visual archive of the 'usable past'" that included over 18,000 "watercolor renderings of American folk and decorative arts objects from the colonial period through 1900."[16] Meanwhile, the WPA Archeological Survey studied the Indians of Texas, including location mapping and excavation of Indian villages, campsites, and burial mounds (a total of fifty sites in all), and the collecting and analyzing of specimens from these locations. Then, in a palaeontologic-mineralogic survey, WPA workers in Texas (under the supervision of scientists) searched for fossils, mineral resources, and combinations of both.[17]

For many Texans, the WPA was a relief from hard times. In 1937, 30 million dollars was spent on work relief by the Texas WPA, entailing many projects throughout the state.[18]

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[15] This fact is deceptive, however, since Texans were employed by the Treasury Department's relief art project and fine arts section during approximately the same period that the WPA was in effect. Texans carried out at least seventy separate mural projects under these two projects.

[16] There were so few relief-roll artists that better-than-average artisans had to be employed and trained. The objects were listed, and pictorial records were made of them. The original plates for this index are on deposit at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

[17] Michael Barr, "A Comparative Examination of Federal Work Relief in Fredericksburg and Gillespie County," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 96 (January 1993). Roger Biles, "The New Deal in Dallas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 95 (July 1991). Lionel V. Patenaude, "The New Deal in Texas" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas, 1953). Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959); Texas WPA Papers, Record Group 69, National Archives, Washington.

[18] In 1939, the total payroll of the Harris County WPA (centered around the city of Houston) was 3 million dollars, which was paid to an average of 4,379 workers per month, representing 17,516 persons in their combined families. Of the many items accomplished, the Harris County WPA could list the installation of sewers, sidewalks, and landscaping at the University of Houston, the building of new county roads and road improvements, improvements to San Jacinto Battleground, improvements at the Texas National Guard airport, street and sidewalk construction in Pelly, Goose Creek and Tomball, water distribution systems in West University Place, Lindale, and Pasadena.

Ultimately, the WPA—even outside the FWP-- made its mark in many areas around the state. For example, it built part of the Riverwalk in San Antonio. The program built the old Robertson Stadium (now TEDCU Stadium) on the University of Houston campus. It played a large part in the sewage and drainage system in the city of Houston. It was responsible for the roads leading to the San Jacinto Monument, the theatre at the bottom of the storied memorial, and the reflecting pool within the park's confines.[19] Even within the FWP itself, the main goal was to provide employment and improve the state's economy. Indeed, according Mabel Ulrich, Minnesota State Director, "the writing of the guide books was not the real reason for this emergency experiment. As everyone knows, they were merely a means whose end was the providing of writers on relief with congenial employment. What the experiment has done to the writers themselves is vastly more interesting and significant than the work they are ostensibly producing".[20]

Second, scholarly consideration of the FWP in Texas is essential in that it reveals the presence of a "cultural nationalism"—i.e., the promotion of a shared heritage over race and ethnicity. For Texas, this specifically meant binding all Texans (Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic) behind a unique common history, customs, and attitudes. For example—regardless of race or economic status, Texans viewed the Lone Star State as unique, and ranked above the other states. Indeed, Texas had once been its own country, the Republic of Texas (1836-1845), and thus, many Texans believed they possessed a legacy of independence and superiority.

Overall, Texas is comprised of five distinct geographical regions: east, west, north, south, and central. These regions, in turn, often revealed great contrasts in economy, politics, race, and

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[19] *Houston Chronicle*, December 30, 1937; *Houston Chronicle*, December 29, 1939; Houston Post, December 29, 1937; December 23, 1937; December 22, 1937.

[20] Mabel Ulrich, "Salvaging Culture for the WPA", Harper Magazine, CLXXVIII (May 1939), 653-664.

ethnicity. In the eastern part of the state, for example, there was a close association with the culture of the Old South as most of the early white settlers usually came from that slave-owning, cotton-producing Black Belt Region. The east (including Houston) was fertile and flat and received the most rainfall in the state. It was also highly conservative, segregated, and Democratic. While predominately white, it had the highest concentration of African Americans in the state (74%)—most of whom were disenfranchised. In contrast, the west (San Antonio, Austin, and El Paso)—while predominately white—possessed a ranch and small farm culture. The southern part of the state—bordering Mexico-- was predominately Hispanic and was centered on small farming (mainly vegetables and fruits). In the northern part of Texas—i.e., the panhandle region-- the white minority across the state, however, dominated the Hispanic majority. Indeed, some areas that declared "No Mexicans Allowed." [21]

Segregation was a part of life for ethnic minorities in Texas, and for most, the only way to live with segregation was to make the best of a bad situation. There were successful black businesses in the state in the 1930s. For example, the Fourth Ward in Houston comprised a flourishing black business culture, including two colleges, and various manufactures. There were also thriving black centers in Dallas, Beaumont, and San Antonio.[22] Mentioned in the Texas State Guide were black businesses in Houston such as "Mammy's Washeteria," the "Welcome Home Shine Parlor" and the "Harlem Grille,"[23]

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[21] The United States Census, Texas 1930, 944, 948. (https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-3/10612982v3p2ch09.pdf, retrieved December 14, 2023)

[22] Howard Beeth and Cary D. Wintz, *Black Dixie: Afro-Texan History and Culture in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1992), 103-106.

[23] *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State (*New York*:* Hastings House Publishing, 1940), 289; *Houston: A City and Guide*, (New York: Hanson Press, 1940), 65-70. Also mentioned were the two local African-Texas newspapers, *The Defender* and the *Informer*, and a semi-weekly newspaper, *The Negro Labor News.*

While this was the vision and goal of the national offices, the attitudes of local and state offices, especially in Texas, differed. The Texas FWP was charged with producing a state guide within this idealized cultural nationalism narrative. Still, the problem was that white Texans by law, and custom, maintained a segregated society. With Jim Crow laws in effect, Texas minorities were separated from the white majority. That thinking would be reflected in most of the TFWP writings. Those widely held white Southern beliefs were also a deeply embedded part of the beliefs of the staff and administrators within the TFWP. Cultural nationalism, as espoused by the national office, was invariably tempered at best, resisted where possible, and occasionally ignored when the state offices interpreted the concept of cultural nationalism. Texas FWP officials thought minorities could be partially represented in the publications but not nearly to the extent and prominence that Anglo Americans received. Their position was reflected in the correspondence between the state and national officials so that some type of compromise would have to be reached if the guides were to be successful and accepted by Texas state officials and citizens.[24]

Third, the FWP in Texas is worthy of scholarly examination in that it exposes the tension between federal and local offices. During the Depression, Texans in each state section was confronted with New Deal reforms, some of which grew from the Progressive movement that began in the early part of the 20th century but were interrupted by World War I. Progressives were generally educated, middle-class business professionals, men, and women—the people who enabled corporations and workers to labor—who believed they could use those same skills, honed in the workplace, to improve society. The Progressives believed that the problems of

[24] Jerold Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of The Federal Writers' Project* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 148-150.

American society were susceptible to change through legislation. Through legislation such changes would rid the nation of perceived evils and restrictions on freedom and creating in the process a *national* inclusiveness in society. Reforms such as creating better living conditions for people experiencing poverty, Pure Food and Drug laws for products purchased by consumers, and implementation of fair labor practices through new labor laws are examples of successful Progressive causes.[25] This idea of an inclusive America was often a belief of those Progressives who, by the 1930s, became the upper-level New Deal administrators as they set out to change the outlook and infrastructure of government. Since most of the national FWP management was from the North and East, the epicenter of the Progressive movement, and grew to adulthood under its influence, it is hardly surprising that inclusivity and the desire for a unifying "cultural nationalism' would be a significant goal of the FWP.[26] To be fair, not all progressives in the Northeast and Midwest were cultural pluralists. Most progressives were not pluralists. Progressives, such as Jane Addams and Horace Kallen, who advocated an inclusive egalitarian cultural nationalism, had influenced many national FWP officials.

Progressivism in Texas was similar as to what it was in northern and eastern parts of the United States. Most Texans, being rural, were affected by Progressivist reforms. Texans living in the major urban areas of the state and the Oil Patch—those rich oil fields being developed in the southeastern part of the state—were usually influenced more by their employers and local newspapers. Business and oil barons despised the imposition of new rules on them by

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[25] For more on the Progressive Era, read Michael McGerr's *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America 1870-1920* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2005) and John Whiteclay Chambers II's *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000).

[26] William Leuchtenburg, *FDR and the New Deal* (New York: Harper and Row Publishing, 1963), 84; Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progress Movement in America 1870-1920,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 84.

"outsiders," and journalists who worked for them were often little more than their mouthpieces decried this latest "Northern" infringement on their "freedoms." Further, the ideal of an inclusive society was not in the thoughts and minds of most Anglo Texans. This philosophy handed down from generation to generation was the idea of "separate but equal". An inclusive society that crossed ethnic, gender, and economic lines was an anathema to most white Texans, particularly in the Piney Woods portion of the state. Texas, priding itself on its short-lived independence, was also anti-federal government. Anything from Washington was viewed with suspicion and sometimes, but not always, seen as an intrusion into state affairs. Less than seventy years after the Civil War, most Anglo Texans still felt that the state could better handle its citizenry and any thoughts of a more open and inclusive society would be met with white Texan obstinacy. This was not the case for all Texans. Some felt that the federal government could provide better opportunities for businesses and the people who ran the businesses. This was also true of the southern leaders in Texas. Southern leaders hardly dared to criticize the New Deal until after the Supreme Court-packing plan. It is hard to believe that all Texans who obtained jobs with the WPA, served on the NYA, or in the CCC hated the New Deal, rather just the opposite. Social security was also popular—a progressive ideal. Not all white southerners were a homogenous group dealing with distinct class differences, and this was the case in Texas.[27]

Exclusiveness was just as prevalent in the big cities of Texas, such as Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio, as in the rural sections of Texas. Although Anglos had far more contact and interaction with minorities in their everyday lives than those living on farms, exclusion was rampant in those environs, usually at the lower levels of both employment and society. In many

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[27] Robert A. Calvart and Arnoldo Diablo, *The History of Texas* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson Publishing, 1990), 128; George Tindall and David Shi, *America: A Narrative* (New York: W. W. Norton Publishing, 2016), 31.

rural areas, whites and minorities interacted daily. Take, for example, a white farmer with sharecroppers. While not groundbreaking and not the inclusion sought by New Deal ideals, this closer contact contributed to the compromises eventually reached to make the project an overall success and are discussed in this dissertation. This was inclusiveness within a white supremacy system, which was very different from the culture envisioned by national FWP officials as they considered their approach to culture.

Ultimately, the essence of being Southern represented a complex part of Texas history. Lost Cause Romanticism was still prevalent in 1930s America. In this myth, white Southern rural culture and the old Confederacy were venerated and romanticized in both scholarship and popular culture. Many white Texans, then, took pride in being Southern.[28] That sense, combined with the heritage of a successful revolution and independence as a nation for however short a time, permeated white Texas culture and served as a foundation of what became Texas cultural nationalism. For Anglo Texans, this was a matter of pride and love for the Lone Star State.

The term "Southerner" did not include blacks living in the South. As one Texan historian noted, "White Texans had a love of place, a fierce loyalty to the state, place, and a desire to advance its power and prestige"—these characteristics of nationalism describe the feelings of Texans toward their nation-state in the nineteenth century and persist in half-humorous, half-serious clichés about Texas bigness and uniqueness.[29] White Texans' view of their history played a crucial role in the formation of their identity. They adapted the legends of the Alamo and the

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[28] George Tindall, *The Ethnic Southerners* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1976, (n.p.); George Tindall, *Natives and Newcomers, Ethnic Southerners and Southern Ethics* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995, 54.

[29] Mark E. Nackman, *A Nation Within a Nation: The Rise of Texas Nationalism* (Port Washington, NY: Kenikat Press, 1975), 1-23.

fight for Independence from Mexico to the era of desegregation and beyond. White Texans' views of their history played a crucial role in the formation of their identity.

Fourth, this examination of FWP work in Texas fills a significant gap in New Deal and Texas historiography. While the FWP is the subject of voluminous literature, the works on Texas and the FWP are minimal. One of the first books to be published was *Texas Cowboys: Memories of the Early Days* (1984), by Judy and Jim Lanning. Ava Mills published *A Legacy of Words: Texas Women's Stories, 1850-1920,* in 1999, and David La Vere published *Life Among the Texas Indians: The WPA Narratives* (note, the Oklahoma FWP collected this data) in 2005. One critical work is Jerrold Hirsch's *Portrait of America*: *A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project* (2004). Overall, Hirsch observed that the state guidebooks reflected the desire of the national FWP officials to reconcile cultural nationalism and pluralism.[30] His view was that celebrating diversity was a central goal of national officials who wanted every state guide to conform to this goal. State officials in most Southern states, however, resisted the national office's goal of the celebration of diversity and democracy, preferring instead to cling to traditional segregation based on skin color.[31] Differences of opinion and the deeply held "Southern ideals" of the state and local staff interfered with the state's adherence to the national office's approach. Because the Texas Staff adhered to Southern segregationist policies in all aspects of Texas life, the State of Texas was limited in implementing the National FWP's approach, policies, instructions, and guidelines on producing the Texas guides. Native white male Texans in charge in the TFWP offices, as well as many of the journalists who wrote

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[30] Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 24.

[31] Hirsch's *Portrait of America* does not discuss Texas and Texas Cultural Nationalism but discusses the cultural nationalism promoted by the Washington FWP office. Here the reference refers to Texas and Texas cultural nationalism, which is the antecedent.

articles, insisted that equality between the races would be limited, at best. While *The Guide to the Lone Star State* contained over seven hundred pages of history, dates, and information about Texas, the problem was that the guidebooks reflected much of that white Texas racial thinking instead of the equality and inclusiveness that the national FWP wanted.

Another critical work is Christine Bold's *Writers, Plumbers and Anarchists: The WPA Writers in Massachusetts* (2002). Bold showed that the national FWP, state FWP officials, local FWP writers, and people throughout Massachusetts similarly had differing views about what constituted appropriate and essential information to include in the guides. Bold showed that local elites and officials played a significant role in shaping the Massachusetts Guide. This was also the point within the TFWP.[32] Bold's work demonstrated that the Federal Writers' Project had a real opportunity to show precisely how inclusive the state guidebooks could be but did not achieve this goal even in seemingly far more liberal Massachusetts. She showed that minorities were either hardly mentioned in the state guides or were presented condescendingly. This study focused on those same issues and examined similar outcomes in Texas.[33]

Paul Sporn's *Against Itself: The Federal Theatre and Writers' Project in the Midwest* (2007) argued that one of the Michigan Federal Writers' Project (MFWP) goals was to make the guides appealing to both autoworkers and farmers in Michigan.[34] My study of the Texas FWP reaches conclusions like those of Paul Sporn in *Against Itself*. In both cases, the goal was to make publications appealing to the middle class and the working class. However, in Michigan,

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[32] Letter from Newsom to Davis, December 31, 1939, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 2644.

[33] Christine Bold, *Writers, Plumbers and Anarchists: The WPA Writers in Massachusetts* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006).

[34] Paul Sporn, Against Itself: *The Federal Theatre and Writers' Project in the Midwest* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1995).

with its CIO unionization drives and eastern and southern European ethnic groups, FWP leadership dealt with organized and effectively led groups, unlike in Texas.

The MFWP wanted local and city administrators to purchase and use books to promote the "cultural nationalism" of their communities. Thus, supporting these key individuals and groups within the state was critical if the MFWP was to succeed. In addition, the MFWP wanted the guides to appeal to the white-collar professional class in Michigan, which resulted in a complicated challenge for project administrators to develop a document with such broad appeal, a similar challenge was also true for the Texas FWP.

This study also followed in part George Blakey's approach in *Creating a Hoosier Self-Portrait: The Federal Writers' Project in Indiana 1935-1942*.[35] Blakey examined anonymous Indiana project writers and their contributions to the Indiana state guide. Since the many men and women who wrote the vignette guides were serving essentially as the heart of the project, any examination of the conflicting goals and agendas in Texas must also include an analysis of how these journalists reacted to the national ideals that Washington set forth, just as for Indiana. Because Blakey had studied the Indiana FWP, it is possible to compare that state unit with the TFWP, and this comparison is presented in chapter one.

The studies of Christine Bold, Paul Sporn, and George Blakey showed the need for state studies as well as national FWP. Conflicts between the state and national FWP offices illustrated frequent and great resistance to the New Deal's emphasis on a democratic, pluralist, and inclusive idea of who and what America was. Like several others reviewed, this state study revealed the complexity of American thinking at the local and national levels about what it was like to be an American. Furthermore, while national studies of the FWP tell us much about the

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[35] George Blakey, *Creating a Hoosier Self-Portrait* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).

national officials, we also need to examine and understand the FWP employees in the state who gathered the material to understand and appreciate their work.

In the end, this dissertation seeks to provide a history of the Federal Writers Project in Texas from 1935 to 1940, including the publication of the *Texas Guide*, and the accumulation of oral histories via the folklore and slave narrative initiatives. Chapter One focuses on the launching the FWP nationally and in Texas and examines the FWP bureaucratic structure, and various personnel (especially in connection with Texas).

Chapter Two considers the FWP in operation in Texas and examines the various challenges the project faced in the Lone Star State. For example, to staff the project, the TFWP needed to locate the right people, yet filling these positions took time because they had to go through the steps of relief. The staffing problems were a part of the conflict between the relief and cultural goals of the FWP. Because the goals differed, the racial and cultural makeup of the staff contrasted differently in the state and local district offices. Meanwhile, Chapter Three explores the Texas State Guide itself. Chapter Four considers the folklore initiative of the FWP in Texas, and Chapter Five examines the Texas Slave Narratives.

CHAPTER ONE
THE TEXAS FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT:
GETTING STARTED

The Federal Writers' Project was a New Deal effort of President Franklin Roosevelt (1933-1945) to create employment for writers in the United States during the Great Depression. Established in July 1935 under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, the FWP aimed to compile and publish state guides for all forty-eight states (as well as Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia). These guides, in turn, provided Americans—for the first time in the nation's history-- with "a series of volumes that ably illustrates our national way of life, yet at the same time portray variants in local patterns of living and regional development." Overall, it was an effort that lasted eight years and involved 6,000 people nationwide. In Texas, over 600 writers, editors, researchers, and stenographers were employed to provide a "self-portrait" of the state via the publication of a travel guide. Ultimately, the *Texas State Guide*, completed in August 1940, was 714 pages long, covered state history, provided an overview of fifteen of the state's leading cities, and provided "tours" of communities along the major highways.

Structurally—as was the case in most states—there was a heavy top-down administrative orientation in Texas: The National Project Office (Washington D.C.), the State Office (San Antonio), and six area offices (Houston, Dallas, El Paso, Amarillo, Austin, and San Antonio). Various local offices reported to their specific area director within six area offices. The staff in these offices were relatively small for a federal program and typically numbered under fifteen.

For example, in the Dallas office, there were only eight personnel. In Houston, eleven.[36] Key administrative figures in the Texas FWP experience included, Henry Alsberg (Director of the National Project Office), James Frank Davis (State Director), and John Olive (Assistant State Director).[37] Laura Hamner (a noted Texas writer), Blanche Wiesen Cook (a historian), and Alan Lomax (an ethnomusicologist) were also significant native Texan contributors to the TFWP.

Central to the TFWP was Alsberg. Born in New York in September 1881, Alsberg grew up in a secular German-Jewish family on Manhattan's Upper East Side. His father, Meinhard, was a chemist at Columbia University and later worked with the New York City Bureau of Health. He intended his three sons (of which Henry was the youngest) to pursue careers in science or technology. Unlike his older brothers, who, pursued such careers, Henry was more inclined toward the arts and humanities.[38] In 1896, at the age of fifteen, Alsberg entered Columbia University, where his literary interests became apparent with his work on the school's new literary newspaper, *The Morningside*. The magazine intended to "reflect the lighter and brighter side of Columbia life," doing so by being "unorthodox by undergraduate standards" in "attacking undergraduate and university affairs." Alsberg later became an editor of the magazine-- one of three at the time—and even made literary contributions of his own (including poems and short stories).[39] Overall, Alsberg was popular and active at Columbia—participating

[36]American Guide Week, November 10-16, 1940, President Roosevelt statement; "2,000,000 Million Words About Dallas", *Dallas Morning News*, December 18, 1936; "Jobless" Writers Put On WPA Work", Houston Chronicle, January 20, 1936.

[37]The six area directors included: Charles Munz (and later Lawrence O'Leary) in Houston, Robert Horan in Dallas, Norman Walker in El Paso, and Laura Hamner in Amarillo. Neither Austin nor San Antonio had an official area director. State Director Davis oversaw those two areas of the state.

[38]Henry's older brother Carl became a scientist with the Food and Drug Administration, while his other older brother, Julius, and became a successful engineer.

[39]His literary relationship with the other two editors, Harold Kellock and John Erskine, continued into Alsberg's future. Incidentally, *The Morningside* is still in publication at Columbia to this day, claiming the position as the

in a variety of sports and playing the cello in the university's Philharmonic Society. Classmates described him as "whimsical, even facetious streak, mixed with a playful disregard for authority, also to which Henry wrote about being late for classes, when others wrote of scholastic and athletic conquests."[40] In 1903, Alsberg graduated from Columbia Law School, and briefly practiced law. In 1906, he entered graduate studies in literature at Harvard University. Ultimately, Alsberg failed to complete his degree at Harvard, and shortly after that returned to New York City, where, in 1912, he had a short story published in *The Forum* magazine. In 1913, he became a writer for the *New York Evening Post* and *The Nation.*

In 1914, after the eruption of the First World War, Alsberg traveled to Europe and became a foreign news correspondent. Later, in 1916, he became press attaché to the American Ambassador in Turkey (Henry Morgenthau). After the entry of the United States into the war in April 1917, Alsberg returned to New York and taught a course at the Rand School of Social Science, a Socialist Party of America school established in 1906. In 1919, as the Treaty of Versailles concluded, Alsberg returned to Europe—writing now as a foreign correspondent for *The Nation*—and ultimately made his way to the Soviet Union (where he was accompanied by anarchists Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman). Initially, Alsberg was an enthusiastic supporter of the Bolshevik Revolution. In a 1921 essay in *The Nation* entitled "Russia: Smoked Glass vs. Rose-Tint," Alsberg acknowledged the lack of democratic government in the new Bolshevik regime but "harbored hopes that the Soviets would become less repressive while retaining what he saw as positive revolutionary changes." Max Eastman of *The Liberator* called Alsberg's essay "journalistic emotionalizing" and dismissed him as "a petit-bourgeois liberal".

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nation's oldest college literary magazine. Susan Rubenstein DeMasi, *Henry Alsberg: The Driving Force Behind the New Deal's Federal Writers' Project*, (Jefferson: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2016), 23-24.

[40]DeMasi, 23-24.

Nevertheless, Alsberg's article was reprinted in the *New York Call* and reported on the front page of the *New York Tribune*. By the mid-1920s, Alsberg was more uncertain about the Soviet experiment. In his sympathetic review of Berkman's 1925 memoir, *The Bolshevik Myth* (which recounted Berkman's time in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s and chronicled his move from enthusiasm to disillusionment toward the Revolution), Alsberg admitted that "the crux of the matter was that international radicals and revolutionaries had expected better from the Russian Revolution, the bold experiment for which they had waited so long."

After the war, Alsberg returned to fiction, writing both plays and short stories. Throughout the 1920s, he was a prolific author, publishing many works and plays. From 1925 to 1926, Alsberg was a director in the Provincetown Playhouse Company, translating and adapting Giacomo Puccini's 1924 opera, *Turandot*. He was also associate director of Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom* (1926), which won a Pulitzer Prize, and the producer for *Him* (1927) by poet E.E. Cummings. He even collaborated briefly with George Gershwin in the early 1930s in an unsuccessful effort to acquire the musical rights for composer David Tamkin's 1933 opera composition, *The Dybbuk*. These experiences all contributed to the formation of Alberg's emerging views of multiculturalism, equality, and inclusiveness that became the cornerstone of the vision he had for the Federal Writers' Project.[41]

After the election of Democrat Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, Alsberg, still traveling abroad in Europe (and in the company of Emma Goldman), expressed confidence that Roosevelt's victory demonstrated "that there are forces [now] at work to overcome the old reactionary spirits."[42] In late November 1932, Alsberg returned to the United States (spending 1933

[41]Monty Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Government Patronage of the Arts*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1977), pages 18-19. DeMasi, 127-142.

[42]Alsberg quoted in DeMasi, 152.

attending to his mother and working on his autobiography), and shortly after that (March 1934), was tapped by Jacob Baker, an administrator in the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FERA), to edit a book on the accomplishments of the FERA's Civil Works Administration. Following the publication of *America Fights the Depression* in September 1934, Alsberg continued to work with FERA, editing two magazines, one reporting on the far-flung activities of that agency and the other dealing with Baker's pet interests and government-sponsored cooperatives. Federal Project Number One, the WPA program encompassing the Theatre, Art, Music, and Writers' Projects, would not officially commence until August 1935. Howevever, its creation took shape throughout the spring and summer, culminating in an off-the-record meeting at Alsberg's home on a steamy summer's night. WPA Director Harry Hopkins and Jacob Baker led the unconventional summit, inviting Hallie Flanagan, director of experimental theater at Vassar College; Holger Cahill, from New York's Museum of Modern Art; and noted conductor Nikolai Sokoloff. Henry Alsberg and FERA associate Clair Laning discussed the Writers' Project plans. "It was one of those evenings in which everything seemed possible," said Flanagan." Thus, the grand experiment began.[43]

The Federal Writers Project, a project within the Works Projects Administration, was an undertaking that had no precedent. The FWP was designed to put out of work writers, librarians and newspapermen to work on a project that would compile information for an encyclopedic guidebook for each state. During its lifetime (1935-1942), it employed over 6,000 folks and produced a guidebook for every state in the union and Washington D.C.—many of which went through multiple editions. It also produced books on folklore and slave narratives. Ultimately, the FWP remains one of the mainstays of the New Deal period.

[43] DeMasi, 158, Author interview with DeMasi, December 6, 2023.

As soon as the Federal Writers' Project received approval in July 1935, Alsberg, as national director, plunged into his new role with great zeal. As head of the national office, his most immediate task was to hire administrative staff to assist him in getting the project underway, including state directors. For Texas, as with the other state offices, he needed a competent individual who could manage the state office and staff and had a newspaper background. His first choice for State Director was Willard Francis Scarborough, co-author of *Stories from the History of Texas* (1930), but she declined the position. Alsberg then turned to James Frank Davis, a well-known author and playwright familiar with Texas. [44]

Born in the fishing port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1870, Davis had held several of positions in leading Boston newspapers as a theater critic, political writer, and city managing editor. Davis retired in 1910, however, because of an injury and relocated to San Antonio. There he became a playwright with several accomplishments including *Gold in the Hills* and *The Ladder*, which ran on Broadway from 1926 to 1927. He also penned over one hundred and sixty short stories for publications such as *The Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, The Rotarian,* and *Ladies' Home Journal.* Many of these stories were set in Texas. His novels—which were also often set in Texas-- included *Almanzar* (1918), *The Chinese Label* (1920), *Almanzar Evarts, Hero* (1925), and *The Road to San Jacinto* (1936).

In 1935, Davis accepted Alsberg's offer to direct the Texas Project.[45] It was a popular choice. National FWP official George Cronyn noted Davis' considerable editorial experience and familiarity with the state: "He has written 16 serials, some 200 short stories, and three books

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[44]Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 53-54; Davis was erroneously confused with J. Frank Dobie in later publications. Dobie was a consultant with the TFWP, but not the State Director. Harry Hanson (editor), *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, Hastings House Publishing, New York, NY, Revised edition, 1969, page 5.

[45]Tshaonline.org, Davis, James Francis (1870-1942), retrieved March 16, 2018 at 10:09am.

and is a member of the Author's League of America."[46] Overall, Davis recognized his massive challenges with the Texas project. As Davis told Alsberg, "the state of Texas is massive and we are still short of employees to cover it. We must do what we can to get the state covered." Davis wanted to build a staff that could take on this challenge. The first order of business required finding a competent Assistant State Director to serve as his right-hand man. He found just the right person in John Olive, editor of *The San Antonio Light*.[47]

Olive, a native of San Antonio with a long career in journalism, was described by Davis as "an exceedingly competent man whose proven efficiency and value to work in my opinion, justifies and makes advisable the increase in salary. Olive's temperament, as revealed in the various letters from the state office, allowed him to function as the TFWP point person whenever problems arose. As Davis noted in a letter to Alsberg, Olive was "working very capably since October 28 as 'acting superintendent' and assisting me in general organization".[48]

In October 1935, Davis and Olive—with a budget of $15,280 began their work collecting material for the state guide in Texas. However, they were not left without general instructions from Alsberg and the national FWP office. As Davis stated to Alsberg about starting up, "I have planned (and have men ready for employment the moment is clear to our authorization) a set up for one Executive State Assistant Supervisor to be located at this office as my assistant in

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[46]George W. Cronyn to Jacob Baker, October 17, 1935, Federal Writers' Project Records Group 69 Box 45 File Davis, Washington D.C (Hereafter FWPNA- Federal Writers' Project National Archives. Baker to Drought recommending Davis for the job, Box 45 File Davis, October 15, 1935. There is no archival record of why Scarborough declined the position. Note: The Author's League of America was formed in 1912. The Authors League of America began in 1912, headquartered in New York City—its mission "to protect the rights of all authors, whether engaged in literary, dramatic, artistic, or musical competition, and to advise and assist all such authors." *The New York Times*. 12-17-1912.

[47]Davis to Alsberg, October 24, 1935, FWPNA, RG 69, Texas File, Box 1.

[48]Davis to Alsberg, November 19, 1935, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45 File Employment; Davis to Alsberg, March 17, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45 File Employment O-Z.

directing the State and as the Executive of the Editorial Staff to be assembled, and five Assistant State Supervisors to be located at Dallas, Houston, Austin, El Paso, and Amarillo, the salaries of all have been worked out to come within $9900.00 administrative appropriation of which Mr. Drought and I were advised in FWP Budget Form A, dated October 14. Realizing that beginning a project of this magnitude in each state would be complex, time of the essence, and not wanting each state project staff to reinvent the wheel, the national FWP office developed a template to assist state directors in both organizing their operation and outlining what was to be in the state guides, the end product of the project. National officials expected state officials to follow the template when developing the guides, which stressed a purely "American" national culture that was an evolved amalgam of regional, state, and local cultures. These guides not only revealed the best of American life but also encouraged the development of a more inclusive society based upon equality. To that end, each state was to compile information about that state reflecting those ideals and produce travel guides that reflected the national office's attitude.[49]

The national office repeatedly stressed the importance of these overall guidelines to the states. The proposal submitted by the WPA Professional and Service Projects Division a month previously presented plans for a five-volume guide named *The American Guide Series* covering the Northeast, Southeast, North Central, South Central, and Pacific Coast areas served in Alsberg's basic plan. Information would be received from the states and a professional staff of writers in Washington would then produce the final manuscript. Twelve regional offices were proposed as administrative centers.[50]

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[49]"Drought Names Writers' Chief", *San Antonio Express*, October 16, 1935; Davis to Alsberg, November 9, 1935, FWPNA, RG 69 Folder Employment 1 of 3 Box 45.

[50]*New York Times*, July 27 and October 11, 1935; Cronyn to von Auw, January 4, 1936, as cited in Penkower, 30. Ivan Von Auw was a literary agent who represented many famous authors. In this role, he was part of the Author's League.

This regional emphasis presented several drawbacks: George Cronyn, the newly designated associate project director, and Kathrine Kellock, the National Tours Editor, objected that beyond New England and the South, no one could agree on regional boundaries. "They argued that the border of many regions was unclear; Is Missouri, for example, in the South or the Midwest. More important to the viability of the Project, they pointed out that a regional structure would lack automatic political support, not regions, elect congressmen and senators-and it was apparent from the outset that the Project would need all the friends on Capitol Hill it could get". Cronyn also believed this arrangement would be unfair to the states, who were obligated to send all their material to Washington. In addition, Cronyn believed that the contemplated Texas Federal Writers' Project organization could only administer state units for WPA if its planners had initially been intended because of the massiveness of the federal projects. Ironically, the project later had to establish state units called districts and areas. Also, there needed to be a larger workforce and more funds at the federal level for such a massive national project. Furthermore, quick results were needed to mollify skeptics at both the congressional and local levels. Regional guides would take too long to produce. Finally, as National FWP Tours Director Katherine Kellock had argued, regional guides could not be expected to gain state and local support, not a small matter in the minds of legislators on the Hill who were looking out for their constituencies.[51]

Alsberg and Cronyn produced American Guide manuals for the states to avoid confusion and ensure a consistent product. While some state executives praised the first manual, others called for fundamental revisions. The national staff needed more certainty about the organization

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[51]Penkower, 30; Wendy Griswold, *American Guides: The Federal Writers' Project and the Casting of American Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 62-62 Cronyn telephone conversation with Penkower, June 30, 1968; Kellock telephone conversation with Penkower, August 25, 1968.

and content of the guidebooks, resulting in confusing instructions from Washington. Alsberg's preference for essay-style writing contrasted with Cronyn's encyclopedic approach to town and city coverage. Thus, a second manual was produced-- a revision of the first—detailing a uniform set of instructions for area and district manuals. The requirement immediately elicited cries of despair from many states, especially in the South. For example, the manual required indexing of specialized subjects; and while this was practical in Charleston or Jacksonville, such a practice was unworkable in areas of the country with limited research capabilities and travel funds. Alphabetizing, moreover, would require a reader to "tie up fragments" by thumbing through maps, making lists of places, and referring and forth to cities on a planned route.[52]

Davis and his staff set out to get the state office set up. Staff organization would include an allotted $2,434 for the project (at the state level) and would initially employ 20 people.

Ultimately, Davis organized the Texas project into six regional areas within the state from the state office in San Antonio. Davis felt that "the best way to set up the Texas Guide Book is as one San Antonio District Project, which shall be in reality be a Statewide project." To do this, Davis understood that with Texas having such a significant area of land, "we need to find certain supervision of a competent character; indeed find it well nigh impossible to get started unless we are somehow able to arrange it." In the central office, located in the Smith Young Tower in downtown, nine people were housed. Along with State Director Davis and Assistant State Director Olive, Henry Newhall, the executive assistant; Angelina Wharton, the Secretary to Davis; John Tyler, Guidebook State Editor; Bess Woolford, Assistant State Guidebook Editor; Mary Donoho, Guidebook Writer; Boyd Gatewood, Rewriter and Area One Supervisor John

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[52]Harlan to Alsberg, November 27, 1935, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 3; Kellock to Alsberg, February 18, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 58, Penkower, 31-32.

