

**WPA PROJECTS IN CLARKSVILLE
AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY**



BOBBY A. LONG

WPA PROJECTS IN CLARKSVILLE AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Bobby A. Long

July 1973

ABSTRACT

The Works Progress Administration, a Federal agency, was created in 1935 as a work relief program. Billions of dollars were available to state and local governments for public work programs such as hospitals, schools, airports, roads, parks, utilities, and public buildings.

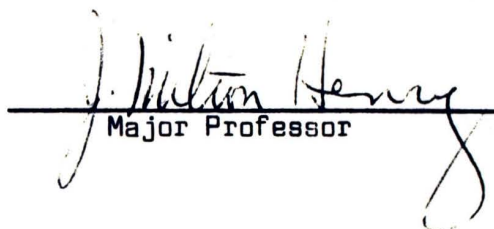
Clarksville and Montgomery County, Tennessee, responded immediately toward this program. Government officials submitted applications to WPA for proposed programs requesting WPA funds. Several city and county programs that were currently in progress during 1935 were resubmitted to WPA for financial funding.

This writer has researched WPA projects in Clarksville and Montgomery County, Tennessee, from 1935-1941. The research of these WPA programs include the type of program, its location, its cost, its duration, the number of WPA workers involved, the amount of WPA funds, and officials or workers that were employed on these projects.

The comments that follow contain facts and figures that the researcher obtained from the Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, the files of John Cunningham, the files of the County Road Supervisor, the minutes of the Montgomery County School Board, the minutes of the City Board of Education, and personal interviews. These comments reveal the importance of local WPA projects, utilizing local labor with the end product being an economical and beneficial asset to Clarksville and Montgomery County, Tennessee.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting a Thesis written by Bobby A. Long entitled "WPA Projects in Clarksville and Montgomery County." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of History.

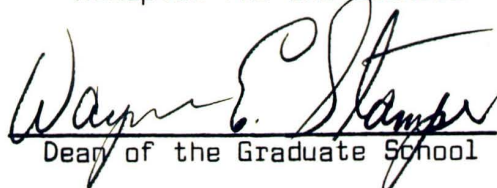

Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance.


Second Committee Member


Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Council


Dean of the Graduate School

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Milton Henry for his critical evaluation of this manuscript, and a special thanks to Dr. Preston Hubbard for his idea of this thesis. Appreciation is extended to Dr. Wentworth Morris for serving as a member of the author's graduate committee.

I would also like to thank my wife, Ann, for her encouragement, patience, and understanding for this research.

A special thanks is given Frances Baggett for many hours of cooperation and typing of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	WPA PROJECTS EXECUTED BY THE CITY OF CLARKSVILLE	5
III	COUNTY AND CITY SCHOOLS	17
IV	FARM TO MARKET ROADS	24
V	ARMORY	30
VI	VARIOUS WPA PROJECTS	35
	Sanitary Closet Construction	35
	WPA Aid for Flood Sufferers	36
	Airport Development	37
	Hot Lunch Program for Schools	38
	Miscellaneous Projects	39
VII	CONCLUSION	40
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	44

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Works Progress Administration was created in 1935 by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide useful public work for needy unemployed persons. In 1939, this agency was renamed the Work Projects Administration.

Harry Hopkins was named by President Roosevelt to head this new work program. The WPA's peak years were from 1935-1938. During this period it gave work to as many as three million jobless annually and spent most of the \$10.7 billion distributed from 1935 through 1942.¹

The WPA was a relief program. It provided work relief rather than a dole, was run by federal instead of state officials, and required no specific amount of matching state money.

WPA projects included road construction, public buildings, bridges, airports, public utilities, sanitary closet construction, and recreational facilities. Art projects produced paintings, drawings, sculpture and murals in public buildings. Writers produced a number of notable books. Musical groups gave thousands of public performances. Women were engaged in sewing, gardening, canning and school lunch programs.