Davis (all non-certified). Area One comprised of Districts 10, 11, and 15 (headquartered in San Antonio was run by John Davis ($125.00 per month). Area Two, headquartered in Houston, was comprised of Districts 2, 3, 5, and 6 and was operated first by Charles Munz ($125.00 per month) and later by Lawrence O' Leary.[53] Area Three, meanwhile, included Districts 1, 4, 7, 12 and 13, and was centered around the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex and run by Robert Horan ($150.00 per month). Area Four, which included Districts 8, 9, and 14, consisted of Austin and neighboring communities and was overseen by Gene Cooper ($135.00 per month).[54] Area Five, the Amarillo/Panhandle area, which included Districts 16, 17 and 18, was overseen by Laura Hamner after the initial area supervisor, Fred Wortham, found employment elsewhere. Ironically, and despite the project's stated goal of promoting equality, Hamner was paid only $125 a month while the remaining area supervisors, all some of the men, received $125 to $150.[55] Finally, Area Six, included El Paso and the surrounding areas of West Texas included Districts 19 and 20 and was overseen at first by Rufe P. March ($125.00 per month) and later Norman Walker.[56]

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[53]Charles Curtis Munz was the original Project Manager, but he soon left for other employment. His novel, *The Land Without Moses* (1938), was about the life of an East Texas sharecropping family; Davis to Alsberg, November 19,1935, FWPNA Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3; "Staff Organized for WPA Writers, San Antonio Evening News, October 31, 1935.

[54]Robert Horan was a reporter for the *Dallas Times-Herald* and *Dallas Dispatch*, State capitol reporter for *Des Moines Capital and Tribune*, United Press in Washington D.C., seven years, Horan was the Director of Public Relations of Louisville Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies. The Area was originally overseen by Gene Cooper, the Night City Editor for the *Dallas News*; City Editor and Managing Editor of the *Austin American*; Davis to Alsberg, November 20, 1935, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45 File Employment; Davis to Taylor, March 20, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3; Davis to Alsberg, November 19,1935, FWPNA Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3.

[55]Laura Hamner to David Olive, January 23, 1936. Washington, DC: National Archives; Ellen Woodward to H. P. Drought, 1936. FWPNA RG 69 Box 45; Davis to Alsberg, November 19,1935, FWPNA Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3.

[56]Rufe P. March was City Editor of the El Paso Herald and was head of publicity of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce. Norman Walker served as Supervisor of Area Six, Davis to Alsberg, November 19,1935, FWPNA Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3; Davis to Alsberg, January 2, 1936, FWPNA Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3. Hamner came strongly recommended by Gene A. Howe, editor of the *Amarillo News-Globe*. Davis felt Hamner was

Davis devised the idea for employees in the cities and surrounding areas to try and maximize what force he had at his disposal. By Alsberg's request of covering territory outside of cities of 10,000, Davis "set forth some of the peculiar problems of Texas coverage due to the great area of the State, and the manner in which we are setting up our field force to work them out. His idea was to "to have the city in which the headquarters of each of the Texas WPA Districts is to have a Local Supervisor and an Intermediate Worker typist. In each of the counties in which the five largest cities are located will have a staff averaging ten. Smaller large cities will have three or four."[57]

In many of the districts, the workforce was small. District three had 15 people, 10 who were women, and only one, in addition to the supervisor in charge of research, had a college education. None, except for the said supervisor of the research, had specific training in research work. In the large cities, area supervisors were assisted by editors and clerical staff such as typists and, by Local Supervisors, who often had to manage upwards of 60 or so employees. All twenty districts had their share of field writers, hired to travel to the cities and countryside to gather the information needed for the guides. Each field writer had an average area of about 1,650 square miles to cover an average of one and one-half counties. Volunteer consultants also contributed to the effort, usually about 15 to 20 people in each district. District offices created

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a woman of middle age, was an author of school histories and other books, a magazine writer, was an executive through having been a superintendent of schools and is wholly competent to handle District 16, 17 and 18 Area. Davis also interviewed her personally and heartily coincided with the opinion that no better person could be found to work in that Area

[57]Davis to Alsberg, November 5, 1935, FWPNA Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3; "Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Every Locality in U.S. Is Goal of American Guide", *The Sunday Beaumont Enterprise*, March 22, 1936.

Advisory Committees of local citizens were created by district offices to provide additional support and advice as needed.[58]

Although many letters to the state office exhibited calmness and clarity, area and district staff frequently functioned in a state of ordered chaos. In the project's early stages, the lack of employees caused difficulty and confusion. As positions were filled, it was the need for furniture and supplies, or the money to purchase them. District Two, centered on Houston, was the exception, with fewer letters of complaints. Whether the organization and operation of his area functioned somewhat more smoothly than the others is a matter of conjecture since in later correspondence, he does offhandedly refer to "routine problems."[59]

Though O'Leary did not concern State Director Davis with mundane district supply problems, he did express concern that labor challenges would represent a continuing problem in all Texas districts in his first letter to Davis. As early as June 12, 1936, barely a year into the project, he described in a letter to Davis about his problem he was having with one of his employees and how he resolved it.[60]

Another labor problem was recruiting African Americans to the project, as in all states. For example, in Texas, there were early instances in the project involving the recruiting and hiring African Americans. The first applicant, Phil Register, wanted to work as a supervisor on the Fort Worth project. Although there were no vacant positions at the time, Davis and Alsberg and Jacob Baker, director of Federal Project Number One, which oversaw Music, Art, Theater,

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[58]Davis to Henry Alsberg, January 2, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Box, 45; WPA Federal Writers Project, RG 69 Box 45, Supplementary Instructions #4 to the American Guide Manual, Volunteer Associates, November 1, 1935, II Volunteer Associates, 7771, page 2.

[59]O'Leary to Davis, June 16, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

[60] O'Leary to Davis, June 16, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

and Writers, wanted to give Register anything the minute something opened.[61] However, there are no records to indicate whether Register was ever hired. Davis thought that a second applicant, black writer John Harmon, would be suitable as “Assistant Editor in Charge of Negro Affairs.[62]

Despite Harmon’s appointment, the TFWP employed few blacks. Unlike in other southern states, Texas has no overt resistance to hiring blacks, though records show that only two were ever considered for the TFWP. While it appears Alsberg and Davis made a concerted effort to recruit black writers, it cannot be ascertained whether this is due to a lack of black applicants, applicants that were not qualified, or because blacks were discouraged by other factors not seen in the records.[63]

An area supervisor had so many responsibilities that he or she had to scurry about to keep up with all these tasks and was therefore unable to focus on one problem for long. As state and local offices received TFWP letters and communiqués, numerous actions had to occur to keep the offices running smoothly. Given the lack of resources, staff or money, the area supervisor functioned in a constantly challenging arena trying to keep up with a massive amount of paperwork to get the project rolling. In Houston, O’Leary experienced a better situation than most of the other Texas districts. Positioned in Texas’ then-largest city, he had an abundance of resources with which to work and could readily obtain good people.

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[61]Phil Register was a qualified candidate in the eyes of the TFWP. He was editor of the magazine, *Negro and the White Man* and editor, *Fort Worth Eagle Eye* newspaper.

[62]O’Leary to Davis, May 11, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

[63]Alsberg to Davis, October 21, 1935; Davis to Alsberg, November 6, 1935, Alsberg to Davis, November 12, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45 File T-Z.

The task of finding qualified people for the project was daunting. Davis was almost at wits end when confronted with the realization of this problem. "In all the State there are listed by 66 persons on Relief under all the various classifications enumerated. Only (12) of these are Writers, (9) are Architects and Map Draftsman (not yet needed), and (45) are Librarians, and "Other Professionals". It therefore looks highly improbable that our field force can be set up to cover 254 counties without some pretty liberal exemptions. I have shall be glad to have your advice as to what to do, (or ask Mr. Drought to do, if he is the one to do it), when have exhausted our Relief lists". Finding qualified help plagued the project almost to the end.[64]

The TFWP encountered numerous difficulties finding qualified personnel to do all required tasks, seriously jeopardizing the project's existence. Using "unskilled" labor caused problems, but the implementation of the ten percent rule solved some of these difficulties. Realizing that a large number of qualified workers were off relief rolls or refused to go on, the Finance Division permitted the project a larger non-relief quota. Whereas most WPA projects had to cut certified personnel from 10 to 5 percent, the FWP received permission to raise the limit to 25 percent two months after it began. As the division overseeing Federal Project Number One admitted, this allowance signified a contradiction of the significant purpose of the WPA, which was to provide jobs for those certified as "needing relief. With the help of the ten percent rule, supervisors could use employees with a substantial writing background or were writers themselves. This would be a godsend for the project, which would allow it to move forward with experience in editing and writing.[65]

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[64]Davis to Alsberg, November 5, 1935, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3.

[65]Penkower, pages 62-63; although the figure dropped to 7 percent at the close of 1937, it climbed to over 11 percent in March 1939; Donald Howard, *The WPA and Federal Relief Policy*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1943), 356.

Although the national office established the template for organizing and operating areas and districts, making the plan work at the state level presented a test. States were all instructed to follow the format of the national office. Nevertheless, each state had some unique problems. Although each state guide presented content and organizational structure, with 48 different programs, differences in the tone and tenor of each guide arose, and it seemed reasonable that monies allocated, personnel distributed, and office space allocated differed in different states.

As the project became better organized many procedural items required special handling. Texas FWP staff attempted to locate and hire qualified workers but were hindered by the restrictions imposed by the federal guidelines. National and TFWP administrators recognized the importance of quickly employing people and getting them working on projects. Alsberg repeatedly discussed the difficulty of locating and employing qualified, certified staff.[66] District project administrators constantly sought out individuals who were eligible for hiring, drawing on every resource to find those people the project intended to help with a job. Fortunately, the Texas WPA supported the TFWP. While this practice helped alleviate the labor problem, it created other problems when, on occasion, a state official had to answer to the national office and the state WPA administrator. [67] Although producing comprehensive guides for the state was the goal, employing the unemployed remained the priority for the project.[68] This resulted in competition with the WPA as a work relief program and the FWP's goal of contributing to American culture.

While the project continued to build its foundation and organizational structure throughout early 1936, progress slowed, and it became clear that the Texas FWP needed all the

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[66]Alsberg to Mrs. Nan Mattoon, February 12, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45. Concern is expressed in this 1936 letter from Henry Alsberg to Mrs. Nan Mattoon.

[67]Munz to Davis, March 17, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45.

[68]H. P. Drought to Jacob Baker, February 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45.

help possible to accomplish its tasks. One suggestion was to ask for an increase in funds for wages.[69]

Another solution to the difficulty in hiring qualified people was to revise the guidelines. The situation was especially difficult because WPA guidelines stipulated that those asking had to qualify as a pauper to qualify for relief. Worse, that was just the first hurdle. Applicants had to read and write. Field writers had to have an automobile and live in the town they were writing about. The FWP presented another hurdle because in order to find qualified people, the TFWP relaxed the hiring numbers for non-relief workers-- allowing the TFWP to fill the quotas for the local offices with skilled and intermediate qualified workers.[70]

For many prospective TFWP employees the decision to participate in the Texas project was challenging. During this period a person's identity, self-respect, and self-worth were closely tied to their work. Thus, accepting money from the government was a tough pill for most to swallow. However, many people were desperate for a job with the WPA and struggled greatly to get and keep a position with the project. Employment with the TFWP was considered better than "the dole" because it involved actual work and paid a steady wage. Others justified their employment with the project as a chance to help the country somehow. Gathering stories, collecting materials for the state and local guides, and editing manuscripts made TFWP employees feel they were contributing to something that would help Americans better understand each other.

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[69]Baker to Drought, February 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45.

[70]Baker to Drought, March 4, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45.

When first proposed, the project faced two questions: First, who would be eligible to work on the project?[71] Second, what work and job tasks would they perform? In response to these questions, authorities ruled that any kind of writer on relief would be eligible, but most applicants in Texas needed more writing experience. Some could neither read nor write. Program administrators clarified that young men and women who prized writing and received assistance should apply. As a result, non-fiction writers represented a vast majority of the applicants.[72]

For the field writer, having an automobile to get to the farms and towns presented a significant challenge in addition to the other requirements. Not only must the TFWP writer meet the pauper classification to qualify for participation and employment in the project, but many writers were the sole breadwinner for their families. They often took extraordinary steps to join the project. Mrs. Gertrude Cook of San Antonio is one example: in 1936, U. S. Senator Morris Sheppard wrote to Bruce McClure, WPA Director, Professional and Service Projects in Washington, on behalf of Mrs. Cook. Director McClure responded that Mrs. Cook had yet to communicate with them but that he (McClure) would ensure that Davis, Texas FWP State Director, would receive the letter and give it the utmost attention. Mrs. Cook succeeded in getting a job with the project.

The "Mrs. Cook" case illustrates the desperation many people felt.[73] For many writers just out of school, these jobs represented their first employment opportunity. For one former school superintendent in the Texas Panhandle, the TFWP job allowed her to work again. She was

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[71]To be eligible for the project, a person had to be designated as either non-certified or certified to work.

[72]Milton Meltzer, *Violins and Shovels: The WPA Arts Project*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1976), 104.

[73]U. S. Senator Morris Sheppard to Bruce McClure, December 9, 1936. Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, TFWP Files 4H83. Gertrude Harris Cook was an accomplished author before the project began. Her book, *The Tale of Men Who Knew Not Fear,* in 1935, was a story about the campaign of Harry Hopkins Sibley and his 1862 campaign in the West.

able to use her experience to gain an area directorship and parlay that into a writing career. With Drought in the TFWP's corner, the project's initiation proved more straightforward to manage but other challenges existed for employees and applicants alike. First, applicants had to feel the indignity of qualifying as poor and needy. For the Federal Writers' Project, what qualified an individual as poor? Then, the pay presented a meager wage for the average worker. Herman Walker, for example, received $85 per month as a "senior research worker," an upper-level position. It was termed a "security wage," meaning he was paid more than a "dole" wage, which varied by state and was perceived as a handout. In this case, a wage was tied to work done, not a dole as defined as a wage.[74]

The constant fear of layoffs had deeply affected workers across the nation. During the Great Depression, a person could never know when or where he or she would find employment or if he would even find a position. A job in the private sector might vanish at the end of the week, or work might be available another week, month, or year because of economic fluctuations. In contrast, most project staff worked month-to-month. As the economy improved even slightly, WPA positions decreased, but the reverse happened if the economy grew worse. Congress approved limited funding for the FWP causing employment to rise and fall as managers attempted to keep the books balanced. Such turnover and uncertainty caused disharmony on the project and a loss of morale. Ninety percent of the workers on various arts projects came from the local assistance rolls. A ten percent exclusion from relief conditions

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[74]Alsberg to Baker, March 30, 1936. FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45 $75.74 was the average monthly wage for a non-managerial employee, though men usually made more than this and women less. "As per orders from Washington, the wage scale for the Writers' Project is that regularly prevailing for professional, skilled and intermediate workers in the counties in which they were employed. For example, the wage scale in El Paso County will be $75.00 per month for professional, $68.00 per month for skilled and $52.00 per month for intermediate." Davis to Alsberg, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45, December 20, 1938, and October 28, 1935; Olive to Bland, FWPNA RG 69, Box 45, December 2, 1935.

proved permissible for the supervisory staff, whose pay, though more significant, certainly did not make them rich or even middle class. Management fared better but not by much. The national director of the Federal Writers' Project, Henry Alsberg, received $6,000 a year but was later raised to $7,200, regional directors were paid $3,600 and state directors $2,500 to $3,000 annually.[75] Still, unemployed writers the program represented a way to at least receive a paycheck, provided that they were eligible for relief and certified as such by the Home Relief Bureau.

Although the Home Relief Bureau determined overall eligibility, the local relief boards in Texas followed no standard.[76] A certification requirement approving an employee for relief in one town would deny certification in another town, and applicants had to answer very personal questions. For example, did the applicant own property, did anyone in the family own property, did they have money put away in a mattress or a savings account, and did the candidate have insurance that could be cashed in? Relief investigators asked many questions and usually would not take the candidate's word for anything. Making matters worse, investigators might drop by anytime to check if you had any food, look through the closets, and search for extras that indicated you were living well above the means of relief, and the investigators might question neighbors, asking questions about a candidate's coming and going. Did the candidate have a secret job? Did he/she live too much above the economic means for relief? Did a family member financially support the candidate during this time of need?[77]

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[75]Davis to Alsberg, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45, December 20, 1938, and October 28, 1935; Olive to Bland, FWPNA RG 69, Box 45, December 2, 1935.

[76]Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Or Does It Explode: Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[77]Davis to Alsberg, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45, December 20, 1938, and October 28, 1935; Olive to Bland, FWPNA RG 69, Box 45, December 2, 1935.

Once on relief, the employee obtained certification from the Texas WPA, which subjected them to a new set of indignities. What requirements did the Texas WPA establish in its regulations for prospective employees? The Texas WPA project had to approve each employee before he began work with the TFWP. Another reason for arts projects and other educational projects was to find appropriate jobs for individuals with some education, to utilize that knowledge rather than assign them, for example, road construction. On one hand, the TFWP responded directly to the national FWP. Conversely, it also had to answer to the state WPA office. Again, standards differed for each project and each state.[78]

Many TFWP workers had been journalists, librarians, historians, and teachers--practically anyone who was literate. However, few had published anything of note.[79] The law required state administrators to pay prevailing area wage rates for each type of work. Most federal WPA workers comprised construction workers earning about $60 a month. The arts project workers received a higher wage scale as professionals because most individuals' work remained concentrated in urban areas with greater expenses. Monetary allotment for the arts project averaged $1,200 annually or $100 a month. That difference-between $60 and $100--angered many congressional representatives, who demanded either pay cuts or the complete abolition of the arts projects. In return for the subsistence wage, a worker on the TFWP is required to put in 140 working hours per month. This would mean a seven-hour day and five-day work week. The office managers, at least, put in a great deal more time than that. Within one district, the morale

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[78]In letters from Davis to Alsberg (and later, Newsom), state administrator H. P. Drought was in the train of communiqués back and forth. Some of the letters were sent straight to Drought from the national office.

[79]Long to Alsberg, October 14, 1937; Woolford to Alsberg, January 6, 1937. FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45.

was considered significant as they were enthusiastically concerned about the success of the undertaking and earnest in their efforts to further it.[80]

Once an applicant was Texas WPA certified, another hurdle loomed: being named to the project. Many administrators resorted to letter writing to try and plead for assistance in getting applicants approved. Conversely, TFWP applicants, needing help desperately, employed various strategies to get hired, sometimes appealing though the governor, a congressman or senator, or even to WPA head and presidential advisor Harry Hopkins himself. For example, Gertrude Harris Cook of San Antonio, opened her appeal to Bruce McClure, administrative head of the WPA Section for Professional and Service Projects, with a small quantity of flattery: “and what a Scotch-Irish name it is! It gladdens my heart; my ancestors were the original “McGintys.”' After relating her problems—and distaste—about going on relief and lamenting the low wage to be paid to writers on the project, she described how she needed work “immediately” but that her “Irish and Scotch-given power to endure” was what was keeping her going. She closed her appeal with a postscript claiming the support of Governor [James V.] Allred of Texas and Governor [Clyde Kendle] Tingley of New Mexico. H. B. Carroll of Hillsboro, Texas, who had a Ph.D. in History, appealed to Texas Senator Tom Connally, assuring the Senator that he could provide” the best of recommendations from the leading historians in all sections of the state.” Mrs. Mildred Buniva of Bastrop, Texas, went straight to Harry Hopkins, assuring him that she had both stenographic and clerical experience and was on relief.[81]

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[80]Long to Alsberg, October 14, 1937; Woolford to Alsberg, January 6, 1937. FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45; “Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Every Locality in U.S. Goal of American Guide”, *The Sunday Beaumont Enterprise*, March 22, 1936.

[81]Cook to McClure, FWPNA, RG69 Box 45 Folder C-N, November 5, 1935; Buniva to Hopkins, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45 Folder A-B, November 9, 1935; Carroll to Connally, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 45 File A-B, November 14, 1935.

These examples all reflect the desperate need for a job of many TFWP employees and sometimes their creativity and political connections. Once declared eligible for relief, a person still often lived hand-to-mouth. Texas relief was intermittent. Worse, funds for relief for northern states and Texas relief were not wholly immune to these swings, and the tendency to let people go and then later hire people back occurred with less frequency and severity. This meant that once on the project, employees stayed much longer, some for the duration. National FWP official Lawrence Morris acknowledged: "Due to the large distance between separate units, it will be necessary to retain the experienced workers for the editorial writing of the Texas Guide Book to be completed by the latter part of November. The checking of galley proofs etc. will require at least an additional month after the editorial work has been completed."[82]

Non-certified individuals, defined as people not considered fully eligible for relief, contained the poor but not the destitute. In simple terms, individuals applying for relief fell into categories based on different scales. With non-certified relief persons, these individuals, close to being paupers, did not quite qualify at that level of relief. According to FWP guidelines, the TFWP could only place a certain number of non-certified individuals of this category on employment project rolls. Advanced in their skills and training, these individuals compiled many a guide and story. Although they did not qualify for relief, they were hired as the "ten percenters."[83]

As overwhelming as they seemed, many of the problems within the project were steadily resolved, and the Texas project began to take shape. Other problems remained, as Davis explained to Henry Alsberg, "some of the problems described as numerous difficulties have risen

[82]Lawrence S. Morris to Mr. Marbury, FWPNA, RG 69 September 8, 1937; Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 65; *New York Times*, September 13, 1935.

[83]McDonald, *Federal Relief*,177.

in our Texas group work, in which we see little help." These problems varied according to the needs of professional, skilled, and intermediate workers throughout the state, and some would continue for the duration of the project.[84]

Another solution to TFWP's labor problems was Volunteer Associates. Since locating qualified, certified relief men and women was proving difficult, and the national office wanted to see results quickly, recruiting volunteers to fill in the gaps became an expedient means in the early stages of producing a guide. Davis issued a mass appeal to local historians and statisticians calling for help. For example, he sent a letter to Theo Revell, local president of the Rotary Club in Paris, Texas, explaining what he needed from the men and women of this small east Texas town: volunteers willing to assist in gathering information about the towns and hamlets in their part of the state. Davis appealed to a community's sense of pride and civic duty to help this governmental enterprise.[85]

The response was immediate, and volunteers' contributions became vital in compiling the information needed for the state guide from the vast TFWP districts throughout the state since they knew their communities well. This made administration of the collection process somewhat more manageable. Directors and supervisors then ensured the information was correct and coordinated who collected what to avoid unnecessary duplication. [86]

The national office agreed to use Volunteer Associates on the project. As districts became established, an administrator oversaw all the individuals participating in the project, later

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[84]Davis to Henry Alsberg, (n.d.) 1935.FWPNA, RG 69, Box11. Certified employees were those who were on relief and qualified as such. Non-Certified individuals were close to being considered relief.

[85]Davis to Theodore Revell, January 28, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files, 4H83.

[86]WPA Federal Writers' Project, Supplementary Instructions #7 to American Guide Manual, Instructions to Field Writers, December 16, 1935, page 2; Supplemental Instructions #4 to the American Guide Manual, Instructions to Volunteer Associates, December 17, 1935, page 2.

acknowledging that volunteers became essential to the guide's success. They were significant in number: over 2,914 local consultants freely gave their services.[87] They came from many occupations and, in their hometowns, were regarded as experts of local history. Rotary and Lions Club members throughout the state donated many hours. Much of the information and discussion they provided would make the guides authoritative once published. While the original intent was to use Volunteer Associates as fill-workers, their role would grow over time as they took responsibility for more tasks. Volunteers would perform significant research that would add depth to the finished publications. They would become, in fact, one of the few constants in the program because the paid staff came and went.

[87]The Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, (New York: Hastings House, 1940), page ix.

CHAPTER TWO
THE TFWP IN OPERATION

Operations in the Texas Federal Writers Project began in the summer of 1935. An army of field workers numbering over 250 soon dispersed across the state searching for "the real Texas." In writing to Davis, Charles Munz, area supervisor in the Houston office, "I am enclosing a list of cities in District #2, 3 and 6, to which I believe letters should be sent at once. In each district I have put an X after the name of the towns to which I think it would be helpful to send these letters. Those which are not marked are towns in which I hope to be able to find relief workers that will be suitable for the Writers' Project". By 1937, and with FWP operations in the state in full swing, Davis reported to Alsberg at the home office in Washington D.C., that "issues were still being sorted out. However, at this stage of our work (some of the requirements of our field service having lessened and those of our editorial department having increased), much greater efficiency, without additional cost, will be attained if our Coordinating Project may be slightly amended as to positions and personnel." Specifically, that goal was to create a state guide for *The American Guide Series.* Part travel guide, part social commentary, and part regional history companion, *The American Guide Series* was to be the most important achievement of the WPA's Federal Writers' Project, with the state guides being the most significant part of the overall project.[88] Each state, then, was charged with producing a guidebook series, drawn from previous state and local guides as well as original research, and containing practical advice for residents and visitors alike.[89] Texas was a critical test for the

[88] Davis to Alsberg, January 27, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45, Folder Employment 3 of 3; Daniel Fox, D., "The Achievement of the Federal Writers' Project", *American Quarterly*, Volume 13, No. 1 (Spring 1961), 3–19.

[89] Christine Bold, *The WPA Guides: Mapping America* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 4; "Jobless" Writers Put On WPA Work", *Houston Chronicle*, January 20, 1936; Munz to Davis, 4G223 Administrative Correspondence State Supervisor To Charles Munz, Briscoe Center at the University of Texas at

FWP, and for the more significant hopes of Alsberg—i.e. to promote inclusiveness, multiculturalism, and equality. Indeed, Texas was the largest state in the union at the time and a predominately Southern one at that. The FWP in Texas, then, was not without problems. The mere geographical size of the state (and vastness and diversity of material) combined with a limited staff created practical and logistical difficulties. Furthermore, a significant disconnect existed between the national office (and Alsberg's goals) and the execution of those goals on the ground in Texas.[90]

Texas covers an area of 260,000 square miles (across seven distinct geographical regions) and consists of 254 counties and, in the 1930s, twenty-one congressional districts. Not only is the state vast geographically, but it is also prominent in terms of population. The largest city in the state in the 1930s was Houston, with a population of over 370,000. San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, Fort Worth, and El Paso were other prominent cities, with populations of at least 85,000. Overall, the population of Texas in the 1930 census was over 5 million. Of that, whites made up 74% of the population, African Americans 15%, and the remaining 11% a variety of other groups, including Native Americans and Hispanics. About half of all Texans lived in urban areas.[91] Politically, the state was dominated by the Democratic Party—and was the home of Roosevelt's vice president, John Nance Garner. Still, not all Democrats were New Dealers.

Austin ((Hereafter will be referred to as the Briscoe Center), TFWP Files; February 13, 1936, Munz to Davis; February 15, 1936, 4G223 Administrative Correspondence State Supervisor To Charles Munz ,Briscoe Center, TFWP Files.

[90] "Jobless" Writers Put On WPA Work", *Houston Chronicle*, January 20, 1936; Munz to Davis, February 13 and 15, 1937, 4G223, State Supervisor Files "Munz", Barker Center Files.

[91] 1930 Census, https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-3/10612982v3p2ch09.pdf. Retrieved December 13, 2023 at 1:36 pm.

Indeed, the Democratic Party was riddled with intraparty strife—especially over issues such as the role of the federal government and race.[92]

Not surprisingly (given its great diversity), the FWP faced many problems in Texas. One of the earliest challenges involved labor shortages. Indeed, administrators often had to work creatively to fulfill the main goal of employing people on relief while also finding qualified workers for the project, relying on the ten percent rule to overcome the lack of good writers-the FWP process for finding and hiring an employee. The TFWP had to adhere to the 10 percent rule. That meant that only 10 percent of the employees could be non-certified (meaning the other 90 percent had to be certified for relief by the Home Relief Board). That seriously hampered and hindered the TFWP, and Alsberg, in many letters to Davis, complained that the offices could not find enough persons eligible for relief who would fit the qualifications set for the FWP. In Texas, there was advertising for those who wanted the jobs. From the Galveston Daily News, Houston Chronicle, and Dallas Morning News to the Amarillo Daily, the TFWP was in the news about what they were doing and what type of folks they needed. In one case, in North Carolina, the NCFWP had advertisements on the University of North Carolina campus asking those interested to come and apply for the FWP. In Texas, the same sort of advertising was up at Texas Tech University. Many professional people wanted on the TFWP. With varied backgrounds from PhDs in history to accomplished book authors, the need for employment was great for these people. Mrs. Florence E Barnes (PhD), who had published *Texas Writers of Today* in a letter to Alsberg, wrote, "I am addressing you as director of the literature project of the PWA (WPA, actually). I am peculiarly fitted for work in connection with the proposed guide-book, both as a

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[92] 1930 Census, https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-3/10612982v3p2ch09.pdf. Retrieved December 13, 2023 at 1:36 pm.

director in state or section, or as a writer." , John Ashton (Ph.D.), who did find work with the TFWP) who published *Historic Ravensweed,* who wrote to Alsberg, "Having just learned from the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce (Corpus Christi) here about the Federal Writer's Project and read the circular kindly lent to me for perusal, I beg to leave to make formal application for one of the writers' posts to be assigned for duty either in Texas or elsewhere, as maybe thought fit" to Tucker Moore, who stated, " At this point of an unemployed writer, I am eligible. On the point of a trained newspaper man, I shall not pretend to that which I am not. On the other hand, excluding orthodox technique, I have gathered experience closely paralleling the field of newspaper work." Include quotes from letters from people wanting to be in the TFWP.[93]

In Texas, there was often a need for more qualified individuals to do the work of the TFWP. One reason was a "lack" of qualified persons on the relief roles. This delayed the start of the project in many areas, Galveston County being one of them. "A check of the relief rolls has revealed no person eligible for employment on this type of project, which has its purpose of gathering data for publication of a national guidebook, "Ed M. Owens, Galveston County WPA Supervisor, noted to the Galveston Daily News. It was hard to get officially qualified in the first place. One must be declared a pauper by the relief board. That would mean going through an extensive list of questions, background checks of your house, and interviews with your neighbors. Once qualified for the project, you had to have particular skillset that would match the TFWP. As Genevieve Rosales, a case worker in charge of the local relief office, stated in an

[93] " Writers Project Start Deferred", *Galveston Daily News*, January 31, 1936; Edwin Massingill, Telephone Interview with author, November 9, 1994; Jim and Judy Lanning, *Texas Cowboys: Memories from the Early Days*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983) ; "Public Asked To Help Gather Correct Panhandle Data For New American Guide Book" *Amarillo Daily News*, January 17, 1936; Davis to Alsberg, June 21, 1937, FWPNA RG 69 Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3; "Jobless" Writers Put On WPA Work", *Houston Chronicle*, January 20, 1936; John Ashton to Alsberg, December 6, 1935; Florence Barnes to Alsberg, September 9, 1935; Tucker Moore to Alsberg, September 11, 1935, FWPNA RG 69 Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3.

interview with the Galveston Daily News, "Although there are no persons on the local relief rolls classified as unemployed writers, there are a number with a sufficient educational background to perform the work under supervision." The problem was that there were not enough to fill all the slots available in the TFWP. This was a constant problem for Davis and his staff throughout the project's life. Trying to convey that need, Davis stated to Alsberg, "The need for competent persons in all these positions is obvious, and I think it cannot be questions that the wages paid are exceedingly low for such persons." [94]

Many applicants had little chance of working at jobs like those they held before the Depression. Sometimes a new worker was given a challenge to a job she or he had never done before. TFWP administrators had to employ typists and editors from the towns and villages where they had set up their offices to run the various projects, and there was often a lack of people qualified to do this work. Applicants did not have to be published or work as a writer to get on the Federal Writers' Project. The project employed teachers, librarians, journalists, and those aspiring to be professional writers. Because of a limited number of qualified individuals, the TFWP had to rely on those who were less qualified. Project administrators had anticipated that this might often be the case. Indeed, according to the *WPA Handbook* (1936):

> If you are not working at your regular trade on the project, it is probably because there were no jobs open for your particular trade. This is one of the toughest problems the Work Program has had to meet because the government projects do not call for many different tasks.

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[94] "WPA Project For Writers Planned", *Galveston Daily News*, October 22, 1935; Milton Meltzer, *Violins and Shovels* (New York, Delacorte Press, 1976), 107; Davis to Alsberg, June 21, 1937, FWPNA RG 69, Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3; Davis to Alsberg, March 23, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3.

> Many skilled workers have to take common labor jobs. For example, it is impossible to hire skilled miners, skilled sailors, and skilled weavers on government projects, and the Work Program does not have projects like these because they would interfere with private business. You should file an application at the National Re-Employment Service office for work at the trade you know. They will let you know if they get a call for a man of your experience.[95]

For the most part, however, the TFWP obtained sufficient applicants with the appropriate skills needed for the work to be done.[96]

The same WPA memorandum spelling out the program for the federal writers also made it clear that almost anyone on relief who could write English might be eligible to work for the project. Its explanation "that a great variety of non-manual workers and researcher workers" were needed to gather material for the guides presented, in effect, an open invitation to anyone trying to find work.[97] As if to make sure prospective workers got the message, Alsberg insisted that the FWP would also employ "near writers," "occasional writers," and even "would-be writers−young college men and women who want to write, probably can write, but lack the opportunity." Ultimately, Alsberg believed the FWP would help American literature by helping American writers.

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[95] Government Printing Office, *WPA Handbook,* (Washington, DC: Works Progress Administration, 1936), 3.

[96] Jerrold Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project*, (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 3; "2,000,000 Words About Dallas", *Dallas Morning News*, December 18, 1936; "Public Asked To Help Gather Correct Panhandle Data For New American Guide Book" *Amarillo Daily News*, January 17, 1936.

[97] *WPA Handbook*, 3.

While Texas was home to many writers of national repute—including Katherine Anne Porter, J. Frank Dobie, and Walter P. Webb—some areas of the state struggled to find qualified and willing writers (or employees) to fill the quota rolls of the TFWP. One district--Houston--had to delay the start of the project because of a lack of employees. In city offices, the staff—despite their heavy workloads centered on compiling facts and figures of their respective locales-- were usually small. For example, the staff members of both the Amarillo and Dallas offices numbered only eight each. Meanwhile, Houston, the state's largest city-- had a staff of only twelve "unemployed professional writers."[98] Ultimately, the TFWP hired over 200 personnel across the state. All but a few of the TFWP workers were white and male.

The one African American on the project was John Harmon of Houston (who would later be promoted to Assistant Editor). In a letter from Davis to Alsberg, the State Director (in answering the questions, for example, How many negroes are on the project in your state? What have been their assignments in general? Do you have any special Negro projects?) "One, an Assistant Editor in charge of Negro Affairs. The great area of the state and resultant necessity for having workers perform all kinds of general duties, many of them covering more than one county each, made it impossible to consider any Negro projects". Area Two Supervisor John O'Leary emphasized in his reports to the state office the good work Harmon was doing. "I feel that he will uncover a large amount of valuable information," O'Leary wrote. "He has contacted several older Negroes who are familiar with the history of the Negro cowboys… [and] learned that 'bulldogging' is the invention of these early Negro cowboy[s], who doubtless played an

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[98] Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*,(Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971) 47-48; "Writers Project Start Deferred", *Galveston Daily News*, January 31, 1936; "2,000,000 Million Words About Dallas", *Dallas Morning News*, December 18, 1936; "12 "Jobless" Writers Put On WPA Work", *Houston Chronicle*, January 20, 1936; "Cooperation of Public Asked by Miss Hamner in Panhandle Writing Project, Part Of WPA", *Amarillo Daily News*, January 20, 1936; Davis to Alsberg, FWPNA, RG 69, Folder Texas State Guide Miscellaneous Box 49.

important part in the early days of the cattle industry in the State of Texas ". O'Leary provided Harmon with a list from Texas folklorist, J. Frank Dobie of significant books on Negro folklore in Texas. Harmon arranged with FWP consultant Miss Julia Ideson (1880-1945), library director of the Houston Public Library and an advocate of gender and race equality. The library was segregated, but with Ideson's assistance, Harmon was able to use the library and access books that otherwise would have been denied him.[99]

Laura Hamner, one of the few female supervisors on the project (Mary O. Stimson was the Houston City Director), made a positive impression on Davis. Davis "felt Hamner was a woman of middle, age was an author of school histories and other books, a magazine writer, was an executive through having been a superintendent of schools and is wholly competent to handle District, 16, 17 and 18 Area. Davis also interviewed her personally and heartily coincided with the opinion that no better person could be found to work in that Area."[100]

For the most part, work on the project was a five-day, forty-hour work week, though some writers employed in the TFWP worked more varied hours. In the Beaumont City project, for example, some timecards showed employees working from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.[101] John Olive required workers in the Dallas office under Robert Horan to work "70 hours per payroll period," which was bimonthly.[102] Yet, there was no fixed policy within the TFWP on how many hours an employee should work, which resulted in a continuing debate among project directors: should it be a fixed number and schedule, the same for everybody, and therefore not centered on private

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[99] O'Leary to Davis, December 12, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83;

[100] Davis to Alsberg, January 2, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45 Folder Employment 3 of 3; Harmon to Lomax, October 12, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[101] Letter from Beaumont City Project Director to Houston City Project Director, April 6, 1937, Maresh WPA Files, MSS 1470, Houston Metropolitan Center.

[102] Olive to Horan, January 16, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

segment pay sizes for comparable work, or should TFWP administrators calculate hours by dividing the total payment by the prevailing rate for each type of labor? [103]

Organized labor strongly supported the latter approach. Unions were a significant part of the working-class culture of the New Deal. Industrial unions grew considerably after the passage of the federal National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1935, also known as the Wagner Act. Given the number of people employed by the FWP, unions were to play a significant role in the developing the guides, especially in the more industrialized state of the North, representing the writers and staff on the project. Outside of New York City there was relatively little effort to organize the TFWP.

A second challenge facing the TFWP was related to pay and work hours. Organizations such as the League of Writers and Authors League of America with this project, you could not compete against private industry. The idea of the program was to provide a job in which those with talents in certain areas could secure wages. The governmental enterprise could not compete with private industry; it only partnered with it. The thought that determining the number of hours to be worked in a pay period by dividing the total payment by the prevailing rate for each type of labor helped preserve private-sector pay rates, particularly for the skilled workers, by clearly tying work-relief rates to labor-market rates. The project thus provided pay comparable to the private sector jobs of the writers and editors of the time, which helped and hindered the project in practice.[104]

The hourly wage scale throughout Texas depended upon what occupational title one had. In the Lone Star State, there were four job-related titles. Unskilled labor was twenty to twenty-

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[103] Horan to Olive, January 16, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

[104] Nancy E. Rose, *Put to Work: Relief Programs of the Great Depression* (New York: Cornerstone Books, 1994), 97-98

five cents per hour, intermediate skill level workers would be forty to fifty cents an hour, skilled sixty-five cents to a dollar, an hour and professional and technical would be between seventy-five cents to one dollar an hour. The TFWP workers would be categorized under professional and technical classifications. The prevailing work hours would be eight hours, a work week 40 hours, and a work month 140 hours. As the years wore on, holidays would be added to the workers benefits within the TFWP.[105]

However, this procedure inadvertently put the project in competition with the private sector, leading to conflict between government programs and for-profit businesses. When the WPA began, payments based on a "security wage" meant that workers received wages even if someone on the project was absent due to weather or other factors outside a worker's control. TFWP also followed this practice, which public sector businesses such as newspapers did not.[106] In the case of the FWP, private publishers were eager to publish the project's guides. There was no evidence that publishers saw the FWP as a business threat.

The TFWP experienced other labor-related complications. Because of the need for more clarification from the state offices, area supervisors handled overtime and pay rates differently, this caused confusion within the project. For example, Dan G. Ruggles, who worked in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, was brought on board during a pay period. The area director, Robert Horan, did not see a problem with him working from the middle of one week to the next so long as it added up to seventy hours for two-week pay period. His timecard, therefore, showed thirty hours for the first week with Ruggles making up the remaining forty hours the second week. According to Jim Farley, who oversaw time and labor for the TFWP, this was unacceptable

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[105]"Rates Ranging from 20 Cents to $1 Per Hour to Be Paid Workers On Texas Projects", *Houston Chronicle*, July 4, 1936.

[106] Rose, *Put to Work,* 97-98.

because Ruggles was not allowed to work overtime. Farley then wrote a letter to State Assistant Director John A. Olive reminding him of the rules, urging him to "get Mr. Horan straightened out for he would suffer just as much as we would Area Statistical Office detect an unpleasant flavor in the stew." Olive resolved these and similar issues with a directive in late February 1936, clarifying the issue. With a consistent policy, pay rates and hours were no longer an issue.[107]

A third problem facing the TFWP involved compiling, processing, and distributing the voluminous state information, which soon began to inundate the district offices. Of particular concern was producing a complete guide that would be both popular and profitable. Project management soon realized that filling a guide or travel brochure with an endless stream of cold facts provided little incentive for a person with limited funds to purchase one. If that happened, the project would be a success, and the opportunity to foster an American national identity that was inclusive and egalitarian would be recovered.

The solution was to attempt to make the guides exciting by having editors interweave that information into engaging historical narratives involving as local scenery as possible, as well as anecdotes of the extraordinary things done by ordinary people and the ordinary things done by extraordinary people. This would enhance its readability while conveying the information and boost morale for people and communities that the Depression shook. For example, A. S. Stovall made the rounds in Potter County, Texas during the first three months of 1936, writing several small articles about its churches, cathedral, and religious institutions. E. B. Emerson wrote about

[107] Hamner to Olive, January 10, 1936; Horan to Olive, December 9, 1936; Cook to Willison, August 26, 1940, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83; Farley to Olive, February 26, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files, 4H83.

various local interests ranging from archeology to ethnography and religion, while C. May Cohea wrote a series of articles centered on Amarillo's role in the culture of the West.[108]

This approach had its problems, however. On occasion, the writing was florid and overly embellished and the state and national office returned it with instructions on how to rewrite it. One glaring example referred to an article by A. S. Stovall that State Editor John M. Taylor described as essentially a 7,000-word "dissertation on the progress of religion since Greece and Rome, in which we are not even mildly interested" since it had little connection with the early settlement of the Amarillo area, the intended topic.[109] Another task of the office editor was fact-checking copy. While the information flowing into the office was usually accurate, some missed the mark. To verify the accuracy of the dubious "facts" that came to his desk, an editor, or in some cases, the city director would send a field writer back out into the field to validate the information in question. Travelers needed guides that provided reliable facts, and the Texas FWP was determined to provide as much reliable information as possible.[110]

A more fundamental challenge facing the FWP in the Lone Star State was that the articles and interviews the field writers began submitting were similarly wide ranging and often did not reflect the national office's view of what constituted a pluralistic and inclusive "American." Instead, they had a pronounced "Texas" view about them.[111] For the national office, one of the major problems of this "Texan" view of Texas centered squarely on race and ethnicity. Both law

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[108] Hamner to Taylor, March 23, 1936; FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45 "Report of FEC Wordage Submitted to State Office" 1-3 FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45.

[109] Taylor to Hamner, February 18, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

[110] Hamner to Taylor, February 18, 1936; Hamner to Davis, March 6, 1936; Hamner to Davis, April 23, 1936; Hamner to Newhall, April 27, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

[111] Hamner to Davis, March 6, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83; O'Leary to Olive, March 6, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83

and custom segregated Texas in the 1930s. No travel guide written by a Texan for Texans—at the time thought of as only white Protestants descended from Northwestern Europeans--would even consider listing the number of specifically Negro hotels or Negro swimming pools. Nor would a count by identifying the number of specific ethnic minorities engaged in industry or similar information about non-Whites.[112]

These views that appeared in the early writings that started coming in from the field are not surprising, nor should they have been to FWP management. The field writers, along with their editors and supervisors, were products of the age in which they lived—i.e., in a white-dominated and racially segregated society. The vast majority were white Texans. They were proud of their state and what they saw as its unique culture and heritage. In essence, the compilation of the history of the state, and the traditions of what it was to be "Texan," was for them a reflection of "Texas" cultural nationalism—as epitomized by songs such as "Deep in the Heart of Texas" and "The Yellow Rose of Texas."[113] Ultimately, it dictated--by unspoken agreement-- what white Texans of the time understood about who and what would be included in their articles and the state guidebook.

Unsurprisingly, then, most of the data initially gathered for the Texas state guide emphasized "Anglo"—i.e., white and Protestant-- achievements and viewpoints.[114] Still, there were cultural variations even within this white, Anglo majority. For example, there were town versus country divides, and "liberal" versus "conservative." Thus, in eastern Texas, the home of

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[112] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, (New York: Hastings House Publishing, 1940), 225, 242, 258.

[113] Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920's and the American Political Tradition*, (New York, NY: Norton, 2018); Lawrence Wright, *God Save Texas: A Journey Into the Soul of the Lone Star State*, (New York: Knopf, 2018); Randolph Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*, (New York: Oxford Press, 2003).

[114] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State,* 133, 136, 201, 231.

Democratic Congressman Martin Dies (co-founder of the House Committee on Un-American Activities), was very conservative—especially as it related to race and an embrace of Jim Crowism. Indeed, many in eastern Texas proudly traced their roots back to the "Black Belt" migration of whites who moved with their slaves to Texas from the Cotton Belt regions east of the Mississippi River during the early 1830s and 1840s. Further west—in the area around San Antonio (which had been founded as a Spanish mission in 1718) -- there existed a more Latino-influenced ethos in culture, and more liberal beliefs. South of San Antonio and down to the Mexican border, the culture became distinctly more Latino. Meanwhile, northern Texas, centered around the Dallas-Fort Worth area, was "conservative," but that conservatism—unlike in the eastern part of the state—was more libertarian and grounded in economics and a distrust of "big government." These attitudes also prevailed in west Texas, a broad strip of arid land running north along the border with New Mexico from El Paso to Amarillo. Most of the inhabitants were either ranchers or worked in the oil industry.

The minority populations of Latino and African American Texans also took pride in Texas cultural nationalism. However, their views of what it meant understandably differed in some ways from the views of the Anglo majority. Segregation permeated life in the 1930s for both minorities, though the level of segregation and discrimination varied by region within the state. For example, Latinos—usually thought of as "Mexicans" by Anglo Texans regardless of where they had been born-- were as highly segregated as African Americans in northeastern Texas but far less so in southern and southwestern Texas, where they often outnumbered Anglos. Jim Crow segregation laws were designed to deny Latinos the right to vote. If they tried to vote extra-legal forms of intimidation kept them from doing so. This helped ensure white control of the political and legal system. The Latino population was dependent upon what the ruling Anglo

elite would allow. Latino family life was close-knit and tied firmly to the Catholic Church, and most of the population had a strong work ethic. Latinos contributed art, music, food, and above all, many of the terms adopted into the western lore of the ranch, cowboys, and cattle drives to Texas cultural nationalism.[115]

For African Americans life in Texas was more difficult. More segregated than Latinos, there was practically no opportunity to advance economically or politically. Nor was any part of Black Texan culture included in the prevailing Texas cultural nationalism as there was for Latino culture. No African American terms, festivals, foods were included in that vision of Texas. While Black Texans annually celebrated Juneteenth—Emancipation Day—it would not be seen as a part of the "Texas" tradition until many years later.[116]

For the Native Americans remaining in the state there was even less inclusion in Texas cultural nationalism. Called "Indians" at the time and viewed as "savages," the few that remained in the state were confined to the reservation, principally the Caddos of northeastern Texas. The Comanche and Apache tribes that figured prominently in the frontier lore of Texas cultural nationalism had been hunted to near extinction and driven from the state. They were, to Anglo Texans, the enemy, not deserving of recognition except as an example of white superiority in

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[115] Arnoldo De Leon, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History*, (Wheeling: Harlan-Davidson, 1999); Arnoldo De Leon, Ethnicity *in the Sunbelt: A History of Mexican Americans in Houston, Texas*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011); Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr, *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, Texas, 2005).
[116] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 88-9; E.R. Bills, *Black Holocaust: The Paris Horror and a Legacy of Texas Terror*, (Woodway: Eakin Press 2017); Alwin Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528–1995*, (Austin: Jenkins 1996); Bruce A. Glasrud, Deborah M. Liles, *African Americans in Central Texas History: From Slavery to Civil Rights*, (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2019).

subduing a "lesser" people.[117] Ironically, and perhaps because the majority of African American Texans of the time lived in east Texas or separate areas of the major cities while Latinos lived mostly in south or west Texas or their barrios in the major cities, these variations of Texas cultural nationalism rarely mixed.[118]

By the end of 1936, many of these logistical and substantive problems had been addressed, and work on the Texas State Guide proceeded with great effort. Ultimately, the Texas guide was developed from a model designed by the national office. This model called for essays on state history, identifying points of interest and significant cities with states, and establishing "tours" of states designed to take advantage of the paved highways and byways being developed throughout the state. Overall, the guides were to be informative and attractive to travelers to the state and residents alike by revealing the diverse landscape, cities, people, and culture of the various states. Together, the collection of all state guides expressed and promoted the New Deal "ideal" of American cultural nationalism by showing how people of different beliefs and ethnicities lived together across the land to make up the United States. The unspoken overarching message was that *E Pluribus Unum* meant inclusivity and equality for all.

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117 Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, (New York: Hastings House 1940), 88-91; Shirley Boteler Mock, *Dreaming with the Ancestors: Black Seminole Women in Texas and Mexico*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010); David Frye, *Indians into Mexicans: History and Identity in a Mexican Town*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010); Martin Salinas, *Indians of the Rio Grande Delta: Their Role in the History of Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico; (*Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).

118 E.R. Bills, *Black Holocaust: The Paris Horror and a Legacy of Texas Terror*, (Woodway: Eakin Press 2017); Alwin Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528–1995*, (Austin: Jenkins, 1996); Bruce A. Glasrud, Deborah M. Liles, *African Americans in Central Texas History: From Slavery to Civil Rights*, (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2019); ; Shirley Boteler Mock, *Dreaming with the Ancestors: Black Seminole Women in Texas and Mexico*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 2010); David Frye, *Indians into Mexicans: History and Identity in a Mexican Town*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010); Martin Salinas, *Indians of the Rio Grande Delta: Their Role in the History of Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico;(*Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).

The national template provided by the FWP contained a uniform set of rules for developing the state guide. The first content the national office received from Texas could have been better and more satisfactory. Indeed, the articles did not reflect the pluralism that was the guide's goal. To national officials, it was evident that the state administration and local writers were focusing primarily on the majority "Anglo" Texans and their culture and not including ethnic minorities and their culture as directed. From the national office's perspective, the field writers were presenting only what they knew from their cultural perspective.[119]

Since the FWP's goal was to have an inclusive, multiethnic guide about the state, merely giving a condescending sentence or two about minorities, as was found in most of the submissions, was clearly insufficient. George Cronyn, the national Federal Writers' Project associate director, took up the issue of Texas with state director Davis. Cronyn believed the guide should include how much African Americans, for example, had become part of the culture of the state of Texas. "'The Racial Elements and Folklore Essay' leaves us puzzled," Cronyn wrote Davis in the summer of 1937. "The folklore material is delightful, but there is no adequate survey of the national and racial components of the state, which is a subject of profound interest in Texas." Cronyn went on to ask, "Of what national strains were the people who have made Texas, when and why did they come and where did they settle and lastly, what affect did they have on the social and economic complex of the state?" He then included a portion of the New Jersey FWP Guide to use as an example of how the racial components within the state were described by county and city, evidently urging Texas officials to follow their example.[120]

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[119] Cronyn to Davis, July 12, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69 Folder Texas June 1937-September 1938; Cronyn to Davis, August 28, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69 Folder Texas June 1937-September 1938

[120] Cronyn to Davis, July 18, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

With the national office unhappy with the content, they were receiving, and the field writers writing from their segregationist point-of-view, the Texas state office in San Antonio was caught in the crossfire. Attempting to remedy the situation, state officials insisted on revisions from the field offices, especially after closely examining the writings with the re-emphasized national directives in mind. For example, the state office wanted to know whether the information from Area Two, which included El Paso, accurately reflected the region. With American cultural nationalism and inclusion of all races being the *national* goal for the state guide, State Director Davis—under pressure from the national office—wanted assurances from Norman Walker, the Area Two Supervisor, that the information produced there was correct and had the proper focus before sending it to the San Antonio office.

This, in turn, led to questions about whether the data being sent to the state office had been verified. Some of the information that had come in from the field did not seem credible, so further verification was necessary to produce an accurate guide. As a result, guidance committees of consultants were set up at both the local and state levels to ensure that the information being presented was correct and accurately reflected the subject of the articles. For example, if information were gathered about the history of a particular event, these consultants, as experts in their fields, would validate that information against other factual data for accuracy. Walker then responded to Davis "that the placement of consultants on manuscripts will state that we have done this is as far as is possible in accordance with our guidance committee," and that once all the documents had been verified, they would then be sent to San Antonio.[121]

However, it was sometimes challenging to validate accuracy when the consultants were not experts in the subject matter. This occurred in every district in Texas at one time or another.

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[121] Walker to Davis, March 6, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

Consequently, though with Volunteer Associates, some interpretations of history had to rely simply on the consultants themselves. Sometimes, there was pushback from local officials. Davis reached out to a Liberty County Chamber of Commerce member to find someone who could collect historical data for the state guidebook. The response, on Liberty County Chamber of Commerce stationary, was that the TFWP was "worthless and useless." The official was later ousted as manager of the Chamber of Commerce over the stern rebuke he gave Davis.[122]

The changes ordered by the national office and implemented by the Texas state office were not well received in the field offices. Fieldworkers immediately began challenging the instructions made by far-off Washington officials who insisted they did not know their communities, customs, or people. Having a standard template for all the states to follow was good in theory but actual practice proved otherwise in Texas. Anglo-Texans were proud of their state and its history of revolution and independence. They saw attempts by people they saw as "outsiders" trying to put those groups viewed as former "property" on an equal footing within the state's history as objectionable if not. They saw the writings and the Texas Guide as an opportunity to foster a "Texas" cultural nationalism.

Not surprisingly, this resulted in continual negotiations between the local offices and the state and between state and national officials to reach a compromise that worked for all parties involved to complete the state guide. It became essentially an ideological battle of wills between the Washington-driven ideas of an "American" pluralistic diversity that included all of the ethnic groups who made up the United States versus the state pride of Anglo-Texans that was becoming its form of cultural nationalism.

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[122] Walker to Davis, March 6, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83; Davis to O'Leary, March 15, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83. "COC Manager Who Rapped WPA Plan Ousted", *Houston Chronicle,* March 17, 1936.

The goal for TFWP officials was to find a way to please both the national office and white Texans.[123] In one case, Cronyn added to the confusion, reversing himself on where to place the Mexican folk material in the San Antonio copy, writing that "It was an item that escaped my attention; otherwise, I would have deleted the comment as inappropriate. Whenever a city is large enough to have a well-defined foreign quarter, the characteristic observances that maybe attached to the points of interest should be treated there." In response, Davis noted, "The large Mexican quarter in San Antonio, so sharply divided from the remainder of the city that signs in one block are English and the next block Spanish, is a city within a city. The housing, labor and festival conditions are peculiar to that section. It is my opinion that properly they should be included in the tour part of the section, where the visitor may see them as he follows the tour. I shall appreciate your consideration of the point involved and advice as to our procedure."[124]

The final copy was a compromise between the two offices, having more sensitivity to Latinos and praising more within the community. In a letter to Davis, Cronyn stated, "the present State Government, insofar as it is not treated historically should not conclude this section. It should summarize briefly the features identical with those other states but where differences are to be noted, these may be developed more. Davis, having lived in Texas and researched what Texans were all about, tried to explain that to Cronyn by stating "that your thought regarding peculiar divergence in the forces that made Texas and their dramatic personification in Austin and Houston presents an angle which I have never before considered or

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[123] Alsberg to Davis, August 6, 1936, FWPNA, RG69, Box 45, Entry 21.

[124] Cronyn to Davis, September 20, 1937, FWPNA, RG69, Box 49, Texas State Guide Cities. Folder; Davis to Cronyn, September 20, 1937, FWPNA, RG69, Box 49, Texas State Guide Cities Folder; Davis to Cronyn, August 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG69, Box 50, Tours Folders.

heard. It opens up an original line of approach which I am very glad to have suggested and developed, largely in your very words, in the amended essay." Davis also suggested that Cronyn "read his historical novel, *The Road to San Jacinto*, which was written by a General Sam Houston partisan (in the book) and offered to send him a copy."[125]

This discussion between the two leaders illustrates the inherent negotiations within the project to reach a compromise acceptable to both the national office and Texas cultural sensitivities. While the overall goal was to publish a comprehensive guidebook for Texas, what was to be included and how it would be presented in that negotiation. As Anglo Texans "pushed back" against the mandates from the Washington office, they also gave impetus to a growing *Texas* cultural nationalism as it promoted awareness of the state's unique history and culture. For example, Davis asked Alsberg "that the questionnaires be reshaped in your office to meet local situations"[126]

The issue of race and how to present ethnic minorities in the guide was the most contentious issue between the national office, the TFWP state office, and the districts for the project's duration. Data on minorities that districts sent to the state office was limited, at best, given that white segregationist Texans had little interest in promoting non-Anglos or their culture. In contrast, the national FWP emphasized inclusion even more, putting the state office in the crossfire. Examples of this continual clash of ideals ranged from Alsberg telling Davis that the Waco City Guide must be more "inclusive to Cherokee history" to Davis telling Cronyn that "William McDonald was a fine contributor to the colored race and that his deletion from the state guide should not be made." After seeing all the facts that Mr. McDonald made in Texas history,

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[125] Cronyn to Davis, August 20, 1936, FWPNA, RG69, Box 50, Tours Folders; Davis to Cronyn, August 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG69, Box 50, Tours Folders.

[126] Alsberg to Davis, October 24 and 28, 1935, FWPNA, RG 69, Miscellaneous Box 45.

Cronyn told Davis, "I think you are justified in keeping the bit on McDonald. Whatever reason you have to disagree with any comments, changes, or deletions by our editors, please submit a memorandum attached. "[127]

In addition to state guides, the FWP called for the states to produce city guides. These city guides followed the same template as the state guide and, as in the other states, only those municipalities with a population of over fifty thousand were to be considered. The cities of Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Beaumont, Port Arthur, and El Paso were selected in Texas since they were the state's largest cities. Their guides were to contain even more local detail than the state guide with the intent of more inclusion of minorities and their culture.

The complexities and controversies over materials to be included in the state guide manifested themselves in the city guides. Not only did civic leaders—usually all white-have their ideas about what of their communities should be presented but also what should *not* be presented. Field writers, usually white Texans themselves, gave these leaders a sympathetic ear and wrote accordingly. This is understandable, to some extent, since the writers knew that they would be looking for a job when the project ended, and these leaders were most often men of influence in the business community. They wanted to be remembered when that time came, but not because they had offended local sensibilities.

This view, often puts the state office in a difficult position when writing city guides (or city sections in the state guide). Indeed, even those like State Director Davis, who is a more liberal race, were hesitant to include detailed material on minorities. When describing Austin, for example, minorities were cited in only two paragraphs (out of sixteen pages) in the Austin

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[127] Alsberg to Davis, February 8, 1938, FWPNA, RG69, Box 49, Texas State Guide Cities; Davis to Cronyn, September 24, 1937, FWPNA, RG69, Box 49, Texas State Guide Cities.

section of the Texas State Guide. The Austin section of the state guide then described its Latino population as “the Mexican element, acquired largely since 1925,” and characterized it as “scattered and more or less transient. Austin’s slum areas are not confined to one part of the city but not many sections. In older areas of Austin, where the most extensive and worst housing conditions, with their accompanying disease and delinquency, exist, about 50 tenement structures have been torn away for the building of three low-cost housing projects.” Descriptions such as these were hardly an enticement for visiting tourists and did for inclusivity.[128]

In July 1937, Davis wrote Cronyn, attempting to explain why he thought that more information on minorities was not warranted, pointing out that the black population of Austin was only 18 percent. He felt that “unless there is some reason for the elimination which is better than the reasons for leaving the phrase as it was, I recommend that the sentence stand, as being important Guidebook information.” Furthermore, he added, “I felt very sure that in any other southern city the tourist is likely to wonder what the proportion of the city’s population is Negro, and in all of our Texas city stories we give the percentage if it is at all substantial … I know that few first time visitors to San Antonio with whom I come in contact with fail to ask, ‘How many Mexicans have you here and how many Negroes? I believe that not to give this information is to omit a fact both important and of interest to all visitors of all the races involved and a great number of other visitors.”

Alsberg’s response was to remove the statement about the percentage of the black population of the city from the beginning of the essay, noting that the national office had received “a large number of requests from southern states with large Negro populations to

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[128] Federal Writers’ Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State,* 162; Cronyn to Davis, July 18, 1936, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

Federal Writers’ Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 194.

remove percentages from such a conspicuous place." The intent, he explained, "was to insert it in the body of the text and this was *apparently overlooked"* (italics by author). He wanted the "Negro or Mexican population percentages" included, "but we think they might be inserted in the text where racial groups are discussed."[129] While Alsberg and the national office made suggested revisions and made recommendations about additions they wanted to be make sure the copy they received that would promote their goals of inclusivity, state officials inserted only what they deemed necessary to meet the letter, but not the intent, of the project's goals. The compromise is what eventually would become the state guide. There was the bare minimum of facts about minorities in the copy the Texas office sent to the national headquarters. Minorities, when mentioned at all, were most often described in harsh terms and unflattering descriptions. In the portion that described Beaumont, for example, only a single paragraph is attributed to African Americans in the final copy of the Texas State Guide. After describing the area where most African Americans lived as a slum, the commentary concludes with the observation that "Among its residents, however, there are those who practice "charms," whose lives are ruled by superstition and whose picturesque manner of speech has crept into the current idiom."[130]

While the presentation of multiethnic material was perhaps not quite in the inclusive manner desired by the national office, the continuing conversation encouraged the local officials to include more about minorities. However, the fact that they included more material about blacks and Mexicans is not evidence that they changed their views on segregation. They would reluctantly agree that more inclusion in the guide would happen for the minorities but, in the state office's view, it would be limited and largely unflattering at best. Staff from both offices

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[129] Davis to Cronyn, July 24, 1937, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83; Cronyn to Davis, July 25, 1937, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

[130] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 194.

made their interests known in an exchange of letters, and though the disagreements they expressed between the state and national offices seemed small at times, the effect overall was cumulative.[131]

Using the cultural nationalism ideals, the state and local offices would agree that more inclusion must happen for the minorities, but in the state office view, it would be limited at best.[132]

When the new FWP Director John Newsome took office, a workable compromise had taken shape. The national office, distracted by events unfolding and threatening the project in Washington, was still insistent in their view of racial inclusivity, while in Texas, grudging mention was being made toward racial minorities. With the new leadership in place, the goal shifted to simply getting the guides out in a promptly, i.e., before the project was canceled, which seemed increasingly more likely with each passing week. Without Alsberg to push the goals of American cultural nationalism and inclusion, the national office accepted virtually all of the information sent from the TFWP largely without change to get the guides published. This was a "victory" for the state and local offices; they no longer had to justify or defend their *Texas* version of cultural nationalism to the national office after late 1939. Articles previously submitted and revised were not changed. However, materials submitted afterward would reflect a definite Anglo-Texas bias, which further contributed to the lore and mystique of the state, a *Texas* cultural nationalism.

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[131] Cronyn to Davis, April 2, 1937, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

[132] Cronyn to Davis, April 2, 1937, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

A final problem facing the TFWP involved politics. Indeed, by the late 1930s, Roosevelt's New Deal was coming under increased attack within his own Democratic Party, mainly white Southerners who disliked the rise of federal power and its implications for race relations in the South. TFWP employees, in addition to being heartened at having employment--felt they were working on works the public and government could proudly accept and endorse. Indeed, in 1938, the San Antonio Guide, the first of the Texas publications, was met with a positive public reception.[133]

Still, some in the state looked at the WPA, and "arts" projects, such as the FWP, scornfully. They asked why those American taxpayers who could pay taxes should have their money spent on projects for people who could not pay taxes, producing things the country did not need and would not buy. They especially questioned the focus of such programs.[134] Some felt that the Guides went too far in criticizing the establishment and stressed that the government had no place subsidizing the arts. Other critics argued that the guides focused too much on strikes and the undercurrents of creating one inclusive "homogenous" society, not the exclusively *white* society based on racial, ethnic, and social segregation that older white Protestant Americans were used to. In contrast with the New Dealers and national FWP leadership who celebrated the inclusivity in American society, these critics did not want to read about diversity or differences.[135] There was no empirical evidence that this happened in Texas. From the archives in Washington DC and Austin, there were no criticism of the TFWP.

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[133] Kiplinger to Drought, January 20, 1942, FWPNA, RG 69 Folder 651.3172

[134] Jerre Mangione, *The Federal Writers' Project: 1935-1943*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 4-7, 12 14-17.

[135] Christine Bold, *Writers, Plumbers and Anarchists: The WPA In Massachusetts*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 60-63.

While there was always anti-New Deal “work relief, “projects such as the FWP also arose. For anti-New Deal politicians, the state and city guides provided additional ammunition to shut down the project once it began to be published. These politicians complained about the wastefulness of work relief the “inclusive” content of the guides. At first, these objections did not gain much traction with the public since these projects were seen as creating jobs and putting people to work. However, as the economy began to improve, the need for these programs lessened, and the complaints became more strident. From the archives about the TFWP, none of the above information was evident within the program.[136]

One of the more ardent anti-New Dealers who wanted to end the WPA and its subsidiary “arts” programs was Martin Dies, representative from the Second Congressional District in Texas. Dies was a supporter of the Texas FWP when the project began, going so far as to write a letter of support for an applicant to the project.[137] After all, Dies, a Southern Democrat, was looking out for his impoverished constituents in east Texas who had been hit hard by the Great Depression. Dies was a conservative white east Texan who believed in a Texas cultural nationalism that was white, Protestant, native born, and proud of his state. In the beginning, Dies supported the New Deal but grew to doubt it in time. Unlike the leadership of the WPA—and Henry Alsberg of the FWP in particular—he did not believe in the inclusive, pluralistic democratic “American” nationalism that was becoming evident throughout the projects.[138]

By 1939, the need for the WPA and state work projects such as the TFWP was dwindling, and with popular and political support. The winds of war were starting to blow more

[136] Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 155, 316 and 322; Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 202-203; D. A Saunders, “The Dies Committee: First Phase”, *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Apr. 1939), 223-238.

[137] Martin Dies to J. Frank Davis, September (n.d.), 1935, Briscoe Center**,** TFWP Files 4H83.

[138] Monty Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 202-203.

strongly in Europe and Asia, and the American economy was on the rise after the recession of 1937. The forces of anti-New Deal sentiment were similarly on the rise. Harry Hopkins left the WPA in 1938, replaced by the "no nonsense" Colonel Francis Harrington. Florence Kerr replaced Ellen Woodward, who headed the Woman's Professional Projects of the WPA and was better able to handle Harrington's sternness.

Changes in project came with the change in leadership at the WPA and Federal Project Number One in 1939. These new national administrators were uninterested in the inclusive cultural ideals Alsberg promoted. Harrington, a former military man, and to a lesser extent Florence Kerr, Director of the Division of the Women's and Professional Projects of the WPA , did not exhibit Alsberg's flair for art and ideas; instead, they were strictly focused on getting the job done as quickly and effectively as possible. When the Federal Writers' Project was renamed the Writer's Program, the focus of the project was the completion of the publications, thus putting a restraint on the cultural work the FWP had in years past. Although the vision would remain the same, at least until Alsberg left, the process of the guide publication became more straightforward, with less editing and requests for revision from the national office. However, at this time, the office had much less authority over the states. Articles from Texas, how the information was gathered and how it was written, were largely unchallenged. For the most part, from August 1939 to the conclusion of the TFWP, the information that was sent from the Texas state office was included verbatim.[139]

[139] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Political Patronage*, 202-203; Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project 1935-1943*, 289-329; Jerrold Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project*, 197-213; Griswold, *American Guides: The Federal Writers' Project and the Casting of American Culture,* 144-145.