¹James T. Patterson, The New Deal and the States, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 74.

The WPA was praised for its physical accomplishments and its training of workers, but there were criticisms of the amount of money being used for this program. Mr. Hopkins stated:

It costs money to put a man to work and that's why a lot of people prefer direct relief. These people say that if we make the working conditions decent and give people a reasonable minimum to live on, people will get to like their jobs. They suggest that we make relief as degrading and shameful as possible so that people will want to get 'off.' Well--I've been dealing with unemployed people for years in one way or another and they do want to get off--but they can't apparently, get 'off' into private industry. Well--if they can't get off into private industry, where can they turn if they can't turn to their government? What's a government for? And these people can be useful to America; they can do jobs no one else can afford to do--these slums, for instance. No private concern can afford to make houses for poor people to live in, because any private concern has got to show a profit. Why, we've got enough work to do right here in America, work that needs to be done and that no private concern can afford to touch, to lay out a program for twenty years and to employ every unemployed person in this country to carry it out.²

State Director of the Works Progress Administration was Colonel Harry S. Berry. A state-wide meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, headed by Colonel Berry with all WPA staff members, predicted the WPA progress would reach all parts of the state and would give employment to 50,000 relief clients by August 1, 1935.

These 50,000 workers would be on jobs suited by training and ability and would remain only so long as they did their work in an efficient and productive manner.³

Prior to the WPA, 70,000 people were working under the Tennessee Emergency Relief Administration. Projects under the

²William E. Leuchtenburg, The New Deal (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), pp. 74-75.

³Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 10, 1935, p. 1.

TERA were being rewritten and submitted for approval under the WPA. These 50,000 workers on the proposed WPA projects would come from the rolls of TERA.

Medical examinations, experience, and ability would determine permanent employment on the different WPA projects. Some 50,000 people from the rolls of TERA would soon become a work force in Tennessee on different beneficial WPA projects. There would be two classifications that would determine the status of these 50,000 applications--(1) persons able to do heavy work and (2) those capable of doing "white collar" duties.⁴

John Cunningham, the City Engineer of Clarksville, commented on the WPA and its original headquarters in Clarksville:

The WPA headquarters for Clarksville and Montgomery County was located across from the existing courthouse. The J. C. Bradford office is now located in the old WPA office. WPA had their own time-keepers on each job in the county and all records were turned in to Mrs. Ruth Moore, Supervisor of WPA in Montgomery County. Invoices from different WPA projects to be paid to different agencies were forwarded to this office for payment by this government agency.⁵

There were numerous WPA projects within the City of Clarksville and Montgomery County. These projects, sponsored by the Federal Government, were beneficial to our city and county as well as providing jobs for hundreds of unemployed people. The following WPA projects are the topics of research for this thesis.

Many schools that were built during this period of history are currently in use today. The majority of the Farm to

⁴Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 11, 1935, p. 1.

⁵John Cunningham, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, February 12, 1973.

Market roads are traveled daily by county and city citizens. Water mains, sewer lines and city streets serve the people of Clarksville and Montgomery County daily. Other projects that were built by WPA labor and funds are still utilized today and are landmarks of the WPA years. The airport, armory, Central High School, B. F. Goodrich storm sewer, Roosevelt Elementary School, and Mericourt Park are daily reminders of the lean years that occurred from 1935 to 1942.

CHAPTER II

WPA PROJECTS EXECUTED BY THE CITY OF CLARKSVILLE

WPA sponsored projects within the City of Clarksville saved the taxpayers a large sum of money during the latter 1930's. Each WPA project will be described, with emphasis on location, duration, cost, and the amount of labor involved to complete the project. Comments regarding these WPA projects within the City of Clarksville will show the progress that was accomplished during this period of history. Probably many of these streets, curbs and gutters, storm drains, buildings, parks, sewers, and water line extensions would not have been a part of the City of Clarksville if it had not been for the WPA.