The leadership changes did not lessen the attacks on the relief projects. It emboldened critics such as John Tabor (R. NY) and Clifton Woodrum (D VA) to press their attacks. Tabor wanted to make more cuts and have his colleagues read the Dies Report. The report was ostensibly an inquiry into New Deal programs to see if rumors were true about scandals within the programs, such as the programs being infiltrated with Communists. To that end, Dies won House approval in May 1938, for a special committee to investigate "subversive and un-American propaganda" that might attack governmental principles guaranteed by the Constitution. His hearings on this matter occurred before Woodrum started his. This greatly appealed to the anti-New Dealers, who were growing in number. Woodrum later indicated he would have to cut off all monies to the writers because the products were what he termed "dissident". Woodrum believed that "Reds were infiltrating" all parts of the WPA, the FWP included and made it his mission to cut all spending he deemed unnecessary to the program. While outside the scope of this dissertation, is should be noted that the committee's conclusions were essentially in place before they began their investigations.[140]

By March 1939 accusations by Dies that the New York City Unit of the Federal Writers' Project, Washington, and California state units were "hotbeds" of Communism were becoming more than just heated right-wing rhetoric. An examination of the New York City unit from the magazine *Headlines* revealed that Communists had infiltrated it. "Infiltrated" is part of the Dies conspiracy theory rhetoric. The law creating WPA specifically said people could not be refused jobs based on their political views. Not hiring qualified applicants who were Communists would

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[140] D. A Saunders, "The Dies Committee: First Phase", *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Apr., 1939), 223-238; New York Times, "*Ex-Rep. Martin Dies, 71, Is Dead; Led Un-American Activities Unit,* November 15, 1972; Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Political Patronage*, 202-203; Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project 1935-1943*, 289-329; Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project*, 197-213.

have been illegal. Sustained publicity about dissident intrusion, much of it politically driven, served to label the entire FWP as a "focus" of Communism. In response, Martin Dies, as chair of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), called leaders of the Project to testify before the committee.[141]

However, even while he was engaged in finding Communists in the WPA projects in the northeastern states, Dies did not disparage the Texas Federal Writers' Project but the national FWP, at least according to all media accounts and archived material about the TFWP. Dies encouraged witnesses who had worked on the FWP to testify that Communist workers inserted communist propaganda in the guides. The FWP played second fiddle to Dies's focus on the Federal Theatre Program, which was abolished. Most Senators took pride in their state guidebooks, as did most of the nation regarding the AGS. Many Texans who needed jobs, as evidenced by the letters Hopkins, Davis, and Woodward were receiving from Dies. Even as late as 1938, with hearings on embedded communists within the Project about to begin, Dies was trying to get one of his constituents a job on the TFWP.[142]

As hearings commenced in May 1939, it became evident that the days of Federal Project Number One were numbered. From its start, the committee was out to discredit the agency, calling it "communist-inspired" or its members "socialists." The committee interviewed disgruntled employees and hacks who were clearly in it for publicity or revenge for perceived

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[141] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Political Patronage*, 202-203; Headlines 2 (March 25, 1939) in Box 2116, WPA, James E. Sargent, "Woodrum's Economic Bloc: The Attack on Roosevelt's WPA", 1937-1939, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 93, No. 2 (Apr., 1985), 175-207; Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2003), 34.

[142] Dies to Alsberg, December 30, 1937, FWPNA, Box 69 File 615.3197; Woodward to Dies, January 5, 1938, FWPNA, Box 69 File 615.3197; D. A Saunders, "The Dies Committee: First Phase", *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Apr. 1939), 223-238.

slights, such as former FWP employee Ralph Del Sola. Later, it would be proved that Del Sola had categorically lied to the Dies Committee his role was and what he had heard. Another was Joseph T Barret, a former project supervisor, who claimed Alsberg had demoted him due to his Dies Committee testimony.[143]

Even an impassioned plea from Halle Flanagan, the Federal Theater Project National Director and representative from Henry Alsberg, could not sway the committee majority. Of all the arts projects, they were most hostile to the FWP. HUAC shut down the Federal Theatre Project and severely crippled the FWP. After that, the Writers' Program, the former FWP, had to find new sponsorships for the projects yet to be published. [144]

The committee hearings took their toll on Alsberg. The FWP was his pride and joy; even contemplating leaving shook him. Colonel Harrington, the WPA head, wanted Alsberg to resign. Alsberg, ever the fighter for the egalitarian views of his beliefs, would not. Alsberg, in turn, told the press that he "did not want to go on record as leaving the project while the process of reorganization was going on. Hirsch states, "Dies made perfectly clear during the hearings that he rejected a pluralistic, egalitarian, inclusive definition of American identity." As a result [Colonel Harrington, new head of the WPA] terminated my services." Alsberg was forced to resign on August 1, 1939, and replaced by John Newsome, the former State Director of the Michigan FWP.[145]

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[143] Dies to Alsberg, December 30, 1937, FWPNA, Box 69 File 615.3197; Woodward to Dies, January 5, 1938 FWPNA, Box 69 File 615.3197; D. A Saunders, "The Dies Committee: First Phase", *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Apr., 1939), 223-238.

[144] Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 155, 316 and 322; Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 202-203; D. A Saunders, "The Dies Committee: First Phase", *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Apr., 1939), 223-238.

[145] Sue Rubenstein DeMasi, *Henry Alsberg: The Driving Force of the New Deal's Federal Writers' Project*, (Jefferson; McFarland Publishing, 2016), 218; Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 321-325, 331; Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project*, 197-213.

Newsome was a straightforward, no-nonsense administrator. Where Alsberg saw the art and beauty of the state guides and wanted to use them as a vehicle to promote American nationalism and inclusivity, Newsome just wanted to get them done. *Time Magazine* described him as speaking "with an efficient snap in his voice" and quoted him as saying, "this is a production unit, and its work that counts. I've never been for art for art's sake alone." [146]

With the changes in the top leadership, the attitude of the national FWP office also changed. The relationship between Texas FWP director Davis and Alsberg had been good, and there was respect on both sides. With Newsome now in charge of the national FWP office, the relationship became more complex and, at times, adversarial. For example, when the Galveston City guide was being rushed to publication, Davis saw mistakes with it, and wanted them corrected before it came out. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, sponsoring it at the time, wanted it out by April 15 for the tourist season. In more than one letter, Newsome pushed Davis to get the guide ready for publication by that date. Davis continually stalled because he wanted it right and communication between the two men became contentious. Worse, the VFW pulled its sponsorship of the guide when it was not published in time, and the guide was never published. Other similar exchanges reveal how quickly the tone, attitude, and relationship between the Texas state office and the national project office changed after Alsberg resigned.[147]

Congress would eventually close sister projects of Federal Project Number One and require the FWP national office to secure funding outside the government if it was to continue. Since the Texas guides fell under the Federal Project One umbrella, the project needed to secure

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[146] Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 331.

[147] Davis to Newsome, September 4, 1940, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 11 File Galveston Guide, Newsome to Davis, September 4, 1940, FWPNA, RG 69 Box 11 File Galveston Guide, VFW to Davis, September 4, 1940, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 11 File Galveston Guide.

alternate funding to finish producing and publishing the State Guides and other related projects. Sponsorships would replace the lost federal funds, and in Texas, the State Highway Commission sponsored the publication of the Texas State Guide.

Ultimately, Henry Alsberg tried to have the state and local guides be more ethnically inclusive. He and Cronyn stressed the national office's effort to promote a new view of American identity and culture as pluralistic and inclusive. As he pointed out to Davis, travelers from other states would want to know how African Americans lived within the state. By the time Alsberg was fired, Davis had come around to that thinking. However, his drive to be more inclusive of all Texans eventually led to disagreements with John Newsome, who would eventually cancel the Galveston City Guide. When Newsome took over, the Texas State Guide was finished for all practical purposes. From August 1939 until it was published in August 1940, there were a few revisions to articles and information to be included in the Texas Guide copy. Promoting inclusivity and a pluralistic American cultural nationalism was no longer the emphasis of the guides. Ironically, the archives reveal instances where Texas writers did not like the inclusivity they were being asked to promote or, if they did, they did say that in management letters.[148] The political problems that the TFWP dealt with were not as bad as some throughout the country. The TFWP stayed true to the goal of producing a product that would show the state in a positive light, minorities for the most part excluded.

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[148] Davis to Cronyn, July 24, 1937, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83; Cronyn to Davis, July 25, 1937, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files 4H83.

CHAPTER THREE

TRAVELING THE STATE: THE GUIDES

The Texas state guide, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State* (1940), is the best-known publication of the Texas FWP. Comprising 714 pages—one of the largest of all the state guides--and providing brief histories of the top fifteen cities in the state, the guide promised to introduce the reader to all the wonder Texas had to offer. "Texas," the state guide observed, "is a friendly State and genuinely welcomes the traveler from far or near." In addition to "the balmy breezes of the Gulf of Mexico and the invigoration of the Rocky Mountains," Texas (with its 254 counties) possessed historic shrines, great natural beauty, and "hundreds of growing cities"—all of which were connected by "modern highways and roadside parks."[149] The guide was compiled by a team of over 250 writers. While none of these Texas writers were nationally recognized authors, there were several prominent local writers employed by the TFWP, including Laura Hamner, J. Frank Davis, Gertrude Harris Cook, and Charles Munz.[150]

Initially, the state guide title was *Texas: A Guide to the Largest State*. The national office was on board with it from the start of the project in Texas. In the 1930s, this was a truism, for Alaska was, at that time, a territory. As it came close to publishing time, Davis had a change of heart. In a letter to Florence Kerr, Assistant Commissioner of national office of the WPA, Davis stated, "The name of the Texas State Guide, as it appears on the title page that has gone to

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[149] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, (New York: Hastings House Publishing, 1940), I; Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 78-90; Scott Borchert, *Republic of Detours: How the New Deal Paid Broke Writers to Rediscover America*, New York: Picador Paper, 2019), 154; Christine Bold, *The WPA Guides: Mapping America*, (Oxford: University of Mississippi Press, 1999), 34-67.

[150] The FWP did, in fact, employ more well-known authors in some areas, including Richard Wright (Chicago), Zora Neale Hurston (Florida), and Studs Turkel (Illinois).

Hastings House, is "Texas. A Guide to the Largest State. This title was devised a long time ago, immediately after publication of "Rhode Island. A Guide to the Smallest State. Since then, of course, books have been titled as "Magnolia", "Cornhusker", "Bluegrass", "Sunflower", "etc., State. We did not send to Mr. Newsom any suggestion for an alternate title that might be more satisfactory to him or the publisher than "Largest State," and this is to more satisfactory to him or the publisher than "Largest State", and this is to suggest an alternative: "*Texas. A Guide to the Lone Star State*". If Mr. Newsom should this this alternative a better title than the original, he might like to discuss it with Hastings House. We shall appreciate hearing from Mr. Newsom what he thinks or does about this". In response, the national office was on board with it. Responding to Davis (and Drought), Triggs (Director of Community Service Projects) stated, "We quite agree with Mr. Davis' suggestion that *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, is a better title than a Guide to the Largest State, and we are asking Hastings House to make this correction. The possibility exists, however, that these publishers may have had the jacket printed by this time and should this be the case, the first edition may have to go to press bearing the original sub-title. We will let you know as soon as we hear from Hastings House about this matter". There were no issues with Hastings House and the title became permanent.[151]

Overall, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State* (1940) consisted of four parts: "Texas: Yesterday and Today," "Fifteen Texas Cities," "Along the State's Highways," and "Appendices." In addition to the state guide the FWP in Texas produced city and local guides. The city guides were similar in focus to the state guide, but specifically targeted the city it pertained to (Houston, Dallas, Beaumont, and San Antonio). The local guides were targeted to

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[151] Davis to Kerr, April 24, 1940, FWPNA, RG 69, Folder Texas State Guide Box 11; Triggs to Drought, April 30, 1940, FWPNA, RG 69, Folder Texas Guide Box 11.

either an issue the city wanted to raise and used the TFWP to do it. (La Villita) or to give information about an organization (St. David's Through The Years)

In Part I, "Texas: Yesterday and Today," the state guide addressed twenty-one topics—including "Natural Setting," "First Americans," "History," "Industry, Commerce, and Labor," "Transportation," "Agriculture and Livestock," "Education," "Religion," "Racial Elements," "Social Life," "Sport and Recreation," and "Music"—spanning nearly 155 pages. Overall, the various essays in Part I emphasized the uniqueness, character, and greatness of Texas--portraying the state as being in a continual process of rediscovery, renewal, and realization. In "Southwestern Empire," for example, the guide highlighted the state's uniqueness. "Texas," the guide asserted, "is unique among the American States not only because it entered the Union by a treaty made as an independent republic, but also because of a clause in the treaty whereby 'new States' of convenient size, not exceeding four in number… and having a sufficient population, may hereafter, by the consent of …[Texas], be formed out of the territory…"[152] Meanwhile, in "Government," the guide insisted "That [the] rugged spirit which built the first Anglo-American town in the wilderness was the heritage of Texas lawmakers, and [that] the government of the State still wears the brand of the freedom-loving, expansively energetic men of the frontier."[153] Furthermore, the guide insisted, "there are a greater number of legal justifications for homicide than in other State, many of them dating from the frontier days when men, if they were to survive, often needed to 'pack their own law in holster.' In explanation of a not uncommon attitude toward some of those responsible for violent deaths, a highly respected Texas jurist- not

[152] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, (New York: Hastings House, 1940), 3-4.

[153] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 54.

stating what the procedure out to be but what it was once said: In Texas the first question to be decided by a jury in any homicide case is, 'Should the deceased have departed"?[154]

The sections in Part I relating to "History" reflected a desire to assign greatness to Texas, revealing a propensity in the guide to—contrary to instructions from the national FWP office--veer into boastfulness and even embrace "Lost Cause" romanticism. Sam Houston, then, was described as "a natural leader of the aggressive, adventurous, land-hungry pioneers of the type that settled the West." At the same time, groups like the Texas Rangers, who lived in white Texas lore as an elite unit of law enforcement, were glorified as "a body of fighting men organized in 1835 who 'could ride like Mexicans, shoot like Tennesseans, and fight like the very devil,' [and] protected the frontier during the days of the Republic."[155] In examining the Civil War and Reconstruction history, the guide noted that few significant military engagements were fought in Confederate Texas—although the state "furnished the Confederacy huge amounts of supplies obtained from Europe through Mexico, besides those from its resources. Crops were good."[156]

The defeat of the Confederacy and the subsequent emancipation of the slaves, the guide added, marked the rise of "'Radicals,' or those of Northern sympathy" in state politics. Thus, "Race riots flared, the Ku Klux Klan rode, and lawlessness gripped the State as thousands of freed Negroes, cast adrift, and congregated in towns and near military camps, existing by begging or by occasionally doing odd jobs. In 1860, the assessed valuation of slaves in Texas was $64,000,000. Most of these Negroes [now] fondly believed that the government would give

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[154] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 56.

[155] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 46.

[156] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 49.

them 'forty acres and a mule.'"[157] Finally, in 1874, "the opposition of conservative citizens to the radical regime" led to the end of Reconstruction in the state and the emergence of a "conservative Democracy."[158]

Without question, then, the guide was generally steeped in a deep veneration for white Texas—cherishing "the long-established traditions of the Old South"-- and thus often *minimized the contributions and accomplishments* of the state's ethnic minorities*, giving a less-than full portrayal of their environment and history.*[159] In "Racial Elements," for example, the guide noted that "the State's population is predominantly Anglo-American," and then added that "Texas' history, culture, character, and progress have been shaped primarily by this group."[160] In essays on "Sports and Recreation," "Newspapers and Radio," "Literature," and "The Theater," the guide mostly ignored other groups. For example, in the lengthy (8-paged) essay on Texas literature-- which detailed major literary works from the Spanish in the 16th century to the 20th-century novelist (and later Pulitzer winner) Katherine Anne Porter-- there was no mention of Mexican, Native American, or black authors.

Still, the guide included an awareness of these other groups and an inadequate recognition of their importance to the state. "People of Texas derive from many stocks," the guide observed, and "at least 35 nations [over four centuries] have contributed to the present citizenship."[161] Indeed, on the first page of the four-page "Racial Elements," section, the TFWP included an illustration of a Latino man on horseback (and with a gun) in front of an adobe-built

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[157] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 49.

[158] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 50, 52.

[159] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 92.

[160] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 88.

[161] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 88.

ranch—signifying the importance (and legacy) of the Mexican and the vaquero (or Spanish cowboy). Indeed, the guide noted, "the State's largest single division of foreign white stock is Mexican origin," comprising about 11.7% of the state's population. "In handicrafts, such as pottery, the Texas Mexicans excel, and their influence has been great in music, art, and architecture."[162]

The essay "Racial Elements" identified and detailed "three principal classes of Texas Mexicans." The first group was relatively small and consisted of those—typically from "older cities and localities" -- who possessed "strong traditions of family and culture, usually of Spanish origin." The second group was a "widespread new middle class, recruited from both the upper and lower strata, [that] has homes, standards of living, and businesses equal to those of any element." Finally, the third group was "that of the peon"—i.e., those who "crowd city slums or live as tenants or hands-on farms and ranches." This "peon" class, the guide added, was "often used as the balance of power in machine politics" and thus unwittingly proved "a powerful factor in state government."[163]

Later, in the "Arts and Handicrafts" essay, the guide elaborated on the state's Mexican heritage. "Most appropriate to a State which once was a part of Mexico, and which contains many people of Mexican birth or descent has been the influence in painting of Diego Rivera and his pupils. The Mexican crafts have not needed restoration; they have remained intact in those sections of Texas where Mexicans are numerous, and except for drawnwork and tinwork, in

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[162] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 89.

[163] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 89.

which there is an Anglo-American competition, are still a Mexican field."[164] The "Folklore and Folkways" essay also included much information on Mexican culture in the state, including mention of celebrations such as *Posadas* ("Rests"), commemorating the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem (and celebrated just before Christmas), and *Dia de Inocentes* ("Cry of the Innocents"), celebrated on December 28, in memory of the children who died on orders from Herod in his search for the newborn Christ. The essay also briefly explored Mexican songs, dances, and health remedies. Finally, the "Architecture" essay noted the influence of the "early adobe and jacal huts to houses built in the manner of the Mexican haciendas—ranch houses on a grand scale."[165]

African Americans, meanwhile, received the most attention from the "non-white" groups recognized in the guide. "The Texas Negro's social and economic status is very like that of the Negro of Tennessee. Welfare organizations and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas *(present-day Prairie View A&M University) have cooperated to obtain better living conditions for the race." The guide goes on to say, "Among the contributions of the Texas Negro outside of his labor, those to music and folklore are probably most valuable (Italics are added are the author's).* For example, in the "Music" essay, a small paragraph was included on "Negro folk music," noting that "Indigenous spirituals are an interesting phase of Texas Negro folkways. There are Negro song leaders and verse makers who 'call' the words at church, going from one group to another like old-time circuit riders. Examples of the songs spread by their 'calling' are

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[164] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 145-146. Diego Rivera (1886-1957) was an acclaimed Mexican fresco painter who focused on the toil of workers, and helped usher in the Muralist Movement in Mexico.

[165] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 96, 154.

'Jesus Rides Like a Milk White Hoss,' 'I'm New Bawn,' and 'My Lawd's a Battle Ax'… Most of the Negro folk music is religious, but it also includes work songs…"[166]

T*he "Folklore and Folkways" essay* also provided an overview-- often patronizing in tone-- of black traditions and contributions to the state. *"Among Texas Negroes*," the guide asserted, "*nature myths and proverbs are common, like those of Negroes of other States. They have, also, the same* belief *in in the efficacy of charms and good-luck pieces to ward off bad luck or disease, and, in isolated communities, and certain forms of* '*conjure*' *are prevalent.*"[167] The essay also noted celebrations such as "the annual celebration of Negroes of June 19 [Juneteenth]—the day when emancipation from slavery became effective in the state… The holiday is generally observed by a picnic at which everyone eats, dances, and sings to his heart's content." At these celebrations, the guide added, "the racial gift of melody asserts itself. Every Negro who can play a fiddle or guitar brings his instrument, while the others break spontaneously into the 'blues,' work songs, or spirituals."[168] It was these songs—originating "in the cotton field, over wash tubs, and at church"-- that represented, the guide insisted, the "Texas Negro's largest contribution to folk material…"[169] Conversely, the guide noted, a distinctly Texan contribution to "Negro folkways" was "*the barbecue stand*, with its outgrowth of customs. Business deals are often closed, and social engagements made at a barbecue stand, where meats cooked in open pits by Texas Negroes have a flavor which they claim in distinctive."[170]

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[166] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 138.

[167] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 97.

[168] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 97-98.

[169] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 98.

[170] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 98.

The essay on "Art and Handicrafts" provided an overview of African and "American Negro" art collections in the state and even highlighted a young black artist from Dallas, Thurmond Townsend. Indeed, the essay briefly noted the collecting, sponsoring, and displaying of black art in the State, including Bishop College and Wiley University—in Marshall, Texas, and both historically black colleges, founded in 1881 and 1873, respectively. There was aparticular focus on the twenty-eight-year-old Townsend, who in 1938, became the first black artist accepted by the Dallas Art Association and included in the 9th Annual Dallas Allied Arts Exhibition. The guide described Townsend's work as "remarkable in its primitive earnestness."[171]

The group with the least attention in the state guide was Native Americans. Aside from the "First Americans" essay, little was explored or detailed in relating to Native American culture and their contributions to Texas. "Indians," the essay on "Racial Elements" observed, were "the first of the racial elements in Texas," but "only a remnant of the Alabama and Cooshatti tribes [now] remains, with a few Piros and Tiguas near El Paso, and at Fort Clark, a small group whose ancestors were Seminole and Negro."[172] Meanwhile, the essay on "Folklore and Folkways"—despite an illustration of a Native warrior on horseback—fails to mention Native Americans. The essay with the most significant focus on Native Americans was "Arts and Handicrafts." For most of the guide, Native Americans were overlooked, except in the first part of the guide when they were classified as "savages," and the white man was able to add civilization to Texas.

Part II of the state guide, "Fifteen Texas Cities," was 216 pages in length and provided—as its title suggested— "community descriptions" of significant cities in the Lone Star State,

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[171] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 147.

[172] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 88.

including Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Galveston, Houston, Laredo, Port Arthur, San Antonio, Waco, and Wichita Falls. Each community description began with a list of transportation services available, including railroads, bus stations, and airports (and taxi fares), and then moved to "Accommodations." In Amarillo, the guide noted, "4 large downtown hotels, numerous smaller hotels, and tourist lodgings."[173] A list of other general items was also provided, including "Information Services," "Radio Stations," "Golf," "Theatres and Motion Picture Houses," and "Annual Events." Following this list, a two or three-page summary of the city was offered, detailing a community's history, resources, wildlife, and modern development. The city section ended with a list of "Points of Interest" (accompanied by a map). "Points of Interest" included everything from lakes and museums to colleges and hospitals.

While written mainly for whites, Part II—as in Part I—frequently mentioned minorities. The guidebooks were state and federal publications; thus, the items they highlighted recognized a particular group. Not surprisingly, every state faced personnel, whether FWP officials, state officials, or leaders in the larger community-- who did not want minorities cited in the guide or to receive any recognition. Fully aware of this dynamic, the national office was adamant about not only identifying minority areas but also having them identified and described correctly. As such, the FWP employed an expert in African American studies, Sterling A. Brown (1901-1989), a Howard University professor, folklorist, and poet.

Brown was the son of a former slave (and a minister and professor at Howard University). His mother was a graduate of Fisk University and a public-school teacher in Washington D.C. Brown attended both Williams College (1918-1922) and Harvard, receiving an

[173] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 159.

M.A. in English from the latter in 1923. Shortly after, he taught literature at Virginia Theological Seminary and College in Lynchburg, Virginia, where he stayed through 1926. In 1929, he returned to Howard University as a professor and remained there until his retirement in 1969. Throughout the 1930s, Brown established himself as a leading scholar of black folk culture. In 1932, after traveling through the South "to learn something about his people," Brown published a collection of poetry entitled *Southern Road,* "a powerful homage to the extraordinary quality found in the rather ordinary lives of Southern Black folk."[174] In 1937, he published two works of literary criticism, *The Negro in American Fiction* and *Negro Poetry and Drama.* In the spring of 1936, he was appointed editor of Negro Affairs for the FWP.

Overall, Brown took great pains to communicate to Davis and his FWP staff that some copies sent from the States to D.C. were either not valid or exaggerated, making highly it unbelievable. His criticism was that the sections on African American life were lacking in force and color. "The treatment," he insisted, "is weakened by numerous generalizations, often pointless, and sometimes unproved. Typographical or mechanical errors are too numerous. The title might be differently worded, as the treatment does not include expressions in Negro life." Brown then went on to list specific criticisms within the state guidebook. From page 3, paragraph 4, Brown mentioned that the "First sentence was badly contrasted. Both this and last sentence dubious to page 4 paragraph 4, First sentence: doubtful statement, second sentence: Should this be "folk" Negro? The expression "sorry songs" is generally used for spirituals. Interesting material on traditional ballads is much better than the generalizations. Distinguish between musicians, musical organizations, and folk music. Name some of the first, for the

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[174] John Edgar Tidwell, "Recasting Negro Life History: Sterling A. Brown and the Federal Writer's Project," *The Langston Hughes Review* (Winter/Summer 1995), 77.

second mention some songs connected with Texas life. Above all, be specific." He further chastised the staff by stating that the bibliography was too limited. "One book on Houston is certainly insufficient. Look up such works as publications of Texas Folklore Society"[175]

Brown pointed even further untruths when dealing with African Americans in the state guide. By calling out the writers of the copy sent to the national office, Brown was adamant that they get the items right. For instance, TFWP writer Thelma Morgan wrote about Negro superstitions, to which Brown corrected her. "These are not "Negro superstitions"—nor are those compiled by H. B. McElroy in "Some Superstitions in Dallas" and in the two articles titled "More Dallas Superstitions." They are believed by southern Negroes and whites and come from Europe as well as Africa. They are valuable, of course, but too much should be claimed for them. None of them are very well written: McElroy is correct in saying that superstitions listed are common to this section rather than to Negroes. TWFP writer John Griffin wrote about "Don't Eat Goobers in de Kitchen" detailing folk superstitions. Brown corrected him by stating, "Opens with a debatable generalization. In this story the whites are no less superstitious than the Negro. Page 1, paragraph 2:" Rosie Wilcox is a typical old time Negro"; Meaning? Old time Negroes were of many sorts." When TFWP writer John Harmon gave the DC office examples of Negro Folks Songs. When Brown reviewed it, he had this to say. "The miscellaneous quotations comprising the first four paragraphs seem little to the purpose and are at best dubious. A study of Negro folk songs in Texas rather than a cataloging of expressions from what had been written on Negro folk songs would be better. (An emphasis on Texas and the Cultural Nationalism among the African Americans living in Texas) However, going out and getting Texas songs would be better than

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[175] Letter from Cronyn to Davis, October 5, 1936, FWPNA RG 69, Texas March 1936-June 1937.

copying some already recorded songs. Page 10: Game songs such as "Little Sally Walker" are, of course, universal. Much carelessness in phrasing, in grammar and in typing."

John Harmon was again the subject of more critiquing when he was researching Negro Common of Texas. Brown stated that, "Valuable Material. Page 2 last paragraph: That Negro common were chosen "first because of their submissiveness to white people" (or for their great strength either) is very unlikely. A more convincing reason would be that given in the preceding sentence." In its final form, the state guide did not have to say about minorities. In the city guides, more space was given to these groups. Examples in the state guide prove this point.[176]

Typically, the larger the city, the more the mention of minorities. For example, in cities such as Dallas, San Antonio, El Paso, and Houston, a paragraph or two was used to describe their minority populations. *Mexicans received more attention in such cities—especially San Antonio and El Paso-than in other cities*. In the Austin section, the guide noted that the city's "*racial and social background is predominately Anglo-American, derived from the slave-owning South, and aside from its Negro and Mexican inhabitants, the city has no other distinct racial elements… The Negroes have more churches in proportion to their numbers than the white residents" adding to the Latino element of the Austin population, "acquired largely since 1925 (discussion of owned businesses), is scattered and more or less transient."*[177] In the Beaumont city section, *African Americans were only mentioned twice, first in lodging and second to mention the Juneteenth celebration.* For cities such as San Antonio, *African Americans had the usual cursory information about where to stay and see, but in the portion that mentions them, "Negroes, constituting nine percent of the whole population, reside principally in the area in the eastern*

[176] Letter from Cronyn to Davis, May 5, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 11, Folder Texas March 1936-June 1937.

[177] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 168.

part of the city, and have a business district along East Commerce Street. In addition to their schools and churches, San Antonio Negroes have a Little Theater, a branch library, parks and a weekly newspaper." it would seem very small for a town with a population of 310,000 in the 1930s.[178] There were severe impacts of racism and segregation and the poverty it created in the black community. Given that situation, blacks in the city created newspapers, schools, and a newspaper is an achievement. White Americans knew little about these achievements, so mentioning them in a state guide acknowledged them. White Americans generally did not see the black community as having achieved anything.

In Dallas and Houston, the guide gave the most space to African Americans. In Houston, blacks had a significant presence *and received a six-paragraph description*. With descriptions from *the* housing where they lived, the businesses they owned, and the schools they attended: "One of the most interesting areas is its far-flung *Negro district, particularly the part called French Town, adjacent to Liberty Road. It is peopled almost exclusively by Louisiana Negroes who came to Houston two decades ago. The guide mentions* African Americans *living, "in rows of drab "shotgun" houses, the yards bright with flowers; chicken scratch inside a crazy-quilt of* fences. Sagging *porches have sagging rocking chairs, and their aged "mammies" rule small domains, sternly admonishing the accumulated children, chickens and dogs as occasion demands"*[179]

The Dallas city section *provide*d *one* paragraph on *African Americans. "*The *Negro is the* largest *of the minority racial groups in the city*," the guide noted. "*Dallas Negroes live in three main districts: Thomas Avenue in the northern part of the city, Wheatley Place in southern*

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[178] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 326.

[179] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 288-289.

Dallas, named after Phyllis Wheatley, Negro poet, and the Deep Ellum-Hall Street district. The Negro sections have their own business enterprises, professional people, service organizations, chamber of commerce, two newspapers, clubs and churches, and a Little Theatre movement". Meanwhile, in *El Paso,* blacks were not mentioned at all-- *besides the obligatory information on lodgings for* African Americans. *In Fort Worth, there is a paragraph dedicated to African Americans*, *"Negroes of Fort Worth have developed a social and commercial activity which, to a considerable extent, is centered in the large Negro Masonic Temple and the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company, both of which owe much of their importance to an able Negro leader, William M. McDonald, who rose through his own efforts to financial and political prominence."*[180]

Following the national office's want for more inclusion of African Americans, Cronyn stated to Davis (about the Galveston Guide), "The treatment of the Negro is this otherwise represented account is inadequate. Some mention of this group, especially in the contemporary scene, would make this a more colorful and complete picture of life here. Aspects of the Negro's life that should be included are interesting bits of local history, and contemporary conditions, such as the work he does, his churches, schools, and homes, his social life, and his folklore. Outstanding personalities such as Norris Wright Cuney and his organization of that very colorful group- Negro longshoremen- would undoubtedly be of interest. Several schools and parks have been named for Cuney. Are there any in Galveston, his birthplace?"[181]

In the El Paso city section, two paragraphs are dedicated to them, as well as a picture guide. In San Antonio, since Latinos made up a large portion of the population, "More than 30 nationalities are represented in the cosmopolitan population, 36 percent which is of Mexican

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[180] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 262.

[181] Cronyn to Davis, September 15, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 11, Folder Texas June 1937-September 1938.

blood". Naturally more will be given to this ethnic group. The guide also touted the Latin heritage "It (San Antonio) throws itself *with almost Latin enthusiasm into public celebration, historic, commemorative, and religious." Another interesting part of the San Antonio city section is the discussion of the "Mexican Quarter". In it, housing,* employment, *and daily activities of Latinos were documented.* [182] In the Dallas, Houston and Fort Worth sections, Latinos are not mentioned by comparison. By not mentioning Latinos, who made up over 25 percent of the population, they were seriously overlooked in the city sections of three of the largest metropolitan areas in Texas. This oversight exemplifies the pushback from the state office to the national office's emphasis on *cultural* pluralism. If there had been no push from the national office, there would have been even less attention to minorities.

In reference to Texas Cultural Nationalism, Davis tried to explain it to Alsberg in a way that the national director might understand,

"May I explain a usage in Texas with which you are unfamiliar. The usage of "Anglo-Americans" wherever proper in the book was cleared with Washington and approved on May 15, 1937. Our Glossary in the State book thus defines it: Anglo-Americans: In Texas usage, any one of white non-Spanish blood, who, before or in the early days of the Texas Republic, entered from the United States. Regardless of the peculiar Texas usage of the phrase, editing it is in all formerly Confederate states, the word "Yankee" refers to Northerners only, and usually, because of its Civil War connotation, in an uncomplimentary sense. The settlers referred to in this copy, being principally from the South, not only would it be untrue, in any usage but Northern, to call them Yankees, but it would be offensive to their descendants"[183] Because the "northeast"

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[182] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 326, 330, 339-340.

[183] Letter from Davis to Alsberg, May 8, 1939, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 2644, January-October 1940.

liberalism did not fully comprehend what it was to be a Texan, Davis had to make Alsberg and his team realize why certain parts of the state guide came across the way it did. Davis tried to explain what it was like to be a Texan and a visitor to the Lone Star State,

"My personal observation, as one came here a stranger from the East and over more than 25 years have received their impressions from tourists, is that a majority of visitors to Texas are most interested, aside from scenery where it exists and matters that deal with their own personal business, in (1) Cowboys, Rangers, ranches, gun fights, cattle drives and stories of the "wild and woolly West, (2) Things that deal with Spanish and Mexican settlement, influence and color, (3) Places connected with the Texas Revolution (Alamo and San Jacinto Battlefield), (4) Striking contrasts in certain cities, (5) Swift growth and constant changes in certain cities"[184]

Part III of the state guide was entitled "Along the State's Highways" and consisted of 249 pages and twenty-nine "Texas Tours." The tours in the guidebook were to introduce tourists and natives alike to the Lone Star State. Describing what each highway and byway was and what was involved in it allowed the reader to experience the open road. "Tours make history coherent by following significant roads and detailing "the rise of civilization in the States at the places where the events occurred." By this vision, geographical mobility served the national mythologies of progress once more. These tours were quite exhaustive in the research it took to get them done. As Mabel Ulrich remarked, "If you have never tried to check mileage with absolute accuracy, and at the same time note every crossroad, every landmark, not to mention the quality and quantity of the scenery, try it sometime." The extensiveness and detail of each tour is quite evident. For example, in Tour 5, the reader follows along with US 69 as it traverses southeast; the guide gives almost every minute detail one would see if they were traveling.

[184] Letter from Davis to Alsberg, May 15, 1939, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 2644, January-October 1940.

"Southeast of GREENVILLE, m., US 69 passes through farms broken by the heavily timbered bottom lands of the Trinity River. Large deposits of lignite underlie the region, at 39 m., and several mines using the strip method are in operation in the vicinity. At 50 m. is the junction with US 80 (see Tour 19), which unites with US 69 to MINEOLA, 54 m. (414 alt., 3,304 pop.) (See Tour 19a), which is at the junction with US 80 (see Tour 19). The route continues through red hills covered with heavy timber. A lake (R), 63.6 m., offers excellent fishing and numerous camping and picnicking locations. The demonstration area of a United States soil erosion station (R) is at 69.2 m. Southeast, US 69 runs through the heart of a vast rose garden, the cultivated bushes in all stages of development and growth lining the roadside for miles. When the roses are in bloom this landscape is bright with the hues of many varieties, their shades and tints forming great squares and oblongs of color."[185]

There were racial undertones even in the Tour section of the Texas Guide. In Tour 3, Section A- Texarkana to Sherman, it was described as the region having "one third of the population is Negro and spirituals echo over the fields in a wealth of spontaneous composition. In Tour 6, following US 75, the guidebook states, "People along the route are generally prosperous, progressive native-born whites. Later in Tour 6, the guidebook states, "CORSICANA, 55 m. (448 alt., 15,202 pop.), reflects oil prosperity *even i*n its Negro section, where houses and grounds are usually attractive. (Italics are the author's) In Tour 7, while traveling along US 77 to US 81, "White tenantry decreased in the 1930's with reduced cotton acreage, and many Negroes moved away because of the seasonal influx of Mexican laborers who annually invade this area from their homes in southwest Texas. They come in rattle trap conveyances, remain long enough

[185] Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 404.

to pick cotton, harvest fruit or truck crops, then return as they came, building campfires along the length of their migration.[186]

The final section of the state guide, Part IV, was the "Appendices." Thirty-two pages, the "Appendices" comprised of four sections: Glossary, Chronology, Selected Reading List of Texas Book, and Index. The Glossary was a definition of words and terms used in the guidebook. This was a handy look-up for those unfamiliar with some terminology to determine what the words meant. Next was the Chronology section. This listed of years and events in Texas from 1519 to the present (in this case, 1939). The section, titled "A Selected Reading List of Texas Books," introduces the reader to a bibliography of books that could be read to further the reader's knowledge of the Lone Star State. "A Map of Texas in Ten Sections" is the next segment at the back of the guide. The last part of the guidebook has a Calendar of Events and an Index to the subjects in the guide.

In addition to the state guide, the TFWP produced six local guides—five published by 1940, one for Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Denison, Corpus Christi, and Port Arthur, and an unpublished guide for Galveston. The city guides had some of the same strengths and limitations as the state guide. Nevertheless, the city guides merit individual attention. This section will primarily discuss Houston: A History and Guide, a guide to the city *and* surrounding environs. The city guides will be examined primarily regarding the conflicts surrounding cultural nationalism. The city guides dealt with the racial and ethnic elements in depth. However, it must

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[186] "Supplementary Instruction #11E to The American Manual: Complete Summary of Tour Form, 17 October 1938," Central Office Records 11/69; Christine Bold, *The WPA Guides,* 66; Federal Writers' Project, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 386; Mabel Ulrich, "Salvaging Culture for the WPA, Harper's Magazine, CLXXVIII (May 1939), 658; *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, 412, 416, 428.

be kept in mind that the state guide covered all of Texas, while the local guides focused only on one place. The TFWP published eight city guides. The largest were the Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio guides, which one would expect due to their population. The city guides used the same template as the state guides. The TFWP tried to give the tourist and city dweller a sense of history and life in these cities in the present.[187]

The Houston Guides and Cultural Nationalism

As with the state guide, the city guides were deeper in context than more extensive state guides. The city guides were written to attract tourists and educate the local inhabitants and vacationing tourists. From the very first chapter in the Houston City Guide, entitled "Texan Metropolis," - the guide writers try to convince the reader that Houston is a town that is cut above the other cities in Texas: "skirted by rich Texas prairies, tremendously productive of oil wells, cotton, lumber and cattle, the city combines major industrial developments that are like the East, the culture and lush verdure of the South, and the enterprise of the West, plus a medley of pine trees, smokestacks, huge moss-hung oaks and arriving and departing ships that is entirely its own." This leads the reader to believe that Houston is a town that has a culture all its own, with the blending of the Texas prairies giving it a cultural nationalism unlike any town in the United States.[188]

The Houston City Guide and Racial Elements

[187] https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utcah/01355/cah-01355.html, retrieved September 24, 2019, at 11:18 am.

[188] Federal Writers' Project, *Houston: A History and Guide*, (Houston: Anson Jones Press, 1942), 2.

The Houston City Guide handled the racial elements in much the same way as the state guide. In the Houston guide, minorities were mentioned, sometimes more than in the state guide, but still, the treatment was less than that of the white populace. In the guide, less than two pages were devoted to African Americans. The discussion was generally in an overview mode, the first Negroes in Houston were brought as slaves by planters, and most of them spent their lives in the cotton fields along the river bottoms. A few free Negroes resided here as wards of the Republic; several had participated in the Texas Revolution…. the Negroes of the city have subsequently maintained an active interest in labor conditions.” [189] One item worth noting is the last paragraph dealing with African Americans. It is essential for the way the description of the minority was presented in the city guide. “Houston’s educated Negroes no longer enjoy “dance songs” or patronize stores that dispense magic powders and charms, but at least one such store still advertises “Spell Breakers”…Negro children of Houston play song games, including that of the “Courtin’ Song, in which farm characters are portrayed.” [190] This example shows how the city guide writers displayed their tones and attitudes toward folklore. National FWP officials wanted attention paid to the folkways and folklore of all groups. They valued these traditions and the creative thinking and activity that came with them. A popular view regarded folklore indeed as dead, phony stuff that should disappear with progress. That often led to patronizing and ridiculing those who maintained such traditions. This excerpt shows the condescending attitudes of the white guidebook writers of the time. Another excerpt from the same section, “the lives of *these* people (Italics added) and this part of the Negro population has a characteristic passion for music and dancing, and performs rituals through both mediums….nearly every person in the

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[189] Federal Writers’ Project, *Houston: A History and Guide,* 172.

[190] Federal Writers’ Project, *Houston: A History and Guide*, 173.

Frenchtown community can play an instrument. "[191] Here is an example of how the guide writers could patronize other group's folkways. Nevertheless, the same material could be written without the outsiders' patronizing tone. That is what the national FWP wanted. Many Texas Federal Writers did not adopt the national office's view of the value of folk traditions. Still, one can find many non-patronizing descriptions of the lore of diverse groups in the state guidebook. In other parts of the descriptive essay, the guide better analyzes the complexity of the African American community. Other parts of the essay are less condescending toward African American. The guide writers did not use patronizing terms in describing the black community's businesses, churches, and libraries.

In the guide essay, "The People: Their Folkways and Folklore," the Houston City Guide, the writers mention" that Houston has a large Negro population. Sections inhabited by this race form an almost continuous belt around the downtown district and the newer outlying additions. More businesses are owned and operated by Negroes here than any other southern city. "[192]The essay also discusses folk traditions still alive in the Mexican and African American sections of the city. For example, home remedies: "From the Negroes came such remedies as the use of bull nettle necklaces for teething infants."

The guide also mentioned the KKK. In the chapter, Fourteen Years of Progress 1918-1932, the month of December 1921 saw "Marshal Ferdinand Foch of France visit and 2,051 Houstonians inducted into the Ku Klux Klan in a single mammoth ceremony 'on the prairie a short distance south of Bellaire'" From referring to African-American mothers as Black Mammies to a newspaper article in the Houston Telegraph referring to blacks as "darkies," the

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[191] Federal Writers' Project, *Houston: A History and Guide*, 173.

[192] Federal Writers' Project, *Houston: A History and Guide*, 173.

city guide was not above castigating minorities with name tags. The Houston City Guide follows the same template as the state guide, emphasizing the white, Anglo population and cultural traditions.[193]

La Villita

The guide *La Villita* was to help aid the work being done to San Antonio restore the Old Villita section of the city. The guide aimed to draw attention to a piece of history that might disappear if the effort to restore it was not completed. This part of San Antonio experienced an urban revolution and city decay. For San Antonio to realize its former glory, a single part of the town banded together to restore this part of the city. The guide was designed to take the reader through a piece of history that might vanish if the city planned to raze it. The guide took pains to ensure that the reader knew what this part of old San Antonio meant to tourists and citizens within the city. This guide is an example of local pride and was an account of recent moves by San Antonio Mayor Maury Maverick, which was to lead a complete restoration of the village ultimately. The guide writers to make the reader understand the importance of this restoration program. Published by the city of San Antonio and in conjunction with the TFWP, the booklet was to give a complete history of the "Villita." The goal of the restoration program was to build a wall ensuring seclusion; second, restore the houses to their original state and natural glory; and third, build a restaurant serving local Mexican food.[194]

[193] Federal Writers' Project, *Houston: A History and Guide,* 84, 89, 96.

[194]Texas Federal Writers' Project, *La Villita,* (San Antonio: City of San Antonio, 1939), 4; "WPA Compiles Historical Book", *San Antonio Light*, September 21, 1939; Morgan to Davis, November 6, 1939; January 25, 1940, FWPNA, RG 69, Box, 31, Folder Old Villita.

This preservation sought to help San Antonians remember part of their past and educate visitors. San Antonians believed that the care went into the description of the story of what "*La Villita*" meant to young and old alike. "Part of the value of this restored *La Villita*–as seen by patrons and sponsors–is historical; part is architectural. And part is the charm and distinction the restoration and guide presented to the visitor and native son alike."[195] Its rich history was to be felt, observed, and taken in like journeys through time.

The writing style in the *La Villita* is like that of other Texas FWP guides. It is colorful, with descriptions that go far beyond typical guidebooks. The style is vivid, like a painting, as the guide writers attempts to make the reader visualize how history can be relived through the written word, offering a sample description of the hardships soldiers suffered during the 1730s and how *La Villita* was founded.[196] Take for example the intertwined history of *La Villita* and the Alamo. "The closeness of *La Villita* to the Alamo linked the hardships of the Texas soldiers and the uneasiness and privation of the families of *La Villita*. The revolution had cut off San Antonio from its ordinary sources of supply and commerce.[197] That linkage helped the reader understand that this is not an ordinary row of buildings. This piece of the town is part of what made San Antonio who she was.

La Villita and Racial Elements

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[195]Texas Federal Writers' Project, *La Villita,* (San Antonio: City of San Antonio, 1939) 4; NYA, in Spanish Village, to Turn Back Time 150 Years", *San Antonio Express*, August 26, 1939; "WPA Writers Project Produces 'La Villita', *San Antonio Evening News*, September 22, 1939.

[196]Texas Federal Writers' Project, *La Villita,* (San Antonio: City of San Antonio, 1939), 8;" NYA, in Spanish Village, to Turn Back Time 150 Years", *San Antonio Express*, August 26, 1939; "WPA Writers Project Produces 'La Villita'", *San Antonio Evening News*, September 22, 1939.

[197]Texas Federal Writers' Project, *La Villita,* (San Antonio: City of San Antonio, 1939) 16;" NYA, in Spanish Village, to Turn Back Time 150 Years", *San Antonio Express*, August 26, 1939; "WPA Writers Project Produces 'La Villita'", *San Antonio Evening News,* September 22, 1939.

The racial element in *La Villita* was less prevalent as it was in the state and city guides. The guide's focus was to help preserve the landmark of Old Villita. Racial elements should have been brought up during the twenty pages of the guide. Although the Latin portion was mentioned within the pages of the document, it was meant from a historical perspective.

As this study and discussion of the Texas Federal Writers' Project revealed, the FWP process presented an ongoing challenge requiring all supervisors to collaborate with the State office, which also had to work the national FWP office. With directions from the national office changing and sometimes new guides being completed, State and local offices often could not keep up.

With the various directives going back and forth between the administration and those conducting the work, it became imperative for everyone to work from the same guidelines. For the TFWP, the process proved sometimes procedural but sometimes merely emphasized the point of employing employees to edit the backlog of words to the State office. Each area had its own set of problems. As seen from the beginning discussion of the state guides in this chapter, the TFWP goals remained crystal clear: the program must put white-collar workers to work in Texas. The second goal was to produce an encyclopedic guide to help the traveler as he or she crossed the massive territory the Lone Star State also remained. Similar situations existed in Chicago, New York City, and locations in Florida.[198] For many states, such as Texas and North Carolina, the librarians, teachers, and historians helped fill the ranks of the FWP workers. The guides these people compiled reflected the historical time they were produced and presented an

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[198]Texas Federal Writers' Project*, La Villita,* (San Antonio: City of San Antonio, 1939), 46;" NYA, in Spanish Village, to Turn Back Time 150 Years", *San Antonio Express*, August 26, 1939; "WPA Writers Project Produces 'La Villita", *San Antonio Evening News*, September 22, 1939.

informative view of the State, making it very different from an ordinary history book or tourist guide. The guides contained large depictions of folklore in a folk tale's guide and provided numerous maps that a map guide accomplished. The guides present all three things to the tourists representing a credible document. For these documents to reflect relevancy in such a vast, diverse state, even in modern-day travels, speaks volumes about the Texas FWP. The guides proved that Texas cultural nationalism was a central theme throughout this chapter.

The local and national press reviewed the state and city guides to favorable viewpoints. Stuart McGregor of the Dallas Morning News gave the State Guide a thumbs up in their review. Stating that the Texas State Guide was "Decidedly, it was one of the better of the state guide series to date." The book, "which by and large, is a monumental contribution Texas cultural development." J. Waller, in the Pacific Historical Review, stated that "Texas: *A Guide to the Lone Star State* is comprehensive and factual almost to the point of being encyclopedic." Waller also believed that the headings are necessarily sketchy, but several contain most of the essential facts. He further commented that, "the maps showing main streets and points of interest most helpful."[199]

Joseph Dixon Matlock, in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, believed that the guidebook "furnishes a fascinating introduction to a geographical region which has had a romantic appeal for adventuresome mankind since its discovery by Alonso Alvarez de Pineda in 1519. Matlock concludes, stating, "This publication should find a useful place in every home library and also along in the car. With the least amount of effort, it should develop an unconquerable urge to travel over Texas, adding pleasure and knowledge to what is being and has been seen." The

[199] "Texas Writers Do A Good Job", *Dallas Morning News*, November 4, 1939; Waller, J. L. *Pacific Historical Review* 10, no. 2 (1941): 251–52; Matlock, Joseph Dixon, "Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Texas State Historical Association, 1941.

Galveston Daily News stated that Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State was a source of general information for the reader and tourist alike. Overall, the guidebook was well received by the public and critics alike.[200]

In order to get the maximum exposure for the state guide, it was to be strategically located in courtesy stations of the State Highway Department that bordered New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. The idea was for visitors to either look at it, or after seeing it, want to buy it. Fifteen copies were to be sent out to allow the guidebook to be viewed and used by those entering the state. It was also on sale in most book shops, train stations, and airports around the Lone Star State. Developed with the tourist and inhabitant in mind, the guidebook was to be used by all.[201]

The first month saw the state guide sell well, with 3,198 copies purchased by the public and government agencies since January 1, 1940 (the book was released in August 1940). It continued to sell well into 1944, with many wanting the guidebook as a ready reference for vacation, to use in public school classrooms and libraries needing it for their stacks.[202] With all of its faults, missteps, and attention to detail, what did the TFWP accomplish with the publishing of the state, city and local guides?

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[200] Matlock, Joseph Dixon, "Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Texas State Historical Association, 1941; "Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State", *Galveston Daily News*, October 13, 1940.

[201] Letters from Green to Drought, December 28, 1940; January 9, 1941; Newsom to Frese, December 28, 1940, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 11, Texas State Guide.

[202] Letter from Davis to Kerr, March 25, 1941, FWPNA, RG 69, Texas State Guide.

Conclusion

The Texas Federal Writers' Project was formed as a part of the WPA in 1935 to put the unemployed to work with the project's goals as employment and guide production. National FWP officials had a vision from the beginning that these employees could help "introduce Americans to America," to create a pluralistic, egalitarian, and democratic view of who was an American and of American culture. The task proved challenging when the guide was presented to the state offices. Finding men and women able to work in the TFWP's numerous areas and districts was difficult.

The state, city, and local guides were examples of Texas Cultural Nationalism. The guides took pains to point out the positive points of the Lone Star State and how special she was within the forty-eight states. Although one point of the guides was to promote Texas Cultural Nationalism, it was far lacking in terms of cultural pluralism. A key point about Texas cultural nationalism is that there are conflicts within it and between Texas cultural nationalism and the cultural nationalism of national FWP officials. The conflicts around Texas cultural nationalism are most often racial and ethnic. The Anglo version of Texas nationalism dominated official public discourse, and Mexicans and blacks were rarely able to challenge that. The celebration by blacks of Juneteenth as an emancipation holiday challenged Anglo versions of Texas cultural nationalism. The national officials wanted to celebrate a democratic, inclusive, and egalitarian vision of American culture but did not do enough in that direction. This would be a theme that was central to the Texas state, city, and local guides.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the project faced an ever-changing situation, with employees leaving and continuing to leave with the ebb and flow of monies received from the government. Difficulty in achieving consistency in operations throughout the state in all areas

and districts continued throughout documentation in TFWP records. However, men and women chosen to run these areas demonstrated character and strength when faced with challenges. Leaders such as State Director J. Frank Davis and Assistant State Director John Olive interacted consistently and continually throughout the TFWP timeframe of 1935-1939. In Amarillo, Laura Hamner, former principal, and superintendent of public schools, proved capable of ensuring that the right people remained in place while questioning unclear state office directives. In Houston, Lawrence O'Leary dealt with some employees who disobeyed policy. In Dallas, Robert Horan sometimes worked from a public library until office space became available. Finally, Norman Walker, former writer, newspaperman, and semi-celebrity (meeting Pancho Villa), tackled mundane tasks (office supplies, typewriters, and even, at times, office employment) to get things done. For these individuals, this project was not merely a job but their passion. The letters that traveled back and forth from San Antonio show that these employees and leaders cared about what happened with the Texas Federal Writers' Project. San Antonio revealed a different culture and timeframe in many ways. The TFWP demonstrated a program designed to accomplish two goals but also changed the landscape for future travel guides.

The Texas Federal Writers' Project reflected a program that formed "on the fly." Labor consisted of relief workers, with the money paid to these workers based on the prevailing area wage scale. The TFWP challenge produced a guide that became a part of the travel landscape and broke the established rules for guides established by Karl Baedeker.[203] A second TFWP challenge required these men and women to produce the guide in a cohesive fashion with limited supplies and limited office space and to accomplish all these goals despite an ever-changing set

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[203] Jerrold Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 148-153; Catherine Stewart, *Long Past Slavery: Race in the Federal Writers' Project* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 37

of employees and available funds. It would take extraordinary efforts from area supervisors (and state directors Olive and Davis) to pull this venture off successfully.

Although problems with the guide were present, men and women who were part of the guide writing activities traversed two ideals: First, they were part of the New Deal liberalism. The desire for diversity was prevalent in many of the works produced by the TFWP, and the need to try and include everyone was part of the thinking at the time. Breaking new ground by hiring African Americans (only two that are documented) and mentioning them in communiqués on inclusion was groundbreaking. The problem was that the project employees were also Southerners. Thinking of including minorities was one thing, but to have pages in the guides devoted to minorities was different. Racist assumptions among federal writers in many states, as mentioned by FWP historians Jerrold Hirsch and Catherine Stewart, made many white field workers reluctant to give attention to blacks in the guides.[204] A second issue studied here was the challenge of making the guide appealing to middle-class Texans and local governments. Area directors demonstrated their desire to make this guide inclusive by trying to include all histories and items that would make this publication engaging. This was a challenge for the area supervisors.[205]

The next chapter will focus on the folklore studies of the Texas Federal Writers' Project. The examination will be as to whether Texas Cultural Nationalism existed in telling these stories. Also, how were minorities and gender presented in these stories retold to the federal writers as they collected the data? Lastly, was race an issue for the writers who collect the stories?

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[204] Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 148-153; Stewart, *Long Past Slavery*, 37.

[205] Paul Sporn, *Against Itself: The Federal Theatre and Writers' Projects in the Midwest* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 18.

With jobs scarce and money hard to come by, it is not surprising that the American Guides, ostensibly written to aid travelers of America's roadways, were also written to be read by Americans who learn more about the diversity of their nation from them. They were written to be a permanent contribution to American literature that would continue to be read in the future, on their state's cities, history buffs on the state's origins, and nature lovers on the state flora and fauna. The essays provided an encyclopedia-like guide to the state. The essays on the state's history and culture stressed that Texas had the cultural resources to make significant artistic creations and to create a worthy Texas culture for the present and future. The essays argued that the creativity of ordinary Texas, white, black, Mexican, and Indian provided the foundation for this culture. Still, the Texas guide fell short of the national FWP's vision of a pluralistic, inclusive, and democratic cultural nationalism. Nevertheless, the Texas guides would break new ground in dealing with minorities but still fall short in the cultural pluralism the national office strived for.

CHAPTER FOUR
FOLKLORE: TEXAS FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT

The initiative of the FWP to collect local folklore represented a New Deal attempt to understand better the relationship between individuals and the society in which they lived. "The idea," W.T. Couch, the southeast regional director of the FWP, observed in 1939, "was to get life histories that were readable and faithful representations of living persons, and which, taken together, provided a fair picture of the structure and working of society." Between 1935 and 1940, the FWP, collected thousands of stories "portraying the quality of life" and "real workings of institutions, customs, [and] habits" of the American people. The stories collected came from a large cross-section of the population and represented various diverse perspectives. While oral history—a research technique aimed at "preserving knowledge of historical events as recounted by participants" -- dates back as far as the 5th century B.C. and the ancient Greeks, it was not until the 20th century that it became a popular academic pursuit.[206] Indeed, the FWP folklore initiative was one of the first significant efforts at collecting oral history in the United States. Known as the "Life History and Folklore Projects," this national endeavor was the "brainchild" of Alan Lomax, an ethnomusicologist from Austin, Texas. Contrary to many in academia at the time, Lomax believed that the United States possessed a distinctive folklore. Unfortunately, that folklore, he warned, was rapidly vanishing. As nations became more modern, Lomax wrote in 1936, "the old ways—spirit, experience, and art—become forgotten and lost."[207]

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[206] Willa K. Baum, *Transcribing and Editing Oral History,* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977), 5.

[207] Kenneth Untiedt, *Celebrating 100 years of the Texas Folklore Society, 1909-2009*, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2009); John Szwed, *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* , (New York: Viking Press, 2010), 20-91, 299-301; Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project*, (Syracuse:

Lomax's point man for the project was William Terry Couch (1901-1989). A native of Virginia, Couch spent most of his early years in North Carolina, where he graduated from the University of North Carolina and shortly after that began working for the University of North Carolina Press—where he ultimately labored for over four decades, developing the press into one of the most distinguished and respected in the United States. In 1934, he edited *Culture in the South,* a collection of essays—including one by B.A. Botkin's "Folk and Folklore"—deals with "the broad stream of southern life, muddy and turbulent and torrential at times and places. According to historian Jerrold Hirsch, in *Portrait of America*, "Couch initiated the southern life history program, formulated the approach the program would take, and administered it without any significant input from the Washington office. He was not part of the dialogue that took place among Botkin, Brown, and Royse as they thought about how to study American culture. Nor did he respond to the same inherited discourse about American identity that influenced how they approached the subject. As this and the next chapter will make clear, Couch's ideas were formed in response to an inherited discourse about Southern society and identity. The FWP made it possible for Couch to administer a life history program that allowed ordinary southerners, white and black, to speak to their fellow southerners, Americans in other regions of the nation, and future generations of Americans."[208]

The only publication to be released during the project's life was *These Our Lives* (1939) by Couch, which provided the "life histories" of Southerners—from farmers and coal miners to factory and mill workers. Published by the University of North Carolina Press, it presented a cross-section of these laborers (both male and female and black and white) from Virginia,

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Syracuse Publishing, 1972), 262-284 ; Jerrold Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project*, (University of Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2004), 162, 176-195.

[208] W.T. Couch, ed. *Culture in the South,* (*Chapel* Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934, x.

Alabama, and North Carolina…. According to historian Monty Penkower, the publication "was a pioneering venture because it provided the reader with faithful representations of living people. Although Couch limited his selection of the oral histories to workers and allowed FWP interviewers to prove themselves as writers at times, the volume contains valuable insights about a certain anonymous group of Southerners in the Depression years. Sketches based on personal interviews covered such diverse matters as family, education, income, politics, religion, medical needs, diet, and the subject's use of time."[209] And then later, after the project, there were *Such is Us: Southern Voices of the Thirties,* edited by Tom Terrill and Jerrold Hirsch*, Up Before the Daylight: Life Histories from the Alabama Writers' Project, 1938-1938*, edited by James Seay Brown as publications that stemmed from the work**.** There were no Texas folklore publications until well after the project ended (Texas *Cowboys: Memories from the Early Days* by Jim and Judy Lanning in 1983 and *A Legacy of Words: Texas Women's Stories, 1850-1920* by Ava Mills in 1999)

Overall, the FWP faced three significant challenges in collecting these local stories-- both in Texas and across the nation. First, the term "folklore" lacked a consensus definition. For example, some field workers—in the same spirit as Lomax-- labored only to collect those expressions of spirit, experience, and art that were deemed quickly disappearing. Others, meanwhile, focused on emerging folklore, or "folklore-in-the-making." Second, there was the dilemma of determining who should be interviewed. Besides noticeable racial differences, there was also the fact that not all Texans were "Texan"—i.e., some (regardless of race) had moved in

[209] Monty Penkower, *The Federal Writers Project: A Study in Government Patronage,* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 153.

from elsewhere.[210] Moreover third, there was the problem of assessing the stories and determining their credibility.

Indeed, "Can this be believed?" was central to FWP workers in the 1930s and remains the subject of intense scholarly debate today.[211] For example, in a 1979 essay entitled "How Valid are the Federal Writers' Project Stories," Leonard Rapport, a participant in the Southern Writers' Project (1938-1941), argued that they were not incredibly reliable. "Looking back," Rapport wrote, "it might have been different if we had had tape recorders. Assuming the tapes survived we would at least have known what the people said." Based on his own experiences, Rapport concluded "that writers—people certified by the relief agencies as writers—were not the best for life stories. Persons who consider themselves writers, or who are told they are writers, in their hearts begin to think of themselves as creative writers, and most likely, in the innermost adytum, potential fiction writers. They do not want to be court reporters."[212] In contrast, historians Tom Terrill and Jerrold Hirsch, in a "Replies" essay to Rapport published in *Oral History Review* in 1980, insisted that the stories—while sometimes problematic and even "wholly fabricated"--generally revealed "important information about feelings of [groups like] southern textile managers and workers [who] were not waiting away for 'the ring of truth' to be told."[213]

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[210] Sarah Rutowski (ed) *Rewriting America: New Essays on the Federal Writers Project*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2022), 48-70; Hirsch*, Portrait of America,* 196-205; Lomax to Davis,

[211] W.T Couch to Edwin Bjorkman, September 23, 1938, Southern Historical Collection, W.T. Couch Papers, University of North Carolina Libraries, Chapel Hill, NC.

[212]Leonard Rapport, "How Valid are the Federal Writers' Project Stories: An Iconoclast Among the True Believers", *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 7, January 1979, 14; Tom Terrell and Jerrold Hirsch, "Replies to Leonard Rapport's "How Valid are the Federal Writers' Project Life Stories", *Oral History Review*, Vol. 8, 1980, 81-89.

[213]Terrill and Hirsch, "Replies to Leonard Rapport's "How Valid are the Federal Writers' Project Life Stories", *Oral History Review*, Vol. 8, 82, 1980; Interviews with Louis Jones Dubose, Assistant Director of the South Carolina FWP, June and July 1976, and with Mrs. Jim Wilkerson, (formerly Dorothy DeWitt), a FWP administrator in Oklahoma, December 1976.

Ultimately, Lomax (1915-2002) established the guidelines for the FWP—nationally and in Texas. The son of an English professor at Texas A&M, who specialized in Texas folklore and cowboy songs, Lomax, a graduate of the University of Texas, joined his father in collecting folk songs, co-authoring with him *American Ballads and Folk Songs* in 1934, and *Negro Folk Songs As Sung by Lead Belly* in 1936. *Negro Folk Songs* was a compilation of about a hundred songs written and sung by Huddie Ledbetter (1889-1949) of Louisiana and a work that revealed the broad scope of Lomax's interest in folklore. Indeed, Ledbetter's songs, Lomax insisted, represented "a cross-section of Afro-American songs that have influenced and have been influenced by popular music". Lead Belly was "a folk artist who contributes to the [folk] tradition and as a musician of a sort important in the growth of American popular music."[214]

In 1937, Lomax petitioned national FWP director Henry Alsberg regarding folklore and the FWP. "I believe," he wrote Alsberg that March, "that it is very important for this to be a key component of the FWP in Texas." Alsberg was "very much in agreement" and acknowledged "that this a great idea [and] would not only expand the FWP but attract more readers in the process." Furthermore, Alsberg was "thrilled" by the prospect of Lomax working on the FWP and even offered him the position of editor of National Folklore. Lomax, now the Archive of American Folk Song curator at the Library of Congress, was hesitant. "I may be too busy," he wrote Alsberg. "I'm very tired." Ultimately, though, Lomax agreed, and on July 1, 1937, he

[214] John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Negro Folk Songs As Sung by Lead Belly*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), p. xiii; Untiedt, *Celebrating 100 years of the Texas Folklore Society, 1909-2009*; John Szwed, *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* , Viking Press, New York, NY, 2010, 20-91; Rutowski, Sue, (ed), *Rewriting America*, 53-54, 111, 176.

became the National Advisor on Folklore and Folkways for the FWP—a position he held until July 1938.[215]

In general, Lomax's vision included gathering stories, the questionnaires for the subjects, and instructions on who the writers were supposed to find, how they were to find them, and where they were to find them. Lomax, in a memo to Davis, "wanted to have the TFWP writers' fan out into the state and find people who were willing to talk about their life." Materials, then, were to be collected on those from all walks of life, including tenant farmers and their families, those involved in service occupations in towns and cities, and those persons and their families in miscellaneous occupations such as lumbering, mining, fishing, turpentining and ranching. By 1937, even formerly enslaved people were interviewed as a part of a more significant "slave narrative" venture.[216]

In some cases, a new device (technology, as it were) was being used to collect the stories. Lomax told Preece, "I am starting South next week with my machine. When I get to Texas I want to take you with me to make some records if you can get away from the office—provided you can locate some people who know some songs that are yet recorded. You can tell your father I expect him to sing the ballad of Cole Younger in my microphone. The records I

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[215] While he remained supportive of the project, Lomax was not an administrator. His primary interest was in folk music. Indeed, in 1940, he produced Woody Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads* album, as well as Lead Belly's *The Midnight Special and Other Southern Prison Songs*. Though they did not sell especially well when released, Lomax's biographer, John Szwed calls these "some of the first concept albums…"; Kenneth, Untiedt, *Celebrating 100 years of the Texas Folklore Society, 1909-2009*, University of North Texas Press, University of North Texas Press, Denton, TX, 2009; John Szwed, *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* , Viking Press, New Nork, NY, 2010, 20-91, 163, 167; Preece to Lomax, April 3, 1937, Briscoe Center, TFWP Files, 4H83.

[216] Lomax to Davis, November 12, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

make will be first used by us, and then deposited permanently in the Library of Congress. I expect now to be in Austin the early part of January." [217]

Overall, the instructions to fieldworkers from Lomax emphasized three things. The first was the consistency of questions asked. Indeed, interviewers were provided with a script, including … questions such as "What is the size of the family, what was the number of years you attended school, are your actual needs covered by your current income and what influence does religion have on your morals." Second, the instructions encouraged flexibility in the interviews. "Some topics of importance may come up which are not covered in the discussion presented," W.T. Couch wrote. "It will be best to go ahead and treat such topics and not wait to ask for permission to deal with them. However, no state director should allow writers to abandon other outlines and sample stories to such an extent that the nature of their work is changed. And third, the instructions emphasized the importance of accuracy and authenticity—i.e. of securing material that gave an honest, interesting, and comprehensive view of the kind of life that was lived by most of the people in Texas. "It is extremely important that families be selected, that those which get along well will be selected for stories as well as those that make a less favorable impression… [Also] writers should not limit themselves to the types of stories shown in the samples. It is hoped that original modes of presenting the material will be developed. The criteria to be observed are those of accuracy, human interest, social importance, and literary excellence".[218]

With consultation from Harold Preece, the folklore editor in Texas, FWP workers set out across the Lone Star State to find the people to be interviewed. Texas fieldworkers were as

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[217] Lomax to Preece, December 7, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[218] W. T. Couch, *These Are Our Lives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 417-419.

varied as the subjects they interviewed. At the same time, some had a background in journalism, but most had little experience in conducting interviews. Some contract writers and regular staff writers went on their own creating their own questions, so the stories collected sometimes did not represent the stories editors had expected. Stories collected by the TFWP ranged from ranch hands to roughriders and women running the farms in the western part of the state. The writers tried to collect as many stories as they could. Although the syntax was changed, they tried to write down how they heard those interviewed speak. Once collected, they were sent to the local offices for viewing and editing. After that, they were delivered to the state TFWP offices for further editing and then to the national office.[219]

National editors commented to Davis and his staff as the stories arrived in the San Antonio office. December of 1936 saw Lomax comment to Preece, "Perhaps it is not quite fair for me to attempt a criticism on the first draft of your folklore article. My feeling is that any folklore story or any popular paper about folklore should be couched as nearly as possible in the vernacular of the people from whom the stories come. I should avoid general statements except possibly in the opening paragraph. Your paragraph is not sufficiently inclusive. Those sketchy suggestions are 'off the record', and I send them only because you ask for preliminary comments."[220]

In late 1936, Lomax asked Davis to have John Harmon look for more folklore material. "I think Harmon could find folklore material in the Negro schools of Houston and in the nearby country schools by making requests of the children," Lomax wrote. "We should probably ask

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[219] Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[220] Lomax to Preece, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

first for such examples as: Riddles, Rhymes, Toasts, Graces or blessings, Play party songs, Plantation songs: also known as reels or made up songs or jumped-up songs, Ghost Stories, Fortune tellers and cures. By explaining to the school authorities that this is a government project, I think he could get the help of all the teachers.[221] In October, Lomax wrote Harmon, noting, “When I was in San Antonio recently, Mr. Davis showed me some of the copy you have been sending in. The Washington office has access to all printed information about Folklore in Texas and in other sections of the country.” Lomax continued, “You are making a mistake in hunting for Negro Folklore in material in libraries, believing that you and your workers should get it direct from Negroes themselves.”[222]

A typical day for the writer working on the American Guide Series was to make his or her way out to the various farms, worksites, or streets to gather stories. It was a way for farmers take some time off from their daily chores and talk about their lives. Since many farmers and workers felt at ease with the writers, this activity was a positive and collaborative give-and-take process. The idea was to let the subject tell the writer his “life story.” The interviewers used a list of twenty open-ended questions that always permitted the storyteller to fill in the blanks. Sometimes the writer, would help to keep the subject on course of telling the story if he strayed too far off course, but most of the time, this activity was a “gathering time” of collection. For some writers, this was the most exciting part of the project. As was recollected by Bernice Kelly

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[221] Lomax to Davis, November 12, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[222] Lomax to John Harmon, October 8, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Texas Box 2; Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

Harris and Ralph Ellison, life story collecting was a significant springboard to their writing careers. The principles and procedures in Texas were the same: Gather the stories, send them to the city offices for editing, and get paid. Some editors in the city offices were only there to oversee what was turned in, but the editors would read the stories with fascination.[223] City and state directors' job was to ascertain whether these stories were real. As this author discovered, many stories did not make it to the final publication stage because the directors felt a particular story was too. As Lomax told Preece, "Do not waste any more time "chafing under the burden of enforced activity. Go out on East Fifth Street and sit in the barber shops and barrel houses and pick up some new Negro stuff. Also, drive out a short way from Austin and visit some Negro public schools and get their ring songs. The same suggestions would apply to the Mexican communities in and around Austin. And I don't think, even if you did grow up in the hills, you have got all the lore of that section."[224]

In gathering Negro folklore, Lomax chided Harmon by stating, "When I was in San Antonio recently, Mr. Davis showed me some of the copy you have been sending in. The Washington office has access to all printed information about Folklore in Texas and other section of the country. It seems to me, therefore, that you are making a mistake in hunting for Negro Folklore material in libraries. You and your workers should get it directly from the Negroes themselves. The field of Negro Folklore is practically untouched in Texas. That state should have a very interesting chapter on this subject in our publication" In Texas, principles and guidelines

[223]Interview with Edwin Massengill with author, Raleigh, NC: October 16, 1994; Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[224] Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

for story collecting remained the same: Gather the stories, send them to the city offices for editing and get paid. Some editors in the city offices were only there to oversee the material that was turned in. They read these stories with fascination[225] and the city and state directors determined to ascertain whether they were real. Many stories only reached the final stage if the directors felt a particular story was just too far-fetched. Even though the writers stood by their work, in the end, it was the directors' call to determine which story would be included in the TFWP material.