Approval was forwarded on September 30, 1935, from the WPA to the City of Clarksville for quarrying, crushing, placing, grading, and rolling 7312 cubic yards of rock on fourteen different city streets. The total cost of this project was \$18,380.01. WPA would furnish \$5,518.00 for labor which included a superintendent, time-keeper, unskilled and intermediate personnel. The cost to the City of Clarksville was \$12,862.01 which included material and labor.

The streets that were rebuilt by this WPA project were Spring, McClure, Jefferson, Tyler, Martin, Commerce, Twelfth, Wisdom, Glen, Hurst, Lee, Dodd, Reynolds, and Shearer. The quarry that was used for the crushing of limestone was located at the

end of Franklin Street near Red River. This property was owned by the City of Clarksville. All labor required for this crushing of rock was paid with WPA funds. A crew of forty-eight men were employed on this project which required some five months labor rebuilding these fourteen city streets.⁶

WPA funds were approved for Glenwood and Castle Heights sewer installation during the winter of 1935. These two sewer projects employed some 200 laborers. John Cunningham, the City Engineer, supervised the construction of these sanitary sewers. Each laborer was given a certain position to dig at a certain depth. Each laborer had a distance of two feet wide and ten feet long and a depth that would range from six feet to sixteen feet. All work was manual and the only tools used were picks and shovels. Each laborer could move about one-half yard of dirt per hour at a depth of six feet. As the laborer dug from ten to sixteen feet deep, he could only move one-tenth of a yard of dirt per hour. The Castle Heights sewer project of one-half mile of sanitary sewer was constructed at a cost of \$2,991.04. WPA labor amounted to \$1,420.47. The cost to the City of Clarksville was \$1,057.57 for material and labor. A mile of sewer was installed in the Glenwood area of Clarksville at a total cost of \$7,970.31. WPA labor for this project amounted to \$3,811.75. The cost of the Glenwood sewer project to the City of Clarksville for material and labor was \$4,158.56. These sanitary sewers that were constructed in 1935-36 are still in use today.⁷

⁶WPA Form 301, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

⁷Ibid.

In March, 1936, approval was given for converting Meri-court into a Municipal park. The cost of this project was \$10,115.33. The majority of the funds would be defrayed by the WPA. The work would include a band pavilion, shelters, comfort stations, two tennis courts, drives, and walkways. There were forty men working on this project for three months until it was completed.⁸

Approval was received from the Works Progress Administration on March 4, 1936, for surfacing streets, quarrying and crushing stone for some thirty city streets. This WPA project was designed for the improvement of city streets throughout the City of Clarksville. No taxes were levied to cover the amount of Federal funds.

WPA approved \$5,045.00 for labor on this street improvement project. The total cost of the project was \$17,153.00, which included material and labor. Fifty-four men from the WPA labor rolls were employed on this street project with a duration of some five months. The occupational classification regarding this project was as follows:

50 laborers @ 25¢ per hour
 1 Time Keeper @ 39¢ per hour
 2 Crusher Feeders @ 39¢ per hour
 1 Foreman @ 52¢ per hour

The cost of this project to the City of Clarksville was over \$12,000. Majority expenditures were as following:

2445 Cu. yd. Quarry Stone	\$2,900
2445 Cu. yd. Crushed Stone	1,875
3445 Cu. yd. Haul Stone	2,000
14690 Sq. yd. Place & Roll Stone	1,700
15000 Tar Prime	2,100

⁸ Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, March 28, 1936, p. 1.

In August, 1936, this project was completed, utilizing over fifty WPA men and the improvement of over thirty city streets.⁹

The City of Clarksville requested approval from WPA for \$7,921. This Federal money would be added with \$3,933 from the City of Clarksville to remove earth overburden at the city quarry to gain access to stone which was inaccessible. Also included in this project was the installation of a storm drain on Main Street to prevent street surface water from flowing on private property, and re-working of Barker, Daniel, First, and Paradise Streets which were practically impassable.