By using the same employees who collected data for the state and city guides, this task was more manageable than when the program first began. Most of the stories are stored throughout the state. Some repositories are in Austin, Houston, and Fort Worth. Many stories emphasizing a Western theme were published long after the project was completed.

The Texas FWP Life Stories are listed on the Library of Congress Digital Collection Website. Just by reading the titles of the stories one can see that the Western theme was stressed. Pioneer Reminiscences, Cowboys, and Ranching stories were colorful and rich in history. One can see by reading the stories that would make the reader feel as if they were being transported back into the time in which the people, some of whom were hardscrabble and lived from hand to mouth. In describing the life histories, Botkin stated,

"The collected lore and narratives were to be used as a basis for anthologies and the narratives were to be used as the basis for anthologies that would form a composite and

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[225]Interview with Edwin Massengill to author, Raleigh, NC: October 16, 1994; Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Harmon, October 3, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

comprehensive portrait of various groups of people in America. The entire body of material provides new content for a broad documentary of both rural and urban life, interspersed with accounts and traditions, customs regarding planting, cooking, marriage, death, celebrations, recreation, and a wide variety of narratives. The quality of collecting and writing lore varies from state to state, reflecting the skills of the interviewers/writers and the supervision they received."[226]

He told Preece, "Your folklore essay for the guide should be based in current Texas folklore and customs." [227] Lomax also told Preece, "What will be done with all the folk material that is being collected throughout the country, I do not think has been determined." [228] This was before the folklore project was initially started. Early in the project, John Harmon, one of the few African Texans on the TFWP rolls, wrote to Alsberg about gathering material concerning African Texans in the big cities. Harmon stated, "I have always found in previous researches and studies of Negro life that it is necessary to go directly to the people rather than the libraries." Harmon continued, "Here in Houston, as in most large cities, the folkways and customs of the Negro people are hidden in attempt to adapt to the ways of city life."[229] This statement ties into

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[226]*American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project*, 1936-1940. Washington: National Archives. Retrieved August 21, 2014. (https://www.loc.gov/collections/federal-writers-project/about-this-collection/)

[227] Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Texas Box 2. Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[228]Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[229]Harmon to Alsberg, October 12, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Texas Box 2; Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

the earlier statements made about Texas Cultural Nationalism. It can be evident with Harmon's sentiments that culture, even within the insider scope, would have different variances to it. I also worked with Preece during the folklore-gathering years."[230]

The TFWP began recruiting on college campuses during the folklore project era. Annie McAuley was in summer school at Texas Tech University in Lubbock when she answered their ad for TFWP staff. After taking a test and submitting a story for review, she was selected for employment. She received no formal training other than those topical guidelines on what was desired about cowboys. McAuley devised her questions and, in a three-to four-month period, conducted 25 to 30 interviews. She chose cowboy interviewees by talking to old timers and reviewing court records. Interviews were in the subjects' homes and usually lasted a day, although a few took longer. All narratives were typed from notes taken with pencil and paper. McAuley found the cowboys were all happy to be questioned and enjoyed speaking about their experiences. She was paid $60 per month for three or four months. She stated that everything she wrote about was the truth as far as she could determine. McAuley felt they were telling the truth, not "spinning tales". They were telling it "Like it was." To her knowledge, none of these stories were published. Her supervisor analyzed her work and sent it to the University of Texas-Austin.[231] The writers were asked to send as much information as possible on the subjects in response to the practice of sending published items, as opposed to those compiled by the TFWP workers in the field, to the national office. The TFWP sent much material that had been

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[230] Harmon to Alsberg, October 12, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Texas Box 2; Preece to Lomax, October 14, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 15, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Preece to Davis, October 13, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, October 19, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Folder Texas Box 2.

[231] Questionnaire completed by Everett McAuley and Mrs. Annie McAuley for J. W. Lanning, May 10, 1983; Lanning and Lanning, xiv.

previously published rather than focusing more on sending in interviews. Alsberg chided Davis "Our editors report a considerable number of interesting items in the shipment of Texas Folklore material received in this office November 16th. I am disappointed, however, to see that the greater portion of the copy has been derived directly from published sources. Alsberg clarifies "we would attach a greater importance to contributors discovered by your field workers.[232]

Lomax was replaced by Benjamin A. Botkin, who brought sophistication to the project. Botkin embraced the ever-evolving state of folklore. According to him, folklore was not static but ever changing and created by people daily. He developed his novel approach to American folklore while teaching in Oklahoma and later working in the federal government as part of the Federal Writers' Project during the late 1930s and the early 1940s. He became Folklore editor of the Writers' Project in 1938. His efforts working with the Library of Congress led to the preservation and publication of the ex-slave narratives, part of the Federal Writers' Project. His *book Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery* was the first book to use oral narratives of formerly enslaved African Americans as legitimate historical sources.[233]

Many researchers viewed folklore as a relic from the past. However, Botkin and other New Deal folklorists insisted that American folklore played a vibrant role in the present by drawing on shared experiences and promoting a democratic culture. Botkin was the head of the Archive of American Folk Song of the Library of Congress (formerly held by John Lomax and Alan Lomax) between 1942 and 1945. During the mid-40s, Botkin became a board member of People's Songs Inc., a forerunner to Sing Out!, At that time Botkin left his government post to devote full-time to writing. During the '40s and '50s he compiled and edited a series of books on

[232] Alsberg to Davis, November 24, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Entry 22, Texas Box 22.

[233] Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 276-278; Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 29-34, 37; Rutowski, *Rewriting America*, 48-72.

folklore, including *A Treasury of American Folklore* (1944), *A Treasury of New England Folklore* (1947), *A Treasury of Southern Folklore* (1949), *A Treasury of Western Folklore* (1951), *A Treasury of Railroad Folklore* (with Alvin F. Harlow, 1953), *A Treasury of Mississippi River Folklore* (1955), and *A Civil War Treasury of Tales, Legends and Folklore* (1960).[234]

The idea was to find ordinary people, America wanted to know who and what they were. In holding up a mirror to these folks, the United States could see themselves in a different light. As the nation grew smaller, the cultural and linguistic differences, at times, grew more prominent. The folklore project was a way to show that the country, aside from its differences, could be viewed with many different hues. With Botkin, an academic feel was brought to the project. Whereas Lomax was interested in stories from a purely "earthy" study, Botkin brought a theoretical understanding in gathering the stories.[235] With John Lomax and later Benjamin Botkin heading the folklore unit of the FWP project goals were to gather the material and compile the data for publication. "The Writers' Project, as Botkin wrote, "could alter a writer's perspective by giving him or her a social and cultural consciousness too often lacking in ivory-tower writing,"[236] Along with the new outlook came a new subject matter. Botkin shared the desire of literary to move the "streets, the stockyards and the hiring halls into literature". In Botkin's words, the life-history narratives were "the stuff of literature," and, his ideas influenced their subsequent work. Mari Tomasi, who collected many of the granite industry narratives,

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[234] Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 276-278; Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 29-34, 37; Rutowski, *Rewriting America*, 48-72.

[235] Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 176-195; Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 262-284; Rutowski, *Rewriting America*, 48-70; David Taylor, *Soul of a People: The WPA Writers' Project Uncovers Depression America* (Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, 2009), 77.

[236]Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 176-195; Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, 262-284; Rutowski, Rewriting America, 48-70; David Taylor, *Soul of a People*, 77.

wrote a novel, *Like Lesser Gods,* based on that experience. Sam Ross, who interviewed jazz musicians, published *Windy City*, a novel that describes the Chicago jazz scene as he knew it in 1930.[237] Some TFWP writers did publish after the project was over. One is the TFWP director for Area One, Laura Hamner who used her research into life stories of the narratives to write and publish *Short Grass and Longhorns* and later *Light n' Hitch*.[238]

Later revised by Botkin, Lomax showed interest only in the old folklore that he thought was fast disappearing. On the other hand, Botkin also asked field workers to pay attention to emerging folklore, what he called folklore-in-the-making and that term is used in the Texas State Guide's discussion of folklore. In *Portrait of America*, Hirsch makes it very clear how different Botkin's definition of folklore was from Lomax's. "Alsberg thought Botkin could be a key member of a national staff committed to redefining democratic terms." Hirsch believed that Botkin gave" a role to the FWP that Lomax did not, and that was an air of sophistication," Hirsch further believed that with Botkin, the FWP could "thrive within the context of the current setup." Botkin was also after something different from what Couch was trying to do. Using the existing framework within the FWP, employees devoted ample time to the project. For some states, the work on the Folklore Project was going on simultaneously while the state guides were still being worked on. This chapter examines of the interview projects done in Texas and their relationship to what TFWP workers and the national office wanted.[239]

Background of the Folklore Project

[237]Hirsch, 176-195; Mangione, 262-284; Rutowski, 48-70; David Taylor, 77; Botkin, 176-196.

[238]Laura Hamner, *Short Grass and Longhorns*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943) and *Light n' Hitch: A Collection of Historical Writing Depicting Life on the High Plains*, (Dallas: American Guide Press, 1958).

[239] Hirsch, 156-167, Rutowski, 53, 145-198.

The subjects of the slave narratives were getting older and eventually dying off, as were the men and women who were the subjects of the folklore project. Also, the national FWP office wanted to do life histories and folklore collecting for the same reasons they encouraged interviewing formerly enslaved people. They wanted to broaden the sense of who was a part of American history and culture. Second, the folklore project, first under the direction of John Lomax (and then under Benjamin Botkin), was introduced to the state directors in 1937. Alsberg had asked the directors to gather as many stories as possible to form a vision of America as it possibly could. Alsberg pointed out that making a complete collection of folk material in each state was critical. Alsberg wrote:

"It is difficult to tell any field worker precisely when and where and through what sources he may discover interesting material…we have found that a number of State Directors have tried to limit material collected to that typical of their states. This, of course, is an impossible standard."[240]

Dissecting the Folklore Project

One of the many questions presented before the national office was whether the collected stories could be trusted. Some subjects felt they could be noticed if they gave an engaging, meaningful story in the interview.

As we will see with the Texas folk history narratives, it can be made that the stories served both as an example of Texas Cultural Nationalism described life in the era before the Depression hit. Whether or not they are verbatim accounts is not crucial. The most essential part

[240]Alsberg to New Hampshire state director, Charles Ernest White, August 12, 1936, FWNP, Records Group 69; Benjamin Botkin, "We Called It 'Living Lore'", *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore,* Vol. 27, Fall-Winter 2001.

of life histories can tell us that Texas was more than just names and people. The men and women interviewed for the stories were part of the fabric of the land. Researchers must remember that the narratives result from the teamwork of a conversational dialogue between an interviewer and an interviewee and, like other historical sources, are most valuable when combined with as many other sources as possible. Terrell and Hirsch acknowledge it would be unfortunate if we lost the chance to learn from these materials because we shied away from the challenges using them presented.[241]

Marguerite D. Bloxom, in *Pickaxe and Pencil*, insisted that: "All of these first-person documents can provide valuable source material for scholars if appropriate precautions are taken. Since the people involved in the gathering of the narratives are virtually all unavailable for verification, you must in the final judgment draw your own conclusions". As Jim and Judy Lanning stated in *Texas Cowboys: Memories of the Early Days*, "It is our feeling, however, that these cowboy stories are basically substantive.[242]

For this study, in the views of this author, the reader use their best judgment. Terrell and Hirsch got it right when they maintained that the stories are for the most part, true. Those that are not can be used as a litmus test for the studied period. Given that information as a backdrop, we will study the life histories for what they are within the scope of the TFWP.

Collecting and Studying Texas Life Histories

[241] Lanning, *Texas Cowboys*, xv; Terrell and Hirsch, "Replies to Leonard Rapport's "How Valid are the Federal Writers' Project Life Stories", *Oral History Review*, Vol. 8, 1980, 81-89.

[242]Lanning *Texas Cowboys,* Introduction; Marguerite D. Bloxom, *Pickaxe and Pencil: References for the Study of WPA* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1982), 63.

How did the writers amass the vast material they sent to the district and state offices? Let us examine that question. The question remained. Were these stories accurate? Were they true? The correctness of most of these recollections cannot be established, but it is more beneficial to ask instead, what do these stories tell us? Personal recollection has a meaning of its own and offers a window into the ways individuals form their identities and view the world around them.[243]

Life in Texas and Becoming a Texan

For many who immigrated to Texas, life was either an escape or a chance to start over. As W.E. Oglesby stated to a Texas FWP employee, life was different. “I was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee, on December 11, 1863. My father, John H. Oglesby, lived on a farm, and there I was born and reared until I was nine years old, when my parents moved to Texas. I have lived in Texas since the first day I put foot on its soil. It was in 1872 that the Oglesby family joined with seventeen other families which constituted an immigrant train of eighteen covered wagons which left for Texas. Most of the families were Tennessee citizens. There were a couple of families from Alabama. Two families of Johnsons were from Alabama. All the people had sold more or less property and had little money, not much, because in those days real estate did not sell for much. They all loaded their personal effects into covered wagons and started for Texas with high hopes to do better. During those days immigrant trains were compelled to meet the menace of white bandits and Indian raiders. The white bandits were interested in getting

[243]Lanning, *Texas Cowboys*, Introduction; Alsberg to Davis, November 24, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69 Entry 22, Texas Box 2; Lomax to Preece, November 17, 1936, FWPNA, RG 69, Entry 22, Texas Box 2.

money the immigrants had, and the Indians were after anything they could get, and in some cases the scalps of the white people. Therefore, each adult, men and women, carried firearms and a store of ammunition. The immigrant party for the trip. Some were designated to be trail leaders, some acted as scouts, and some were on guard duty. There was no trouble anticipated until the Red River. Each night, during the trip, the wagons were placed in a circle when we camped, and armed guards rode in the vicinity of the circle at all hours. After we began to see Indians we doubled the night guard and everyone kept their guns by their side."[244]

For Belle Little, it was quite the adventure. "I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas on the 3rd of April, 1867. I came to Texas with my parent, J.W. and Sarah Louise Mulloy, in the year 1872. We drove through the country in an old, covered wagon with oxen as our team. We crossed the Red River on a ferry boat. I remember that when Father drove the wagon onto the ferry boat, the wagon was so long that it would hardly go on the boat with the oxen, and how the ferry-man swore about it. When we reached the Navasota River in East Texas, we had to wait two weeks for it to go down, as it was on a rise. We stopped at the old Sterling place. It was a large plantation with its slave quarters; the owner was an ancestor of the ex-Governor Sterling of Texas. The men of the plantation entertained our menfolks by taking them hunting and fishing, while the women were wonderfully hospitable and kind. When we finally crossed the Navasota River, and after traveling over the as yet untraveled roads over the prairie of wild grass, after

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[244] Lanning, *Texas Cowboys,* 3-4; Kenneth J. Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

leaving the timbered river bottom, what a beautiful sight met our eyes. As far as the eye can see the prairie of wild grass, it was sparsely covered with a native growth of mesquite trees, and the sage and wild grass intermingled with the Texas wild flowers, the bluebonnet, the red Indian-head, dandelion, wild roses, and many others, made a picture to satisfy the eye of the artist. When our pioneers, urged on by the restless spirit of adventure, gazed on the prairie, they could not pass it by. Texas was a land of promise, beautiful with its carpet of wild flowers and rich in fertility of the soil, running streams and, an abundance of wild game." The intoxicating aroma of Texas definitely had made its mark on Ms. Little.[245]

Coming to Texas was an adventure. Being acclimated to what the state had to offer and becoming Texan, as it were, was part of the process of what the acculturation of the Cultural Nationalism came to be. As Mrs. George C. Wolffarth told Texas Federal Writer, Ivey G. Warren, the journey was quite exciting and different. "My father, George M. Hunt, brought his family to the South Plains in 1884 from Sterling, Kansas. I was quite small then, but I have heard the details of the trip recounted numbers of times by my parents and the older children of our family. There were fourteen people who started this journey to the Texas Plains. They were Henry Baldwin and his family, Paul (Seely or Sealy?), Miss Celia Corrigon, an elderly man whose name my father soon forgot, and then our family. We began the trip with three wagons, each drawn by two horses, and my father's buggy. Jimmie, our pet pony, was hitched to the buggy. Now of the wagons and the team belonged to the elderly man. My father had made the

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[245] Ava E. Mills, *A Legacy of Words: Texas Women's Stories, 1850-1920,* (San Angelo: Doss Books, 1999), 30, 37; Kenneth J. Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

trip with him to bear his own household goods in his wagon, but on the day out from Sterling, he changed his mind and would come no farther, so Father had to transfer mother's organ and the other things which the old man had been carrying on his freighter to the two remaining wagons, which were already overloaded, and we continued on our journey. We began the long trip on the afternoon of the 5th day of November and reached the Estacado thirty-one days later, the 6th of December. Our route ran from Sterling to Dodge City, along the left bank of the Arkansas River. Our party had always traveled together, but on the second day after we had left the Quitaque Ranch, my parents took my brother, my little baby sister Myrtle, and me in the buggy and left camp at noon, before the wagons had started. My father had been told that when we reached Blanco Canyon, we would have to go about two miles to reach Hank Smith's home, and the thought that we were only a few miles from Mr. Smith's place, but it was much farther than he had reckoned, and somehow, he got confused and lost his way in the canyon. We were separated from the wagons and traveled around over trails through the canyon. Night found us in a ravine, far from our part, without food and water. The few wraps that my father and mother had brought along in the buggy were not sufficient to keep us warm." She and her family reached their destination later and the journey to Texas was quite exciting. [246]

James Childers had an exciting introduction to acculturation to Texas and the nationalism thereof. As he told Texas Federal Writer Sheldon Gauthier, "The place and date of my birth was Murray County, Georgia, December 10, 1855. My parents were John and Jane Grey Childers. Father was an overseer for a large plantation owner of Murray County. He died in 1857, and

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[246] Mills, 37*;* Kenneth J. Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

mother moved to Tennessee, where she had relatives living, in 1868. I lived with her and farmed until I was twenty-two, which was 1877, and then I came to Texas. I came direct to Fort Worth and have lived here ever since. When I came to Fort Worth the Texas and Pacific was its only railroad, having built into the city the previous year. At the time I arrived, I was compelled to walk over a mile to Main Street. This spot of ground where I am now living was part of the cattle ranch, as was practically all the south side of Fort Worth. There were a few houses and cultivated fields scattered through the region."[247]

Mrs. Amelia Steward Christoffer told Texas Federal Writer Effie Cowan life was interesting coming to and living in Texas. "For public travel, there was a stage line in the early days from Old Springfield to Waco. The stop between Springfield and Waco was called "Midway," being midway between the two towns. This stage stop was located on the old Vickers farm, now known as the Corley farm. This was known as the old Waco and Springfield Road and passed between the Drinkard farm and our house. The stage station was one big room made from cedar logs and would hold as many as six horses. They were kept there to change for fresh horses. The fresh horses were brought, and by the time they were changed the driver would call "All ready" and away they went. The stage waited for no one; if anybody wanted to stop over, they took the next stage. If a traveler were taking a long trip, they often stopped at some town and waited for the next stage. When we first came to Texas, stage travel was at its height of usefulness. There were several long routes for hundreds of miles, which reached distant towns

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[247] Lanning, 24-26*;* Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

and military posts. Close to the end of our journey up in the fertile Navasota River country, the little city of Groesbeck was our last stop before we reached our destination, which was to be our future home, midway between Old Springfield and Waco. The country was rapidly recovering from the effect of the Reconstruction days, the after-effect of the War Between the States, and many new home seekers were coming to our part of the country. The advantages of soil and climate were being advertised throughout the old states, and many were seeking new fortunes here."[248]

Civil War Stories and Hardships

Life in Texas had its challenges. During the Civil War, it added an extra variable to the equation. Many Texans had to adjust, adapt or continue to live in hardscrabble. It was this Texan spirit that kept many going during the hard times. For these men and women during the Civil War, life was just about surviving at times.

Belle Little, of Mart, recalled to Texas Federal Writer Effie Cowan about events during the Civil War. "When the War Between the States broke out in 1861, my father, (Dr. George Wyche) joined the Confederate Army and went as a surgeon. Sometime after his health failed and he was placed in the post office in Galveston, as I remember as Post Master. He served until the war closed. As a child, I can recollect him telling of how sorely they needed medicine, such as morphine and whiskey, bandages and so on, for the soldiers; how they had to use hotels for

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[248] Mills, 32-33*;* Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

hospitals, and when the wounded soldiers were brought in and they were out of bandages, they had to take bed sheets and sterilize them to use in place of bandages. I can also remember stories of how the city of Galveston went wild with joy when the blockade was lifted, leaving them free to secure those supplies they needed; how they celebrated in honor of General Magruder, both in Houston and Galveston, with banquet; how the Confederate soldiers, stationed at Galveston, were so royally treated by the residents since they had rescued them from this blockade and driven the Union soldiers out of the bay."[249]

For Mrs. Ernestine Weiss Faudie, it was a family affair. She told Texas Federal Writer Effie Cowan, "My father had two brothers to come with him from Germany and they were in the Confederate army. Their names were August and Fritz Weiss. They were sent back home from the war on furlough but had to return, and August was captured by the Yankees and taken prisoner and made to walk all the way to the prison. He was later exchanged and came home. The other brother, Fritz, came home after the war was over and took tuberculosis and died from this, which he contracted in the army. When any soldiers on either side came through our place, they took anything they could find. The rebels felt that they had a right to if for they were fighting for us. They took our horses and killed our hogs and cows to eat and took our corn. When the blockade was on, and we could not get coffee, we made it out of boiled sweet potatoes. We cut them up and drank this for coffee. And speaking of soldiers. I remember an incident that is amusing now, but at the time to the neighbor it was anything but amusing. When a group of soldiers passed this neighbor's, she tied a hog to the bed post so they would not see it, but they

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[249] Mills, 52; Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

stopped for a drink of water and heard the hog grunting and so came into the room and took the hog and barbecued it out in the yard and ate it before the neighbor's very eyes."[250]

Mrs. Annie Shaw of Mart described a mixed feeling of emotion during America's most destructive time. "I was born on the 29th day of October, 1870, Griffin, Georgia. I was one of seven children by my father's second wife. Their names were William and Elizabeth Woodward. "As I was born at the close of the days of Reconstruction, I can remember many things that were handed down to me by my parents, of those days and the days of the Civil War. When the war broke out, the communities selected one of their men to stay and look after the women and children. He was in charge of the business of those who had no man in the family left, and my father was the one selected for our little community. They were within miles of Sherman's march to the Sea, and his soldiers spread out detachments, and our community suffered from their raids in the loss of livestock and feedstuff. As far as I can remember, they did not burn or destroy homes, but the women were insulted and force was used if they tried to prevent the taking of the provisions. They were forced to keep the soldiers in their homes and cook for them when they passed through the community. My two uncles on my mother's side were soldiers in the Confederate Army. I can remember hearing my mother tell about how they were stationed at one time near our home and the women of the community would go to the camp and take their boys clothing and food. My uncles' names were William and Millage Hartsfield. My parents were still in Georgia during the days of Reconstruction. Father passed away when I was three years old,

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[250] Mills, *53-54;* Bindas, "American-made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Widner, Ronna Lee. "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Ferris, Marcie Cohen. ""the Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

but I remember many things my mother told me of those days. The men who were sent from the North to hold the main offices were called carpet baggers. Many of them were unprincipled and profiteered off of whites. They placed the Negroes in offices over the whites, as history shows, and the white people underwent many humiliating things at the Negroes' hands during those days. One of the most humiliating things they had to bear was the insults from the Negro guards who were stationed along the highways and entrances to the towns. If they spoke to a woman, the woman dared not reply. The most appealing thing to my heart, that she told me, was the how the slaves stayed and helped to take care of the crops while the masters were gone to the war. Especially, I do remember old Aunt Harriet, who helped care for us children. When we left, the neighbors came to bid us good-bye. They were lined up in a row, and the family marched by and shook hands with each one of the friends to bid them farewell. Aunt Harriet stood at the end of the row, with her handkerchief in her hands and a red bandanna on her head, and she wiped away the tears which were streaming down her face, as she bade each one of us good-bye. She has long since gone to her heavenly home. I can also remember her lullabies, as she sang us to sleep in our childhood; and when our mother needed us to be kept quiet, it was always Aunt Harriet who could hold us spellbound as she told us Negro folk and fairy tales. It is hard thing for us to leave that dear old country, but the new state of Texas was calling to the ones who were interested in founding new homes where the land was plentiful and cheap."[251]

Living in early Texas was an adventure. Life was challenging, at times. It built a character in the land and the people who occupied it. Hardships were just part of living in the

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[251] Mills, 54-55*;* Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

Lone Star State. Mrs. Laura Hoover, from Ozona, recalled the hardscrabble life in Texas. "We built our house under a big bluff, because we wanted protection from the weather and also the Indians. Across this bluff just seven miles was a water well known as Howard's Well, but we could not cross that way and were forced to go entirely around, a distance of some twenty-five miles, to obtain our drinking water. No mansion was ever constructed with greater fondness of pride or its occupancy enjoyed more fully, than was that first shelter from the black winds and blinding dust storms of the wild and woolly west. We made our foundation of cedar pickets and covered that with a mixture of mud and grass. That one big room had one window and one door. Many times I have known periods of seven to ten months to elapse without seeing a woman of any kind, but I did not have to look around to find something to while away the time-no lonely hours for me. My duties with the household, the babies and, and helping my husband with the round-ups and branding occupied my every moment much more fully than the bridge hours of today."[252]

Mrs. Elizabeth Roe, of Azle, recalled hardships with her mother being and widow and raising children, alone. "My home was a one room log cabin, similar to the homes of all the other settlers. The settlers in the Ash Creek district built their homes from logs. The only difference in these structures was the number of rooms each contained. Some of the cabins contained two rooms. These cabins were all built by hand. The lumber was hand-made and, by hand, worked into doors, window frames, and flooring. My father enlisted in the Confederate Army when the Civil War started, and became ill and died while serving in Virginia. This event left mother alone

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[252] Mills, 79-80*;* Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

to rear her children. My mother and us children attended to the farm work. I was the oldest, with a brother a year younger, and a baby brother constituted the family of children. While we worked hard and had many difficulties to contend with, we always had sufficient food and ample supply of clothing. We raised a little wheat and corn. From these grains, we secured flour and corn meal. We paid out money for grinding our grain. A portion was taken by the miller in payment for his grinding charge. We had a vegetable garden, had a few chickens, and a couple of milk cows which were pastured for our butter and milk supply."[253]

Along with the hardship came the troubles with Indians. With Texas still being a new territory, Indians (the Comanche, for one) roamed parts of the state. Mrs. Elizabeth Roe recalled, "Our most feared trouble was the Indians. They were a constant menace. In the vicinity of the Ash Creek, there were frequent Indian raids, and a number of settlers were killed during my childhood days. Also, a number of women and children were kidnapped. My mother's home was raided several times, but the good Lord was with us. We were never injured, but did lose horses and food. I recall one night when mother was away at our neighbor, Bedwell's place, where there was a sickness at the time. Brother and I were sitting up waiting for mother to return home. Suddenly we heard a noise similar to an owl's screech. Brother said, "Listen to the owls screeching." "It sounds like owls, but it's not." I replied. When we heard the owl's screech, we blew out the candle and crawled to the hole under a rock. We were not there long when Indians appeared, mounted on ponies, and rode up to the house. They scrutinized the place, then went to

[253] Mills, 75-77*;* Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

the corral and took two of our most valuable horses. The Davis family lived on Walnut Creek. The members of this family were killed and carried off. I don't recall of hearing that any of the Davis folks were ever heard from after the raid. The Hamilton family, which also lived on Walnut Creek, were raided. The parents were killed and two children were carried off. One child was sick at the time, and after it was carried for some distance the Indians rolled the child in a blanket and laid on the ground in some brush. The child, of course, cried. After riding for a distance away from the child, the Indians returned and killed it. It was supposed they feared the cry would attract attention."[254]

Indian troubles would plague many settlers in Texas during the early years. Mrs. Lizzie Powers, when telling the story to Texas Federal Writer Effie Cowan, recalled her story as told to her earlier. "I will tell you about this fight (the Indian fight that followed the Marlin-Morgan Massacre) as it has been handed down through the times to us, from the other two brothers who were also at this fight. In the excitement of the battle, Jackson was wounded and fell off his horse. His brothers and companions stopped and tried to put him back on the horse. The horse was so frightened that he plunged, so they could not get him on the horse. He told them that he knew he was killed and for them to leave him and save themselves, before they, too, were killed. The two brothers were William and Lewis who were in this fight and the story has been handed down by them. Jackson was killed, but his self-sacrifice for his companions will live as long as

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[254] Mills, 57-58*;* Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

there is a Powers left to tell the story. This fight between the settlers and the Indians, on the highway between Waco and Marlin, ten days after the Morgan-Marlin Massacre."[255]

The collected storied showed the intestinal fortitude of the Texans that the Texas FWP interviewed. They showed a can-do spirit that was part of the legacy of Texas Cultural Nationalism. Unfortunately, the aspects of a northeast liberal bias were not shown in the letters to and from the national office to the state office or vice versa. Most of it was straightforward and to the point in the collection of the stories. The next chapter will deal with Slave Narratives.

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[255] Mills, 53*;* Bindas, "American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (08, 2009): 842-4; Ronna Lee, Widner, "Lore for the Folk: Benjamin A. Botkin and the Development of Folklore Scholarship in America." *New York Folklore* 12, no. 3 (1986): 1; Marcie Cohen Ferris, "The Deepest Reality of Life": Southern Sociology, the WPA, and Food in the New South." *Southern Cultures* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 2012): 6, 31,119.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE SLAVE NARRATIVES

The collection of memories of former slaves was another major initiative of the FWP in Texas—as it was in other Southern states. While slavery was never as prominent in Texas as it was in other states of the old Confederacy, there were [number] slaves in the Lone Star State in 1860. By the 1930s, over 5 million people resided in Texas. Of that number, 14 percent (741,000) were African American. With that large a number in the United States and Texas in particular, the FWP felt their story had to be compiled. Overall, Alsberg believed that it was important that the story of slaves be included. As noted by Jerre Mangione in *The Dream and the Deal*, "Their story has to be told before it is too late, as many of the subject were losing memory due to older health", "By showing America in the mirror, she can see what was really like to be part of the country," Alsberg stated. The national director said that this type of route description will be a mixture of a travel guide and a running narrative. In this way, the reader could experience the thrills and dangers of traveling the country and seeing itself for, in some cases, the first time." Overall, then, this amounted to a cultural nationalism—i. e, a wanting to retain the history of minorities and what they went through in the years before and during the Civil War. The preservation, of these stories was important because Texas had been a unique slave state. Indeed, Texas was the only slave state that bordered on a foreign country in 1860. As a result, Texas slave owners were just as concerned about their slaves escaping south into Mexico as they were escaping north. Furthermore, the topography of Texas confined slavery to the east and

southeastern portions of the state because the rest was unsuitable for the traditional cultivation of slavery-related crops.[256]

Ultimately, the slave narratives were collected to present the way of the slave during the Antebellum through the Civil War years. As slaves were growing older and eventually dying, their stories would never be told. From that, the public might never know what life was like for the men and women who lived it. In Texas, slavery was introduced into the colony when the first settlers from the United States emigrated over. Virtually copying the plantation life from whence they came, these settlers were adamant about making their life an agriculturally based economy.

The post-Civil War and Reconstruction period ushered in a wave of violence and terror against blacks. By 1867, the Ku Klux Klan—a terrorist organization grounded in the preservation of white supremacy—attacked many African Americans in the Lone Star State, and many of the incidents went unreported. In Texas, this often equaled how the Black Codes and

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[256] Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Publishing, 1973), 263; Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528–1971* (Austin: Jenkins, 1973). Howard Beeth and Cary D. Wintz, eds., *Black Dixie: Afro-Texan History and Culture in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992). Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989). Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992). Chandler Davidson, *Biracial Politics: Conflict and Coalition in the Metropolitan South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972). W. Marvin Dulaney and Kathleen Underwood, eds., *Essays on the American Civil Rights Movement* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993). Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Victory: The Rise and Fall of the White Primary in Texas* (Millwood: KTO Press, 1979). Merline Pitre, *Through Many Dangers, Toils and Snares: The Black Leadership of Texas, 1868–1900* (Austin: Eakin, 1985). Lawrence D. Rice, *The Negro in Texas, 1874–1900*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971). James Smallwood, *Time of Hope, Time of Despair: Black Texans during Reconstruction* (London: Kennikat, 1981). Ruth Winegarten*, Black Texas Women: 150 Years of Trial and Triumph* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); Catherine Stewart, *Long Past Slavery: Representing Race in the Federal Writers' Project*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 40; *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2013*, (New York: Infobased Learning, 2013), ; Ronald Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow: The WPA and the Texas Slave Narratives*, (Buffalo Gap: State House Press, 2013), 13; Ioannis Miliatos, "Some Aspects of Slavery and Slave Care in Texas", MA Thesis, Texas Southern University, 10-11; Joe Grey Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*, (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 4. Whites generally believed blacks were better suited to agricultural labor. For a complete examination of the nature of the slave's work, religion, racial attitudes, and its role in the development of Texas as an independent republic, Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery; The African American Story*, retrieved April 10, 2023 at 1:31 pm (The African American Story | Texas State History Museum (thestoryoftexas.com); The United States Census, 1930, retrieved April 10, 2023 at 1:39 pm, (16440598v2ch03.pdf (census.gov).

Jim Crow Laws further heightened both fear and retaliation after Reconstruction. Indeed, in 1881, Governor Oran Roberts, a former Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court who was reelected on Post-Reconstruction Reform, believed in taking Texas back to what she was during the Antebellum years (Robert was elected president of the Secession Convention in 1861), lynchings would increase. By the early 20th century, a staunch segregation regime had emerged that limited black participation in elections, denied equal protection and access to education. After the First World War, Texas, like other states across the country, witnessed a wave of white aggression. In Camp Logan, 1917, a race riot occurred in the middle part of Houston where black soldiers from Camp Logan, incited by police violence earlier that day, armed themselves and marched into town. When the riot ended, four soldiers and 15 white civilians were dead. Numerous Black soldiers were eventually hung or received life sentences as punishment, furthering exacerbating race relations in the Bayou City. 1928 saw Houston host Democratic National Convention, which was held in the Sam Houston Coliseum, where a lynching took place with seven barbarians forcing their way into the Jefferson Davis Hospital abducting their victim and hanging him outside the city limits. Southern newspapers callously joked that this was Houston's attempt to add a little local color to the convention. Newspapers of the day, including the Houston Chronicle, would have weekly new stories of lynchings that occurred in the Bayou City in the 1930s.[257]

The number of lynchings in Texas saw an increase in the 1920s and 1930s. With the Depression hitting the state hard by 1935, fear was a prime motivator in why these events took

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[257] "16 Dead-22 Injured From Riot", Houston Press, August 24, 1917; Oran Roberts, Texas State Historical Association, retrieved 11:55 am on April 10, 2023, TSHA | Roberts, Oran Milo (tshaonline.org); Randolph Campbell, *Gone To Texas: A History of the Lone Star State,* Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2017, 290-310; Robert A. Slayton, *Empire Statesman: The Rise and Redemption of Al Smith*, The Free Press, New York, NY, 2001, 250-251; *The Houston Chronicle*, May 24, 1931; April 15, 1932.

place. In some cases, they were started by just one minor incident that grew into a large conflagration of hate and fear. This was the case of the Sherman Riot of 1930. With the lynching on one man, George Hughes was accused of raping a white woman in Sherman, Texas, a riot of epic proportions took place. By the time the dust had cleared, thirty-eight men and one woman had been arrested; martial law had been established with 430 national guardsmen and nine Texas Rangers in Sherman. The Sherman Democrat lamented the lawlessness, property damage, and notoriety that the incident caused but did not lament Hughes's death. Other lynchings took place in Honey Grove and Benchly Texas. Of the lynchings that were reported, the Ku Klux Klan, which experienced a national resurgence in the 1920s, enacted violence and terror on Texas African Americans, and lynching became an increasingly prevalent form of racial intimidation. Between 1885 and 1942, there were 468 documented victims of lynching in Texas, the vast majority of whom were African American. Many did not even go reported.[258]

Nationally, civil rights were a growing issue but were thwarted in many instances by the firm holding of segregation in the Lone Star State. As a state that was both southwestern and southern by population and geography, Texas saw little glimpses of the equalitarian equality that the New Deal promised. Although programs such as the WPA, PWA, NYA, and CCC helped employ in employing African Americans, segregation and lynchings were still part of life for minorities in Texas.

The black newspapers of the time were raising deep issues about racism and lynchings, but any pushback against it would be slow in coming. Not only were African Americans in the

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[258] *Lynchings and What They Mean* (Atlanta: Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching, 1931). Dallas *Morning News*, May 10, 1990. Sherman *Daily Democrat*, May 4–24, 1930. Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980).

minority in opinion, but they were also the minority in size of population. With black newspapers such as the Houston Defender and Call, along with the Dallas Express, outrage was lodged squarely at those in power to limit the lynchings, but most of the calls were unanswered.[259]

Further, the Texas culture and cultural nationalism created by the white Southerners depended on various systems designed to control not only the movements of blacks but also practically every aspect of their lives. Perhaps the most apparent manifestation of black control was the violence committed against the black community. Violence, precisely the act of physical violence, was an unfortunate part of every slave's existence. Southern states created laws that gave slave owners the right to punish their slaves in whatever manner they deemed appropriate. In some cases, this included death. Even when heinous acts were committed in which other slaves were witnesses, the Southern courts would not take the word of a black man against that of a white man, a trend that continued well into the twentieth century. This produced a culture and cultural nationalism that was one-sided well into the 1930s.[260]

From the moment that Stephen F. Austin's original colonists brought Negro slaves into what was the Mexican territory, politicians and historians have maintained that the slaves were well treated in Texas. This belief stemmed from a legend which, in the words of the former City Superintendent of Public Instruction in Marshall, held that the slave "was provided by his master

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[259] "Pair Accused of Trying To Attack White Women", *San Antonio Evening News*, July 15, 1935;" Bishop Lauds Minister For Braving Mob", *Houston Chronicle*, November 15, 1935; "State Probe of Lynching Is Requested", Houston Chronicle, November 16, 1935; "Contemporary Comment", *Wichita Daily Times*, February 22, 1934.

[260] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow: The WPA and the Texas Slave Narratives*, 16; Robert Calvert, *The History of Texas*, (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson Publishing, 1996), 65-66; Miliatos,"Some Aspects of Slavery",1;William Williams, *Slavery and Freedom in Delaware: 1639-1865*, (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Books, 1996) ,88; Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, (New York: Pantheon Press 1974), 12.

with a comfortable cabin and all the necessities of life. When he got sick the "old master' sent for the best physicians in the neighborhood…This I assert was the *usual* treatment by the Negroes at the hands of "old master." Anyone…old enough to recollect anything about ante-bellum times" could verify the statement, he claimed. Information collected from the slave narratives proved that it was not always the case. To gather and have the slave narratives to try and portray the actual (as true as it can be) story of the lives of those in bondage was crucial in the telling of Texas history.[261]

The idea of this chapter is to examine whether or not, through the collected stories of ex-slaves, a trend of Texas Cultural Nationalism can be picked up. Either by the stories themselves or the Texas FWP employees, can a hint of the attitude alluded to in the earlier chapters be present in the collected works. Also, there was a hint of Northeast liberalism that emanated from the national office present in the works or the way they were collected. This will be the theme as the stories are told from the slave's point of view.

In the Texas Slave Narratives, we hear the testimony of a heretofore silent source, the slaves. The question of whether slaves were better treated than those in other parts of the country no longer seems essential; no one has offered evidence to prove that slaves anywhere preferred bondage to freedom. The testimony in the Slave Narratives points to the conclusion that has been a part of Western Civilization ever since the ancients tried to divine the spirit of man.[262]

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[261] Ron Tyler and Lawrence Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1974), I; R. P Littlejohn, "The Negro of the South:, included with interview conducted at Marshall, Texas, September 12, 1887, Transcript p-039, H. H. Bancroft Collection. Italics added. (Hubert Howe Bancroft - Native American Collections at The Bancroft Library - Library Guides at UC Berkeley).

[262] Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii; Catherine Stewart, *Long Past Slavery: Representing Race in the Federal Writers' Project*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 197-228.

Veracity of Sources

When J. Frank Dobie said, ‘Never let facts stand in the way of truth”, he pinpointed the problem in dealing with slavery. In this case, the “facts” were set down by wealthy, slaveholding, conservative white planters and their apologists or by propagandizing, humanistically oriented and equally uncompromising white abolitionists. One of the most insurmountable obstacles in writing about slavery, then, is overcoming the blatant prejudice, pro or con, of almost all the source material. It is challenging in this case to fulfill the ideal role of the historian as defined by Professor Eugene C. Barker, former head of the history department at the University of Texas, who studied the early years of slavery in Texas so carefully: to gather all the pertinent evidence possible on both sides of the issue, then present an unbiased, honest, and, as best as can be determined, truthful analysis of slavery. Slaves did not keep diaries. The best material the ex-slaves left is the Texas Slave Narratives collection.[263]

In dealing with the Texas Slave Narratives, a problem that historians are just beginning to recognize surfaces: the problem of the interview. Oral history is a newly developing form of source gathering, and many questions immediately come to mind. Did the former slaves tell the truth? As Martin Jackson described, securing honest, forthright information could be complex. “Lots of old slaves closes the doors before they tell the truth about their days of slavery,” he warned. He warned. “When the door is open, they tell how kind their masters was and how rosy it all was.” Did the African Americans tell only what they thought the white interviewers wanted to hear? In other words, did the questioner, by virtue by being white, involuntarily intimidate the African Americans and influence their answers? The fact that a government employee was in the

[263] Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii; Stewart, *Long Past Slavery*, 197-228.

home of a former slave, who probably depended on some form of government relief, might have had an effect.[264]

Since the government employees were untrained in both oral history procedures and the history of slavery, did they make the correct interpretations once they had the slaves' responses? Some editing was done, in San Antonio, the state headquarters, and Washington. Just how much is impossible to say, but the narratives must be more consistent in form and content to have been prepared by several individuals working independently. If the editors excluded information that did not conform to the contemporary view of slavery, much important material could have been omitted. These questions must be weighed heavily about the Texas Slave Narratives, for the white interviewers understandably could have been prejudiced or mishandled by the ex-slave narrative's answers. But this does not mean that the questions and answers should be ignored; it means merely that we must use them as we use all historical sources, with proper caution.[265]

The Texas Slave Narratives presents further problems. All the accounts are firsthand, or at least seem to be. Some of the former slaves were very young at the time of the interview. However, they would have been only small children during the Civil War. In the cases where African Americans tell fascinating tales of slavery, they are probably repeating incidents told them by older slaves rather than relating their own experiences. There is also the possibility that they fabricated their own stories. Another question we must consider is, how the interviewers were able to take down the words of the ex-slaves so accurately. No electronic equipment was used. Did they take notes and later expand them, imitating the language of the African Americans as remembered? Today, a standard oral history is submitting a copy of the interview

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[264] Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii; Stewart, *Long Past Slavery*, 197-228.

[265] Stewart, *Long Past Slavery*, 197-228; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii-ix

to the subject for approval or correction. Doubtless, this was not done with the ex-slaves in these interviews.[266]

Despite all these problems, both those of the historian routinely plying his trade and those particular ones associated with the ex-slave interviews, there is significant value in the Texas Slave Narratives. Perhaps, the answers to some of the questions puzzling to the public might be found. Why, for example, would a slave risk his life by running away if he were better treated and happier than slaves elsewhere? If, indeed, Texas slaves were treated better than those elsewhere, it seems inevitable that the planters and overseers failed to convince them of it. Just how were the slaves of Texas treated? What activities made up their day? Were they well cared for, as the white planter sources indicate? Or were they neglected when ill and punished just as brutally as their southern cousins and various travelers in Texas indicated? Perhaps the most crucial reason why historians have traditionally viewed slavery in Texas as more bearable than in other states is that there is no large body of primary source material from the slaves themselves available for rebuttal. It is easy to condemn the institution in Virginia or Alabama because there are volumes of published volumes of published writings of fugitives who escaped from those states to Canada, where they could speak freely. The Slave Narratives are the only such collection that exists for Texas. The interviews are also valuable in literature and the study of folklore, for even though the mind of the public intruded in them at some point and to an undermined degree, the language and spirit of the African American.[267]

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[266] Stewart, *Long Past Slavery*, 197-228; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii-ix

[267] Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii-ix; Ophelia Settle Egypt and Charles S Johnson, *Unwritten History of Slavery: Autobiographical Accounts of Ex-Slaves* (Westport: Greenwood, 1972); William F. McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969),722; John Lomax, *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*, (New York: Hafner, 1971), 2-40, 189; B.A. Botkin, *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery*, (New York: Delta, 1994), x; Yetman, *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution*"(New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1970), 363; *Stewart, Long Past Slavery*, 197-228.

Setting up the Program

Lawrence D. Reddick of Kentucky State University suggested to Harry Hopkins, head of the WPA, and other New Deal administrators that the federal government undertake a program to collect the information from ex-slaves. A pilot program was initiated along the Ohio River. With that experience, an expanded program covering almost the entire South was organized under the Federal Writers' Project. The principal task of the WPA authors was to prepare a series of guides on each state, but John Lomax, head of the Folklore Project of the FWP, influenced the program to include interviews with former slaves in its work. By late 1936, a proposal to interview all available ex slaves had been approved, and the necessary instructions sent to various state officials.[268]

Lomax prepared a set of instructions for all interviewers, listing a series of topics that might be covered in conversations. The list included names and dates of birth, descriptions of life in the quarters and at work, food, clothing, treatment by overseers, Civil War experiences, the coming of freedom, contact with the Ku Klux Klan, and many more. He suggested that these were the only starting point, adding "that the main purpose of these detailed and homely questions is to get the African American interested in talking about the days of slavery. If he will talk freely, he should be encouraged to say what he pleases without reference to the questions." The Texas interviews were then written up and sent to J. Frank Davis, the TFWP director, employed a man to edit them and perhaps, rewrite the narratives. A similar process occurred in Washington where Henry Alsberg, Director of the national FWP, Lomax and Sterling Brown,

[268] Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii-ix; Botkin, *Lay My Burden Down*, ix; McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration*, 721-722; Davis to Alsberg, October, 7, 1937, FWPNA, RG 69,;Yetman, *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution"*, 244.

head of the African American FWP, reviewed most of the stories.[269]

The results were enthusiastically received in Washington. No statewide plan assured complete coverage or random sampling, but industrious employees in Marshall, Fort Worth, and San Antonio collected many interviews. While fewer came in from more populous areas such as Dallas and Houston. The Texas project included 308 interviews. Only Arkansas accumulated more.[270]

The collecting of the narratives was statewide. Federal writers combed the state for stories to send back to San Antonio. Armed with a pencil and notepad, these men and women compiled the information given to them. With no set schedule, they would go out and find these ex-slaves in towns and on the farms and industry.

Collecting Stories

As the Texas FWP workers combed the state looking for stories, the most consistent question asked of former slaves involved remembrances and perceptions of their former conditions in bondage in the antebellum environment. Although this may seem a simple and direct query, the answers were often influenced by multiple factors that were not easily understood. Most often, the former slaves responded to questions about their former bondage based in part on their memories of how they were treated about their work. It is no surprise then that those who labored in the fields. However, there were those whose recollections and perceptions of their lives as slaves were tempered by their current living conditions in the 1930s.

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[269]Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, vii-ix; Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, ix; McDonald, Federal Relief Administration, 344.

[270] Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, vii-ix; Yetman, *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution,* 357.

For some of the former slaves, surviving slavery was a more manageable task compared to the challenges they faced as elderly individuals in the Great Depression.[271]

The theme of what life was like during the times of bondage dictated some of the subjects of conversation for former Texas slaves. In the case of Walter Leggett, it was a harsh life. Born sometime around 1855 on a plantation near Whitesville, North Carolina, Leggett and his family belonged to Captain Burns and his family. He did not experience harsh treatment from the captain, but he told the interviewer that his parents nonetheless said Burns was "mean and whipped them and made them work like dogs." However, Leggett's experiences may have been different from those of his parents because he was a house slave with the responsibility of caring for Burn's son. However, Leggett recalled that Sundays were a special time for the slaves on the Burn's plantation because they were allowed to have church services, and on Saturdays, they ate, drank, and danced. Jack and Rosa Maddox both were born into slavery and neither knew their actual birth date. Jack belonged to the Maddox family from Georgia, whereas Rosa belonged to the Andrews family in Mississippi. They married in Union Parish, Louisiana, in 1869, meaning they had been married sixty-nine years at the time of their interview. The Andrews family owned twelve slaves and Rosa said they were treated well. "Dr Andrews was good to us and gave us good lil cabins and cotton mattresses and blankets. We had enough to eat, too." At nine, Rosa went to work in the house as "waitin' and nursegirl" to Dr. Andrew's children and wife, who she called "Miss Fannie."[272]

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[271] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow: The WPA and the Texas Slave Narratives*, 17; Stewart, *Long Past Slavery*, 197-228.

[272] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 17; Walter Leggett, Jack and Rosa Maddox, Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 3, Lewis-Ryles.

Other Texas ex-slaves, such as William Paxton, Clarissa Scales, and Leggett, remembered slavery with varying degrees of fondness. Paxton said he remembered few whippings and stated "dere wasn't much whippin' only when de slaves was lazy,", and "Marse Paxton and de boys was mighty good to de slaves." Similarly, Scales, whose job was "tenden the fires and herdin' the hogs", recalled the benevolence of William Vaughn toward her family. "Master Vaughn was good and treated us all right. Missy's name was Margret, and she was good too." However, Leggett boldly told his WPA interviewer that, "I like slavery just fine, in fact, I aint go no use for free n******. I don't who is going to take care of them when they gets old. The free n****** think they are sho' smart. I aint go no use for churches, women and free n******-they make a difference between this country being a hell land a heaven." He also indicated his disdain for religion when he said, "church folks used to have a good times, singings and dinner on the grounds. All they do know is ask for money. I ain't no 'ligous man.[273]

Arriving in Texas

For many slaves, the road to Texas was an interesting one. For Eliza Holman, it was an adventure. "I'll tell you how we came to Texas. The meals were cooked by the campfire, and after breakfast we started, and it was bump, bump, bump all day long. It was rocks and holes and mudholes, and it was streams and rivers to cross. We crossed one river, it must have been the Mississippi, and drove on a big bridge and they floated that bridge right across the river. Massa and missus argued all the way to Texas. She was scare most of the time, and he always said, "The Lord is guiding us." She said, "It is fool's guiding, and a fool move to start." That's the

[273] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 17-18; William Paxton, Clarissa Scales and Walter Leggett, Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 3, Lewis-Ryles.

way they talked all the way. And when we got in a mudhole, it was an argument again. She said, "This is some more of your Lord's calls." He said, "Hush, hush woman. You're getting sacrilegious." So we had to get out and walk two miles for a man for a man to get his yoke of oxen to pull us out of that mudhole, and when we were out, massa said, "Thank the Lord." And the missus said, "Thank the men and the oxen." Martha Spence Bunton's case, it was about the weather and animals. "I remember how Massa Spence brought us to Texas in wagons, and the way we knew when we hit Texas was because massa began to talk about a norther. When that norther struck, all the weeds and the leaves just started rolling. Us poor, ignorant n***** thought at first they were rabbits, because we'd never seen a rabbit then. Massa Spence rode his horse and missie Spence came along in the richer way, in a coach. The children walked mornings and the older folks walked afternoon. With Betty Farrow, it was a surprise as "About three years before the war, master sold his plantation to go to Texas. I remember the day we started in three covered wagons, all loaded. It was a celebration day for us children. We traveled from light to dark, except to feed and rest the mules at noon. I don't recollect how long we were on the way, but it was a long time, and it was a celebration toward the last. After a while we came to Sherman, in Texas, to our new farm." In Caroline Wright's case, it was almost a shock when she was told she was going go to the Lone Star State. "One day I saw a lot of men, and I asked the missus what they were doing. She told me they came to fight in the war. The war got so bad that Mr. Bob told us we were all going to Texas. We all started out on Christmas Day of the first year of Lincoln's war. We went in ox wagons, and we had mules to ride. On the trip to Texas, one evening a storm came up, and Mr. Bob, he asked a man to let us use a big, empty house. They put me by the door to sleep, cause I was the lightest sleeper. Sometime in the night, I woke up and there stood the biggest haunt I ever saw. He was ten feet high and had on a big beaver coat. I

hollered to my pappy, "Pappy, wake up, there's a haunt." Next morning we got up and there was nothing out of place. No ma'am, we didn't catch the haunt; a haunt just can't be caught. Next morning we started again on our journey, and sometime in March we reached Texas. They took us all across the Brazos on the ferryboat, just about where the suspension bridge is now.[274]

Matthew Gilmore, originally from Mobile, Alabama, made the trip quickly, worried about the Union soldiers making their way south. "I remember when we were coming from Mobile to Texas. By the time we heard the Yankees were coming, they got all their gold together and Miss Jane called me and gave me a whole sack of pure gold and silver, and said bury it in the orchard. I sure was scared, but I did what she said. There was more gold in a big desk, and the Yankees pulled the top off that desk and got the gold. "Miss Jane, are they going to give it back?" All she said was, "shut your mouth" and that is what I did. That night they dug up the buried the gold, and we left out. We just traveled at night and rested in the daytime. We were scared to make a fire. That was awful. All on the way to the Mississippi, we saw dead men lying everywhere, black and white. While we were waiting to go across the Mississippi, white man came up and Marse Barrow how many n******* he had, and counted us all. While we were waiting the guns began to go boom, boom, and you could hear all that noise, it was so close. When we got on the boat it flopped this way and that and scared me. I sure don't want to see any more days like that with war and boats. With Van Moore, it was different story. "Mammy told me it was this way how come the Cunninghams and the McKinneys came to Texas. When war began most folks back in Virginia who owned slaves moved further South, and lots to Louisiana

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[274] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 17-18; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 8 ,12-13; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

and Texas, cause they said the Yankees would never get that far, and they wouldn't have to free the slaves if they came running away to the north, back there. Mammy said when they started for here in the wagons, white folks told poor n******, who were so ignorant they believed all the white folks told them, that where they were the lakes were full of syrup and covered with batter cakes, and they wouldn't have to work so hard. They told them that so they wouldn't run away." [275]

Nelson Denson recalled his trip to Texas by saying to the TFWP interviewer, "Marse Jim Denson had an easy living in Arkansas, but folks everywhere were coming to Texas, and he decided to throw in his fortunes. It wasn't too long after the war with Mexico, and folks came in a crowd to protect themselves against the Indians and wild animals. The wolves were the worst to smell cooking and sneak into camp, but Indians came up and made the peace sign and had a pow wow with the white folks. Marse got beads or cloth and traded for leather britches and things. I want to tell you how we crossed the Red River on the Red River Raft. Back in those days the Red River was nearly closed up by this timber raft, and the big boats couldn't get up the river at all. We got a little boat and a Caddo Indian to guide us. This Red River Raft the said was centuries old. The driftwood floating down the river floated stopped in the still waters and made a bunch of trees, and the dirt accumulated, and broomstraws and willows and brush grew out of this rich dirt that covered the driftwood. This raft grew about a mile a year, and the oldest timber rotted and broke away, but this was not fast enough to keep the river clear. We found bee trees

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[275] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrows,* 17-18; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*,5.; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

on the raft and had honey. It was a long time after we came to Texas when the government opened the channel. That was in 1873 (1874). Before that, a survey had been made and they found the raft, it was like a big swamp, with trees and thick brush and the driftwood and logs all wedged up tight between everything."[276]

War and Fighting the Establishment

As the Civil War was becoming more and more inevitable, Abraham Lincoln adamantly stated his position that the federal government did not have the authority to eliminate slavery. However, he was opposed to its expansion west of Texas. There were nearly 200,000 slaves in Texas, and even though the presence of Union armies in the state had little effect on slavery, most everyone, master and slave, knew that some form of social, economic, and political change was on the horizon.[277]

Texas' former slaves recalled how their masters responded in much the same manner as others throughout the South. Some trained local volunteers for service in the state's militias; others collected food and supplies, and some actively participated in combat. However, some white males in Texas tried to avoid active military service altogether. For example, former slave Susan Ross said, "Lots of em didn't want to go, but dey has to." Ellen Payne of Marshall, Texas, also commented that she knew many young males who tried to get out of service altogether. "I member the white southern men folks who run off to the bottoms to git 'way from war." Lastly,

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[276] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 98; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 96-112; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

[277] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 98; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*,96-112; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

Harrison Beckett told a secondhand story of a slave owner's son who deserted his Confederate unit in Arkansas "When dat first cannon busts at Li'l Rock, he starts runnin' and never stops till he gits back home, I don't see how he could do det, 'cause Li'l Rock am way far off, but dat what they dey say. Den de men comes to git 'serters and dey gits Li'l Ide and takes him back.[278]

In addition to how white Texans responded to the Civil War, most of the former slaves interviewed either remembered the war firsthand or were told how local slaves reacted to the conflict. For example, former slave Millie Forward commented that many slaves witnessed fighting as cooks, bodyguards, or nurses to their masters and other Confederate soldiers because he believed every slave owner took a slave to war with him. Martin Jackson commented that he was not only aware of the implications of the Civil War but also recalled wanting the Confederacy to lose. Jackson said he followed his "young master" to war and eventually ended up with the First Texas Calvary. Furthermore, he remembered feeling that the North would win, but curiously, he did not want the First Texas Calvary defeated in the process. "I knew the Yanks were going to win, from the beginning. I wanted them to win and lick us Southerners, but I hoped they was going to do it without wiping out our company." Jackson also commented that his father cautioned him that regardless of the outcome, they were going to have to along with whites after the war.[279]

Like Jackson, former slave William Adams also recalled how many of the more than one hundred slaves on the Davis plantation were taken and forced into service for the Confederates.

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[278] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 99; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*,111; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

[279] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 99; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*,96-111; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

Slaves did not experience changes when forced into service for the Southern armies, but there were also many changes that occurred back on the farms and plantations. For example, Andy Anderson said that his slave owner began to make preparations to join the Confederate army by hiring an overseer to manage the plantation in his absence. Anderson said life on the plantation changed after the overseer arrived: their food rations were reduced but the new overseer demanded more production. He also said, "de hell start to pop…he half starve us n***** and he want mo work and he start de whippin's." Conversely, former slaves Jack Bess, Abram Sells, and Henry Lewis said many slaves were aware of the war and the implication that it could result in their freedom. Bess said he had heard about the war when the Confederate conscription had begun. Still, he said the war did not mean anything to the slaves on the Bess ranch. "We didn't know hardly what dey was talkin' 'bout 'cause we knowed dat would be too good to be true.[280]

Sells remembered other slaves talking quietly about what they would do when the war ended. Nonetheless, they were frightened by the possibility of freedom because they were unsure about what they would do or go. Still, in retrospect, Sells commented, " Now, I guess I don't want to live back in them times no mo', but I sho' seed lots of n****** not doin well as they did when they was slaves and not have 'nigh as much to eat." Henry Lewis said the slaves knew nothing about the war and talked in the slave quarters about being free, but "we aint said nothin' where de white folks heared us." However, not all Texas slaves remembered being aware of the Civil War. Former slave James Hayes indicated he knew little of the war and that his life was not significantly altered. He admitted that some of the foods they were accustomed to eating were "scarce," but they had plenty of food. "But we'uns had plenty to eat and us slaves didn' know

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[280] Goodwin*, Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 97-110; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*,112; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

what de War was ‘bout. I guess we was too ign’rant. De white white folks didn’ talk ‘bout it ‘fore us.[281]

The Civil War was among the most destructive and agonizing engagements ever fought in the United States. Brother versus brother, this war nearly destroyed a country that many struggled to preserve. For the ex-slaves of the former Confederacy, it was a bewildering time. For William M. Adams, it was not very clear, “Just before the war a white preacher came to us slaves and said, “Do you want to keep your homes where you get all to eat, and raise your children, or do you want to be free to roam around without a home, like the wild animals? If you want to keep your homes, you’d better pray for the South to win. All that want to pray for the South to win, raise your hand.” We all raised our hands because we were scared not to, but we sure didn’t want the South to win. That night all the slaves had a meeting down in the hollow. Old Uncle Mack, he got up and said, “One time over in Virginia there were two old n****** , Uncle Bob and Uncle Tom. They were mad at one another, and one day they decided to bury the hatchet. So they sat down, and when Uncle Bob wasn’t looking, Uncle Tom put some poison in Uncle Bob’s food, but he saw it, and when Uncle Tom wasn’t looking, Uncle Bob turned the tray around on Uncle Tom, and he got the poison food. “Uncle Mack, he said, “That what we slaves are going to do, just turn the tray around pray for the North to win.” Isabella Boyd stated, “ Massa Wood always took the paper, and one night they sat up a long time and did their reading. Next morning the old cook woman, she said, “Well, they have a big war, and lots of them are wounded.” Before long we had to take care of some of them wounded soldiers, and they had a

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[281] Goodwin*, Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 100; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*,112; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers’ Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

camp near us. They all camped around here, and I don't know which the Yankees were and which were the Confederates.[282]

James Hayes recalled to a TFWP writer, "About that time the war started. The massa and his boy, Massa Ben, joined the army. The massa was a sergeant. The women folk were proud of their men folks, but they were powerfully grieved. All this time the men were away, I could tell Missy Elline and her mama were worried. They always sent me for the mail, and when I fetched it, they ran to meet, anxious like, to open the letter, and were scared to do it. One day, I fetched a letter, and I could feel it in my bones, there was trouble in that letter. Sure enough, there was trouble and heaps of it. It told that Massa Ben was killed, and that they were shipping him home. All the folks, colored and white, were crying. Miss Elline fainted. When the body came home, there was a powerful big funeral and after that, there was powerful weeping and sadness on that place. The women folks didn't talk much and there was no laughing like before." As Hayes continued, life during the war was about the same, but there were some differences. "During the war, things were about the same, like always, except some victuals were scarce. But we had plenty to eat, and we slaves didn't know what the war was about. I guess we were too ignorant. The white folks didn't talk about it before us. When it was over, the massa came home, and they held a big celebration. I was working in the kitchen, and they told me to cook heaps of ham, chicken, pies, cakes and sweet potatoes, and lots of vegetables. Lots of white folks came, and they ate and drank wine, then sang and danced. We colored folks joined in and were singing out

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[282] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 96; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 97-112; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

in the back, "Massa's in the cold hard ground." Massa asked us to come in and sing that for the white folks, so we went into the house and sang that for the white folks, and they joined in the chorus."[283]

Nancy King saw it from a different perspective. "I saw the soldiers coming and going to the war and remember when Massa Williams left to go fight for the South. His boy, Willie, was sixteen and tended the place while massa was away. Massa done said he'd let the n****** go without fighting. He didn't think the war was right, but he had to go. He deserted and came home before the war got going good, and the soldiers came for him. He ran off to the bottoms, but they were on horses and overtook him. One of them said, "Jackson, we aren't going to take you with us now, but we'll fix you so you can't run off till we get back." They put red pepper in his eyes and left. Missie cried. They came back for him in a day or two and made my father saddle him up Hawk-Eye, massa's best horse. Then they rode away. One day my brother, Alex, hollered out, "Oh, Missie, yonder is the horse, at the gate, and there isn't anybody riding him. Missie threw up her hands and said, "Oh, Lord, my husband is dead." She knew somehow when he left he wasn't coming back." It was a shock for Jacob Branch to see the war come to Texas. "One morning Alex and me got up at the crack of dawn to milk. All at once came a shock that shook the earth. The big fish jumped clean out of the bay, and turtles and alligators ran out of their banks. They plumb ruined Galveston. We ran into the house, and all the dishes and things jumped out of the shelf. That was the first bombardment of Galveston. The soldiers put powder under people's houses and blew up Galveston. Young massa Shake Stevenson, he volunteered and got killed

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[283] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 96-110; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 99; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

somewhere in Virginia. Young massa Tucker Stevenson, he didn't believe in war, and he said he was never going to fight. He hid in the woods so the conscript men couldn't find him. Old man LaCour came around and said he had orders to find Tucker and bring him in dead or alive. But because he was old massa's friend, he said, "Why don't you buy the boy's services off?" So massa took the boat, cat rig we called it, and loaded it with corn and such, and we poled it down to Galveston. The people needed food and so much, that load of supplies bought off Massa Tucker from fighting. Branch continued, "After the war started, lots of slaves ran off to get the Yankees. All them in this part headed for the Rio Grande River. The Mexicans rigged up the flatboats out in the middle of the river, and tied stakes with rope. When the colored people got to the rope they could pull themselves across the rest of the way on those boats. The white folks rode the Mexican side of that river all the time, but plenty of slaves got through anyway. I waited on lots of soldiers. I had to get smartweed and boil salt water to bathe them in. That helped the rheumatism. Them soldiers had rheumatism so bad from standing day and night in the water."[284]

Nelson Denison and Martin Jackson recalled many events during the war that made an impression on them. In Denison's case, "Before Texas seceded, Marse Jensen sold us all to Marse Felix Grundy, and he went into war in General Hardeman's brigade, and I was with him as a bodyguard. When the battle of Mansfield came, I was sixteen years old. We were camped on the Sabine River, on the Texas side, and the Yankees were on the other side a little ways. I remember the night before the battle, how the campfires looked, and it was quiet night and the whipperwhills were calling in the weeds. We were expecting an attack and sang to keep cheerful.

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[284] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 96-110; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 103; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

The Yanks sang the “Battle Cry of Freedom” when they charged us. They came on and on and, Lord, how they fought! I stayed close to Marse Grundy, and the rebels won and took about a thousand Yanks.” Jackson, followed his master into battle with the First Calvary. “I was here in Texas when the Civil War was first talked about. I was here when the war started and followed my young master into it with the First Texas Calvary. I was here during Reconstruction, after the war. I was here during the European war, and the second week after the United States declared war on Germany I enlisted as a cook at Camp Leon Springs. This sounds as if I liked the war racket. But, as a matter of fact, I never wore a uniform-grey coat or khaki coat-or carried a gun, unless it happened to be one worth saving after some Confederate soldier got shot. I was official lugger-in of men that got wounded; and might have been called a Red Cross worker if we had such a corps connected with our company. My father was head cook for the battalion and between times I helped with the mess. There was some difference in the food served to soldiers in 1861 and 1917. Just what my feelings about the war, I have never able to figure out. I knew the Yanks would going to win, from the beginning I wanted to win and lick us Southerners, but I hoped they were going to do it without wiping out our company. I’ll come back to that in a minute. As I said, our company was the first Texas Calvary. Col. Buchell (August C. Buchel, who commanded the First Regiment, Texas Calvary) was our commander. He was a full blooded German and a fine a man and soldier you ever saw. He was killed at the Battle of Marshall (Mansfield) and died in my arms. You maybe interested to know that my old master, Alvy Fitzpatrick, was the grandfather of Governor Jim Ferguson. Lots of colored boys did escape and join the Union army, and there are plenty of them drawing a pension today. My father was always counseling me. He said every man has to serve God under his own vine and fig tree. He kept pointing out that the war wasn’t going to last forever, but that our forever was going to be

spent living among Southerners, after they got licked. He would cite examples of how white would stand flat footed and fight for blacks the same as members of their own family. I knew that was all true, but still I rebelled, from inside me. I think I really knew I was afraid to run away because I thought my conscience would haunt me."[285]

Jackson continued, "It was the Battle of Marshall (Mansfield) in Louisiana, that Col. Buchell was shot. I was about three miles from the front, where I had pitched up a kind of first-aid station. I was all alone there. I watched the whole thing. I could hear shooting and see the firing. I remember standing there thinking the South didn't have a chance. All of a sudden, I heard someone. It was a soldier, who was half carrying Col. Buchell in. I didn't do anything for the colonel. He was too far gone. I just held him comfortable, and that was the position he was in when he stopped breathing. That was the worst hurt I got when anybody died. He was a friend of mine. He had a lot of soldiering before and fought in the Indian war. Well, the battle broke the back of the Texas Calvary (Jackson is in error. This battle was actually a minor Confederate victory). We began straggling back toward New Orleans, and by that time, the war was over. The soldiers began to scatter. They were a sorry looking bunch of lost sheep. They didn't know where to go, but most of them ended up pretty close to the towns they started from. They were like homing pigeons, with only the instinct to go home, and yet most of them had no home to go to."[286]

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[285] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 96-110; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 103; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

[286] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 96-110; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 103-105; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

Freedom

As the war was coming to an end, the realization of what to do next suddenly hit many African Americans. What might they do next? Where would they live? These questions weighed heavily on the minds of those formerly in bondage. For many, it was an instant euphoria. The joy felt was immeasurable. In the minds of many, the day of freedom was dreamt about for so long; when it finally happened, the shock of emancipation produced the overwhelming feeling of what the future might entail.

Molly Harrell told a TFWP interviewer, "Everybody talked about freedom and hoped to get free before they died. I remember the first time the Yankees passed by, my mother lifted me up on the fence. They used to pass by with bags on the mules and fill them with stuff from the houses. They went in barn and helped themselves. They went into stables and turned out the white folks' horses and ran off what they didn't take for themselves. Then one night I remember just as well, me and my mother were in the cabin getting ready to go to bed, when we heard somebody call her. We listened, and the overseer whispered under the door and told my mother she was free but not to tell anybody. I don't know why he did it. He always liked my mother, so I guess he did it for her. The master read us the paper right after that and said we were free. Me and my mother left right off and went to Palestine. Most everybody else went with us. We all walked down the road singing and shouting to beat the band."[287]

In the case of Andrew Goodman, the slaves and their keepers reacted oddly. "When Marse Bob came home, he sent for all the slaves. He was sitting in a yard chair, all tuckered out,

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[287] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 96-110; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 115; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

and shook hands all around, and said he was glad to see us. Then he said, "I've got something to tell you. You are just as free as I am. You don't belong to nobody but yourselves. We went to the war and fought, and the Yankees done whipped us, and they say the n****** are free. You can go anywhere you like. He couldn't help but cry. The n****** cried but didn't know what Marse Bob meant. They were sorry about the freedom because they didn't know where to go, and they'd always depended on old Marse to look after them. Three families went to get farms for themselves, but the rest just stayed on for hands on the old place. The Federals had been coming by, even before Old Marse came home. They all came by, carrying their little buckets, and if they were walking they'd look in the stables for a horse or a mule, and they just took what they wanted of corn or livestock. They did the same after Marse Bob came home. He just said, " Let them go on their way, because that's what they're going to do anyway." We were scarder of them than we were of the devil. But they spoke right kindly to us colored folks. They said, " If you got a good master and want to stay, well you can do that, but now you can go where you want to, 'cause there ain't nobody going to stop you." The n****** couldn't hardly get used to the idea. When they wanted to leave the place, they still went up to the big house for a pass. They just couldn't understand about freedom. Old Marse or Missus said, you don't need no pass. All you got to do is take your foot in your hand and go."[288]

Many former slaves chose to stay on the plantation and began working for wages. This was perhaps their first exercise of freedom in their lives. However, in time, many began slowly moving away from the plantation and the memories of slavery. Aunt Pinkie Kelly from Brazoria County admitted to not knowing much about the war, and her owner did not immediately tell his

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[288] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 96-110; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 115-116; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

slaves they were free. Although they were happy they soon realized they had nowhere to go. "Law, we sho'shout, young folks and old folks too. But we stay there, no place to go, so we jes stay, but we gits little pay." Born in Harrelson County, former slave Lizzie Jones also said her former owner did not immediately tell them they were free, but they nonetheless stayed another four years.[289]

Former slave Betty Powers remembers her owner advising the slaves to remain with him on the plantation until they were able to take care of themselves and make their own decisions for their lives. "He 'vises dem to stay till dey git de foothold and larn how to do. Lots stayed and lots go. My folks stays 'bout four years and works on shares." Her father bought his own land near the plantation. Former slave Lewis Jones remembered his former owner offering to pay those who would stay after freedom. "Some stays and some goes off, but mammy and pappy and me stays. Dey never left dat plantation and I stays 'bout 8 years." Likewise, former slave Henry Probasco stated that his former owner told them they were free and said they could stay or go. "Yous am free and dem what wants to go, let me know. I'll 'range for de pay or to work de land on shares." Probasco's parents stayed, "but in 'bout a year pappy moves to Waco and runs a shoe shop."[290]

Though the summer and winter of 1865, the former slaves began migrating from their plantation to the nearest city or other rural areas. Although there were definite instances of black

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[289] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 108; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 113-127; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

[290] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 108; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 113-127; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

men deserting their slave families, Texas' former slaves also remembered black men who continued to see themselves as husbands and fathers. Former slaves Lu Perkins and Lu Lee both recited their experiences at emancipation when their slave husbands deserted them. Perkins said her first husband left her and went back to Mississippi after emancipation. Lee described her husband by saying "he wasn't much good." Apparently, he sold crops that did not belong to him, which came to the attention of the local authorities. Lee indicated that he eventually left the family. However, former slaves Sarah Ford and Walter Rimm commented that their fathers did not abandon them and each continued his role as husband and father after emancipation. Ford's former owner instructed her father to leave the plantation after emancipation because he was considered a bad influence on the former slaves. Ford's father complied, but he later returned for his family and he later settled near East Columbia. Rimm stated that his mother wanted to stay on the plantation because they had nowhere to go. Undaunted, his father packed up the family and left. Rimm recalled that their former owner approached his parents six months after they left and asked to return as sharecroppers. "Den massa tells us we can live on de old place without rent and have what can make." They stayed another two years on the plantation, but this time it was their choice.[291]

Like Rimm's father, many former slaves recalled leaving the plantation as soon as possible. Former slave Andy Anderson said he left the plantation as soon as he found out he was free. Susan Ross said after freedom her brother, "Whoop, run and jump a high fence and told mammy goodbye. Den he grab me up and hug and kiss me and say, 'brother gone, don't 'spect you ever see ne mo more.' I don't know where he go, but I never did see him 'gain. Former

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[291] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 106; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 114,118 126; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

slaves Peter Mitchell, Tom Holland and Will Adams each remembered slaves having to take care of themselves without any help from their former owners. Mitchell said, "When freedom come dey turn us loose and say to look out ourselves. Mos's of de slaves jus'works round for de white den gits pay in food and de clothes, but after awhile de slaves larns to take care of demselves." Holland said his slave owner went to war but never returned, so it was his wife who told them they were free. Holland remembered, without instructions on where to go or what to do, "So we starts to cry and asked her what we gwine to do. She said we could stay and farm with her and work her teams and use her tolls and land and pay her half of what we made, 'sides our supplies. That's a bunch of happy Negroes when she told us this." Adams also stated there were tears on hearing the news that they were free, but like Holland, these were not tears of joy, but rather fear. "They's lots of and weepin' when they sot us free. Lots of them didn't want to be free, 'cause they knowed nothin' and had nowhere to go." [292]

Although some slave owners did not free their slaves until forced to do so, Annie Row's narrative indicates that some were distraught to the point of death. Born near Rusk, Texas, Row remembered her former slave owner getting a notice two years into the war notifying him of the death of one of his two sons who had joined the Confederacy. She said he immediately turned around and struck her mother with a poker, grabbed his gun, and proceeded to the fields, intent on killing as many of his slaves as his grief would allow.

"Him takes de gun offen de rack and starts for de field whar de n****** am a-workin'. My sister sees that and we'uns start runnin' and screamin', 'cause we'uuns has brothers and sisters in the field. But the good Lawd took a hand in that mess and de marster ain't gone far in

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[292] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 106; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 114,118, 126; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

the field when he draps all of a sudden. De death sets on de marster and de n****** comes runnin' to him. Him can't talk or move and dey tote him in de house."

The next day he was dead. When the other son returned from the war, he informed the slaves that they were free and could stay or go. Row recalled, 'Mos of 'em left as soon's dey could." As a result, Row stated that the surviving son later killed himself by cutting his own throat with a razor. A note found next to his body said he didn't want to live, "caus de n***** was free and dey's all broke up. Former slave Jack Bess recalled that he was definitely glad when freedom came, but he knew he was facing an uncertain future, "We didn' know nothin' to do but jes stay on dere, and we did 'bout three years and de boss pays us a little by de month for our work. [293]

When finding freedom, William Adams, found the excitement and jubilation quite interesting. "After de war dere was a lot of excitement 'mong the n******. Dey was rejoicing and singin'. Some of them looked pussled, sorter skeered like. But dey danced and had a big jamboree. Armstead Barrett stated that when the slaves first learned of their freedom, "dey all shoutin'." However, he also vividly remembered how some whites reacted to these celebrations. Barrett said a female slave was "cut wide 'cross de stomach" by a passing white man because of her excessive celebration. "I didn't git nothin' when us freed. Only some cast-off clothes. Long time after I rents de place on halves and most my life." Martin Ruffin remembered vividly when he and the other slaves first heard the news that they were free. He described the uncontrollable relief and happiness, "You ought to see 'em jump and clap their hands and pop them heels. Former slave Cato Carter also recalled how some slave owners tearfully announced to their

[293] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 106; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 114; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

former chattel, “You are free do to do as you like, ‘cause the damned Yankees done ‘creed you are. They ain’t a n***** on my place what was born here or every lived here who can’t stay here and work and eat to the end of his days, as long as this old place will raise peas and goober. Go if you wants and stay if you wants.”[294]

The collected stories are directly linked to what life was like in bondage. The validity of the narratives and folk stories and how they may be interpreted was discussed in the previous chapter. The narratives, whichever way one might want to construe them, are still a part of the landscape of the Civil War, Slavery, and the Federal Writers’ Project. The chapter’s goal was to try and deduce what, if any, trends were in Texas Cultural Nationalism, either within the narratives themselves or the communique from the state to the national office (and back again). Also, it was to see if there was a Northeast bias from the national office toward the narratives or the employees that were compiling them. Neither were found when all was looked it. For this chapter, the results show a negative on either count.

[294] Goodwin, *Remembering The Days of Sorrow,* 104; Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narrative of Texas*, 113-127; Eliza Holman, Martha Spence Burton, Texas Slave Narratives, Federal Writers’ Project: Slave Narratives Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1 and 2, Adams-Duhon and Easter-King.

CONCLUSION
WHAT WE HAVE DEDUCED
OVERVIEW OF THE TEXAS FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT

Four years after the Federal Writers' Project began, the average American still had little understanding of what it did. Americans saw red-white and blue signs for WPA projects, but the work of the Federal Writers' Project remained hidden from view. By the summer of 1939, only 19 state guides had been produced. (Texas*: A Guide To The Lone Star State* was published in August 1940) In the public mind, five years of subsidizing "writers on relief" had produced very little.[295]

Never intended as a subsidized cultural enterprise, the Federal Writers' Project was established to provide work relief for writers and other white-collar personnel caught in the toils of the Depression. Under the circumstances, the project could not be divorced from relief regulations. As a result, the majority of the Texas (and other states) personnel, were not writers but simply willing workers in need whose sincerest literary efforts only affirmed Pope's observation that "true ease in writing comes from art, not chance. As those move easiest who have learn'd to do dance." Yet, without the contribution of lawyers, ministers, newspapermen, librarians, and teachers who made up the bulk of its rolls, the TFWP would never have been able to arrive at its record of success (in terms of the state guides sold).[296]

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[295] Pamela Bordelon, "The Federal Writers' Project Mirror to America: The Florida Reflection", PhD Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1991, 237; Pathfinder, December 17, 1938, 4; *Publishers' Weekly*, March 18, 1939, 1130. One FWP supervisor as asked if the chief function of the Writers' Project was to publish all manuscripts rejected by commercial publishers; "WPA Achievement," *Time* (August 21, 1940), 64.

[296] Monty Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Governmental Patronage*, (Urbana; University of Illinois Press, 1977) 238.

The Texas Federal Writers' Project admirably achieved its primary objective: to serve as an agency for the conservation and rehabilitation of threatened white-collar workers. Its researchers in dusty archives, interviewers, and editors gained the right to walk on the same side of the street as other citizens. Many took pride in their work (Laura Hamner, as a prime example), reflected in the relative absence of boondoggling (as far as the files from the local offices were concerned). Universities, which at first were "very very leery about associating with anything as disreputable and with such an 'x' quality" as a governmental project, and libraries that hesitated to let reliefers handle books soon changed their initial assumptions. The University of Texas, in 1939, sponsored parts of the Texas Federal Writer Project items, and by the year 1940, more than one library had requested the state and city guides for their collection.[297]

White-collar workers underwent significant transformations almost overnight. With their awakened enthusiasm, they displayed a diligence worthy of Scotland Yard in ferreting out information for the Texas State Guide and other volumes. Often with their office in their hats, the Texas Federal Writers (and Volunteer Associates) poked their noses everywhere and set out in battered Fords to log back roads and chart nation. Observing the "generosity, dignity, and integrity" with which project employees responded to the opportunity to do constructive work, Texas Director J. Frank Davis was pleased with the information coming into the San Antonio office. This "daring experiment in social psychology" was necessitated by the economic crisis of the thirties, but it is questionable whether the Texas FWP would have emerged under an administration other than Roosevelt's.[298]

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[297] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 238.

[298] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 238-239; Hamner to Olive, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45. December 23, 1936; Davis to Alsberg, January 24, 1937.

The Texas Federal Writers' Project justified itself artistically. Despite the dearth of qualified writers, the absence of worthy guidebook examples, and the persistent attempts to reduce the project in times of economic ups and downturns, the Texas FWP succeeded in fulfilling its mission, the Texas State Guide. Marked by neither drumbeating nor ponderous criticism, this book was relieved of the dullness of most of its predecessors by good writing, intelligent editing, and a wealth of exciting information. Unlike traditional "intimate" guidebooks- "usually so so damnable intimate as to drive tourists into bars for information if not for the drink"- the Texas state project's state and local offerings substantially filled the gap between armchair knowledge and practical information.[299]

At a time when the Texas WPA sought to prime the pump of national recovery, the Texas State Guide, contemporary import and that of the project's numerous others lay in priming the pump to state self-awareness. With considerable scholarship, the Texas FWP uncovered a land behind billboards and boosterism. Their painstaking research reached far beyond the countless movie houses, highway restaurants, and chain stores to discover the state's rich diversity. Cities and towns were found to have an individuality of their own. State pride, otherwise known as Cultural Nationalism, quickened. According to reviewers and increasing understanding of the Texas State Guide and local guidebooks also strengthened national unity by placing the particular within the framework of the whole. As domestic and international unrest tested the Republic's very foundations, and as it turned to take stock of itself, the critical Texas State Guide did its part by making this inspection fruitful. While conserving skills and human dignity, the

[299] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 240; Palmer to Davis, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 45, December 15, 1938;

Texas FWP also conserved history and folklore that otherwise might have remained unexplored or fallen victim to mildew.[300]

Aside from the seminal Texas State Guidebook, the Texas FWP made significant contributions. Its black studies were pioneering ones. The social-ethnic and folklore research represented novel approaches, as did the "life history" technique shown in *Texas Cowboys: Memories of the Early Days.* Booklets on place names, local legends, and many other subjects appeared regularly. Pamphlets for school use, publicity for newspapers, indexing of library files, and the verification of data for various federal and private concerns exemplified the Texas project's diverse efforts. These auxiliary projects resulted in a total achievement, which eighty-five years later seems almost incredible. One aspect of the Texas project's publications is, in some respects, reminiscent of the note sounded by literary America at the close of the thirties. An insular "literature of nationhood" swept the land as writers seeking new certainties stumbled upon and then deeply reexamined Texas' life and landscape for a "useable past." Doubters became devotees, and the restoration of Texas itself was expressed in titles like *San Antonio: A Guide to its Environs*, *Dallas: A Guide and its History,* and *Houston: A History and Guide.* [301]

The way the Texas project's discoveries came to light and finally reached expression also reflected the trends of the 1930s. Its collective effort, which "helped explode the romantic notion of the genius as someone solitary, irresponsible and unique," suggested the shift from the individualistic ethic of the twenties to a community spirit. The TFWP's stress on the pooling of

[300] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 241; Davis to Newsome, October 6, 1939, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 11, January-October 1939; Harlan Hatcher Book Volumn, *Columbus Citizen*, November 16, 1941.

[301] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 241-242; Mary K. Taylor to Florence Kerr, May 6, 1942, FWPNA, RG 69 Houston City Guide, Box 31; Request for Writers Project Activity, October 24, 1941, FWPNA, RG 69, Dallas City Guide, Box 31; Request for Writers Project Activity, August 2, 1941, FWPNA, RG 69 San Antonio City Guide, Box 32.

various contributions typified the greater contemporary dependence on such approaches as cooperatives and county planning boards, as well as emphases in the field of education, which played down the child's role in favor of social concerns. On a broader scale, the TFWP's development along state lines mirrored other tendencies of the periods. The various publications of the TFWP, analogous to contemporary trends in another respect, view the human (if somewhat romanticized) terms. The Texas State Guide, focusing on the common hero, the forgotten American (of any color), was in the warp and woof of a literal tapestry interwoven with the great works of the decade. In this fashion, the TFWP uniquely contributed to the New Deal quest for "cultural democracy". Because the Texas project's program was not explicitly geared to professional talent, it never could hope to bring the art of writing to the national millions through creative works, reading lectures on literature, or the encouragement of gifted unknown through contests and other means. In contrast to other WPA arts projects, the TFWP was, thus, of necessity, not so concerned with the intelligentsia. However, in its final works, the TFWP brought its audience face to face with the factual, rich diversity called Texas and her people. The guides (local and state), in particular, were distinctly a Texas product, transcending Baedeker to become the ultimate road map for the indigenous discovery of Texas. Together with the TFWP's auxiliary publications, the guide essays and tours possessed a "phenomenal democracy of retrospection," which included in their purview fact and folktale, rich and poor, realization and failure of the state dream. All Texans could relate in some fashion to the TFWP's attempt at a multifaceted portrait. This extensive documentation was also especially, albeit unintentionally, helping in forming what Holger Cahill of the Federal Art Project called a "great reservoir" from which "a genuine art movement" might yet flow.[302]

[302] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 241-245.

The TFWP's history provides limited value for advocates of permanent federal support of literary talent. An enterprise that made publishing and cultural history, the project proved that subsidized art could be generally free from censorship. It also indicated that worthwhile productions could be produced at "ridiculously little" cost, as a former project writer later noted, "If we consider what is being spent on preventing the Viet Cong from invading San Francisco in sampans". Still, the TFWP was hampered by disorganization and a lack of employees. Meanwhile, the state of Texas can look back with satisfaction upon the TFWP's diverse accomplishments. In contemplating aid for the development of arts, it might well also recall the advice of a former President: "Any good thing we can do, let us do it now. We'll not come back this way, you know". So, what of the three objectives set out at the beginning of this dissertation? Were they proven and answered? The attempt to resolve that will be the latter part of this chapter.[303] First, we must find out what happened to those on the project after the program ended.

Life After the Project

Although many former TWFP employees did not garner the attention of those in other states did, they still made their mark in other areas. After the project, life went on, and wars were being fought as participation in life continued. For many, the TFWP was just a tiny part of their lives, in which they needed the program to earn money for food for the table. The list of TFWP employees that carried on in the writing world was more than one might assume.

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[303] Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project*, 247-248; Lewis Mumford, "A Letter to the President", New Republic, 89 (December 30, 1936: 263-65; Abraham Lincoln, cited in Cronyn to Dyes, October 14, 1935, FWPN, RG 69 Box 45.

The most notable of all the TFWP employees was Laura Hamner. From her days of overseeing Area One, she flourished after the project. Many years of primary research into the life stories of old-timers gave impetus for her books *Short Grass and Longhorns* (1943) and *Light 'n Hitch* (1958). Since being published, *Short Grass* has become a classic. For over thirty years, Hamner wrote features for the Amarillo Globe-News-"Talks to Teens," "Panhandle Scrapbook," and others. She also gave a weekly radio talk on old-time Panhandle life. In 1947, she published an article about Matthew "Bones" Hook, a black Amarillo cowboy, in *Readers' Digest*. Besides breaking ground in research when many insisted the Panhandle had no history, she spurred others to literary efforts. With a friend, Phebe K. Warner, she founded Panhandle Pen Women in the 1920s.[304]

For over thirty years, she lived in the Herring Hotel, Amarillo, keeping an open house for literary agents, publishers, writers, and would-be writers from many parts of the world. She was never married. She lived on a land claim in No-Man's-Land (Oklahoma); she adopted a child; she sat on village curbstones, interviewed superannuated cowboys; she braved gunfire to interview a former outlaw. Associates gave her such tributes as honorary membership in the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and municipal observances of "Laura V. Hamner Week." Indeed she was known informally for a time as "Miss Amarillo." She died on September 20, 1968, while with a relative in Alabama and was buried with her parents at Claude Cemetery in Armstrong County. Most of her extensive Texana papers are in the Panhandle-Plains Historical

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[304] Hamner, Laura Vernon (tshaonline.org); Myra Dorris Hall, "Laura V. Hamner: A Woman Before Her Time", (University of Houston, 1988, Dissertation)

Museum in Canyon, though some are in the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas at Austin.[305]

Charles Curtis Munz, the first supervisor of Area Two, left the project early in 1936. From then on, he followed his passion for writing. He composed the novel Land *Without Moses* in 1938 ultimately becoming a best seller. The book, which was a disturbing depiction, of sharecropping as a cruel system of exploitation was heralded as a detailed look at tenant farmer hardships during the 1930s. Munz would then go on to write for the New York Times as a correspondent living in San Antonio.[306]

Norman Walker, who was the supervisor Area Three in El Paso, joined the Army and ended up retiring as a colonel. He then went back to college and earned degrees in Spanish and English and taught in the El Paso schools. He was a member of St. Alban's Episcopal Church, the Elks Club and the American Legion Post No. 58. He would eventually die in El Paso, August 25, 1975.[307]

Robert Horan, who manned the Area that encompassed the Dallas region, ended up becoming a news processor for WFAA in Dallas and publicity writer in the Dallas area. He was also on the staff of the *Dallas Journal*, as well being the author and narrator of the Headlines and High Light program in 1936. Milton Saul, who also worked in the Dallas office, was appointed custodian of Arlington Park in Lee Park. An active sportsman all of his life, he liked golf fishing and hunting above all. He wrote a daily golf column for the *Dallas Morning News*. He was a

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[305] Hamner, Laura Vernon (tshaonline.org); Myra Dorris Hall, "Laura V. Hamner: A Woman Before Her Time", (University of Houston, 1988, Dissertation).

[306] *The Houston Post*, September 24, 1942, page 7; *San Antonio Evening News*, March 7, 1939, page 11; *San Antonio Light*, September 8, 1938, page 23.

[307] *El Paso Herald-Post*, March 20, 1984, page 14; *El Paso Herald-Post*, June 18, 1943; *El Paso Herald-Post*, August 25, 1975, page 34; *El Paso Herald-Post*, December 16, 1935, page 9.

member of the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation. During his writing and newspaper career, he was noted for his work in political, financial, oil and local news.[308]

The middle line supervisors of the TFWP found careers after as well. Russell Franklin, who was a supervisor in District Number Five, in Area Three under Charles Munz and later Lawrence O'Leary, worked at the *Dallas Morning News* as a linotype operator and proofreader. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church and a veteran of World War II, serving as a First Lieutenant during his time of service. At time of his death, Franklin was working for the *Detroit Free Press*. O.E. Kennedy, who was up for the supervisor of the Galveston City Office, was the superintendent of the Galveston County Schools both before and after he tried to get on the project. He served in that role until 1934 and held many different political offices until his death. The person that eventually got the job, Mrs. Cortez Pauls, ended up becoming the president of the Galveston Friends of the Library.[309]

John Olive, the former Assistant State Director, found a career after the project. Going back to his job on the *San Antonio Light*, Olive would eventually work as an appointed timekeeper in the police department, a non-civil service job. He also was city editor (a fill in at times) for the *San Antonio Light*.[310]

Over the past five chapters, this piece has analyzed the Texas Federal Writer's Project. From its beginnings to the end, the Texas FWP continues to endure to this day. The Texas FWP

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[308] *Dallas Morning News*, March 26, 1946; April 27, 1936; *Wichita Fall Record News*, January 17,1936; *Wichita Daily Times*, January 17, 1936; *Wichita Falls Record News*, March 14, 1936; *Dallas Morning News*, June 14, 1951, page 16; *Dallas Morning News*, March 30, 1956, page 14;

[309] *Dallas Morning News*, March 30, 1956, page 14; *Houston Post Dispatch*, November 19, 1927, page 10; *Houston Chronicle*, May 10, 1914, page 7; Munz to Davis, March 3, 1936, Briscoe Center, 4G223 Administrative Correspondence.

[310] *San Antonio Light*, January 31, 1943, page 4; *San Antonio Light*, November 22, 1959.

can be considered a success on two fronts. First, an encyclopedic guidebook was produced in 1940 that went into at least six editions. It provided employment to over six hundred individuals that might not have been employed otherwise. The Texas FWP gave an opportunity for two women, Ann Stimson, the Houston City Project Director and Laura Hamner, District One Supervisor, the chance to lead a WPA 1930s program. Second, it gave a voice to many Texans who might not have had their stories told, be it through the folklore project or slave narratives, otherwise. Lastly, many of the project's works are used today, online and in print. The purpose of this study was to illuminate these achievements and answer three items that were first presented in the introduction.

Three main themes are stressed in this dissertation: 1) the role that cultural nationalism played in the organization of the TFWP; 2) how the TFWP tried to make the New Deal cultural nationalism acceptable to local and state officials by modifying this concept in order to avoid offending dominant Texas groups; and 3) how the conflict between Texas and New Deal cultural nationalism shaped Texas FWP publications. If there had been no pressure from the national FWP office, Texas FWP publications would have been less inclusive than they were. As the chapters unfolded, an attempt was made to examine all three issues. Was it successful? This summation chapter will answer them.

The state of Texas in the 1930s was both culturally and racially diverse. The state guide made attempts to show that. Even though the mentions of minorities in the guides were small, to say the least, it was still better than nothing. In the Jim Crow south of Texas, that was a step in the right direction. In the communiques and conversations between the state and local office, the essence of Texas history was discussed when the information was transferred. The Volunteer Associates, when relaying that information, infused Texas Cultural Nationalism when it was

given. The state office did its best not to go off on what could be best called “boosterism” and the state guide as well as local guides showed that. The state guides across the country were designed to show the best of what each state had to offer. The Texas State Guide was no different. When the letters from both the state office to the national office (and vice versa) were examined, Texas Cultural Nationalism was present. From both foods that Texans ate to the music they enjoyed, the dominant white culture (as well as minorities), the Texas Federal Writers’ Project did its best to show *some* respect toward the minorities. As alluded to in Chapter 2, the process from the local district offices to the state office was mostly non-controversial. There were some issues (dealing with information coming from the local environments, for example) but for the most part it was mostly innocuous.

The role that Cultural Nationalism played in the organization was that with the foods that were consumed, the attitudes that were prevalent and the reasoning that existed for them within the project. By examining the Texas State Guide, one can see many instances of the cultural nationalism that prevailed in the state in the 1930s. One can say that pride in one’s state could be an example of such, but with Texas, it was another story. To the present day, a selling point of the state is the byline, “Texas, a whole nother country”. With that, cultural nationalism was quite evident. With the Lone Star State, Texas had a diversity (whether recognized or not) to which many other states did not have. With three races (Hispanic, African and Caucasian Texans. The instances of Asian and Native are small as per the 1930s) being a part of the state, diversity was bound to happen. Unfortunately, due to the racial bias during the time frame, the majority racial opinion and thinking prevailed, both in the guides and administratively.

The role of Cultural Nationalism played a role in the administration and hiring of the project. The majority of the workers were white. Only a small fraction were Hispanic and one

employee was black. With segregation firmly in place in the 1930s, this was par for the course. There was an attempt, both by the national and state office, to recruit blacks for the project, but it mainly for naught. When one examines the Texas State Guide and this was alluded to in Chapter 3, the instances of references to the minority races in Texas are quite small. With the Texas State Guide over seven hundred pages, space was a priority. With the city guides, the references to minorities are much deeper. In summation, cultural nationalism was different for the races involved. For whites, it prevailed for the majority of the state and city guides. For blacks and Hispanics, references were limited. This study would show that Texas Cultural Nationalism was primarily a white construct with Caucasian values and beliefs. Did the minority races influence the prevailing Cultural Nationalism? The answer can be yes, but not completely. The one word would be influenced, both in music and food. For the most part, when one can establish what Texas Cultural National was, it can be defined as a Caucasian set of values, beliefs and institutions throughout the state.

The TFWP did indeed try to make the New Deal cultural nationalism acceptable to local and state officials. They did this by modifying this concept in order to avoid offending dominant Texas groups, but only to a certain extent. When one looks at the Texas State Guide and who the intended audience was, it would be primarily white, middle-class, white-collar workers. The minority races would not "normally" purchase either the Texas State Guide or the sister city guides. With the letters from the national office, many attempts (and this was alluded to in chapter 2) were made to modify the information going into the state guide. In one instance, information for the Austin City Guide was modified, by the national office, to help those of color not to be offended by references of minority makeup in city.[311]

[311] Alsberg to Davis, May 26, 1939, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 11, Austin City Guide.

In examining the folklore stories and slave narratives, one cannot see the Texas Cultural Nationalism. One reason for that is that the focus for that part of the project was different. Texas was just part of a program in the national office to get information for further research. Although the stories were Texas in nature, it was not designed to promote (if that is the operative word) the state to the masses. The state and city guides were designed to be an encyclopedic book to bring tourists to the state and promote the various venues and culture that Texas had to offer. The slave narrative and folklore stories were designed more for the individual. Because they were from Texas was more of an added bonus in the grand scheme of the program.[312]

When the reader sees the guides, they can see the promotion throughout the state and that is prevalent with each fact and fun piece of information presented. Although the treatment of minorities could have been much better, on the whole (considering segregation at the time), it was much better than it would have been had not the national office not influencing but pushing to have minorities represented. There were instances (alluded to in chapter 2) where there was a slight push and pull between San Antonio and Washington D.C, but in the end, the compromise on the state guide was, in essence, Texas Cultural Nationalism. That is the prevailing, white system of values, beliefs and institutions. With that being said, after Alsberg was replaced by John Newsome, the national office administration was more *amenable* (italics by author) to what the TFWP office wanted because the national office wanted to get the book published and out and the post 1939 administration was essentially wrapping up the program. Did the national office shape the TFWP publications?

In answering the last question, one must reexamine the evidence before us. With the guides and letters from the offices to be viewed, one can answer that question with a yes. For all

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[312] Davis to Newsome, February 25, 1939, RG 69, FWPNA, RG 69, Box 2455.

publications, there were templates that were established for the states to follow. In that instance, yes, the national office did influence the TFWP publications. Second, the guides were sent in to the national office for review. Items that the DC office did not like, they would send back with corrections. Third, the folklore stories and slave narratives had a template just like the other states. The TFWP was to follow these templates and send the stories to the national office for review. There they stayed in the national and regional offices. For some, they found publication during the project's life time (*These Are Our Lives*) for others, they found publication after the life of the project (*Texas Cowboys: Memories of the Early Days)*. The same can be said of the Slave Narratives. TFWP employees gathered the information and sent it to the state office, who then sent it to the national office under the jurisdiction of first John Lomax and later B.A. Botkin, who were both in charge of the folklore section of the FWP. The national project shaped and molded, to a certain extent, all three publications (state and city guides, folklore stories and slave narrative) were shaped by the national office. Now, to answer the specific question, did New Deal Cultural Nationalism shape the TFWP publications, the answer would be yes.

The guidebooks, folklore stories and slave narratives were the brainchild (understood there were individuals who came up with it within the organization) of the national FWP. That being said, the state and city guides are a reflection of the states and cities they represent. The eventual products that came out of the TFWP were the art of compromise, so to speak. The national and state office had a dual role in shaping both the project and the yields that came out. The New Deal Cultural Nationalism definitely had a role in the TFWP publications. Without the New Deal thinking that emanated from D.C, products such as the state guide would have never seen the light of day. To further that point, the inclusion of minorities (small as it was), would not have been on the radar of a state project had the national office pushed it. The idea of slave

narrative might not have been on the minds of those in the state office had not the FWP pushed for it.

In a word, yes, the national office not only encouraged (as seen in chapter 2) but pushed for the inclusion of minorities in the state and city guides. That is reflected in the final product of both. For the slave narratives, the program gave a voice to those black Texans that might not have had one before.

Texas Cultural Nationalism, as we have seen, was (and is) a living breathing entity. In the 1930s, it was reflective in the state and city guides. From the food that was consumed to the music listened to, there was a distinction between the Lone Star State and other territories in the Union. The Texas Cultural Nationalism that was defined in chapter 2 was prevalent in the guidebooks, but not the slave narratives nor the folklore stories. Granted it was the majority opinion (although the instances of mentioning minorities, culture was discussed), the prevailing thought, values and institutions were white.

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