On July 1, 1938, WPA forwarded to the City of Clarksville approval for the above project. WPA labor rolls would furnish forty-four men to work as following:

40 laborers	140 hours per month @ \$25.20 per month
1 Time Keeper	140 hours per month @ \$39.20 per month
2 Crusher Feeders	140 hours per month @ \$39.20 per month
1 Foreman	140 hours per month @ \$51.80 per month

This project lasted several months, for all the dirt removed from the quarry site was removed by manual labor. Sixty-six per cent of the cost of this project was furnished by the Federal Government. With the removal of earth from the quarry site, the City of Clarksville was then in position to quarry and crush stone for many needed streets in the City of Clarksville.¹⁰

WPA approved over \$5,000 in April, 1938, for labor to construct one mile of curb and gutter plus improvement on several city streets. The total cost of the project was \$11,374. The

⁹WPA Form 301, September, 1936, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

¹⁰Ibid.

Federal Government paid \$5,609 toward WPA labor and the remaining \$5,765 was paid by the City of Clarksville. The greatest expense to the City of Clarksville was the cost of materials. Portland cement of over \$3,000 was the greatest expense. Crushed stone and sand cost some \$1,400. Other minor items were gas, oil, lumber, coal, and dynamite.

Twenty-eight men from the WPA labor rolls were awarded jobs on this project. The occupational classification was as follows:

- 18 laborers @ 21¢ per hour
- 1 Concrete Mixer Operator @ 28¢ per hour
- 2 Carpenters Helpers @ 28¢ per hour
- 3 Cement Finisher Helpers @ 28¢ per hour
- 2 Rodman-Chainman @ 28¢ per hour
- 1 Time Keeper @ 28¢ per hour
- 1 Foreman @ 37¢ per hour

This project was completed within five months, utilizing some twenty-eight men and installing over a mile of curb and gutter with improvement to several existing city streets.¹¹

The City of Clarksville needed to expand their water system and fire protection to meet the industrial development within the city limits. The total cost of the project would be \$8,883. In May, 1939, WPA approved this project and awarded \$2,166 federal money to be used for labor involved within the project. The remaining \$6,717 would be paid by the City of Clarksville. The water expansion and fire protection would include:

4350 ft. 8" CI pipe	\$5,257
6 Fire Hydrants	441

¹¹WPA Form 301, August 16, 1938, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

6000 lbs. CI fittings	\$ 353
5 8" Gate Valves	242
8 6" Gate Valves	278
120 ft. 6" CI pipe	100
100 sq. yd. pavement repair	62
WPA labor	2,150

The WPA Occupational Classification consisted of:

26 common laborers @ 21¢ per hour
1 Time Keeper @ 28¢ per hour
1 Yarnier @ 28¢ per hour
1 Caulker @ 28¢ per hour
1 Foreman @ 37¢ per hour

This expansion of the City of Clarksville Water System and Fire Protection was completed within three months after WPA approval. The ditches were dug by labor using picks and shovels. Installing the 8" CI pipe was man-handled and backfilling was by manual labor. With this project completed, industry was provided an approved water supply and fire protection.¹²

In October, 1939, the WPA office approved the construction of a twenty-four inch storm drain sewer from B. F. Goodrich Company to Red River. This storm sewer would prevent storm water from flooding city streets and damaging adjacent property.

Construction of this system would include draining Pettus and Red River Streets. This was a drain system and did not carry sanitary sewage. Surface water accumulated in low sections of those streets and prevented normal traffic flow as well as overflowing onto adjacent private-owned property.

TOTAL COST:

Earth Excavation	\$6,962
Rock Excavation	1,124

¹²WPA Form 301, August 15, 1938, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

4800 Lin. ft. 24" Steel	
Corrugated Pipe	\$11,747
200 Lin. ft. 18" Steel	
Corrugated Pipe	414
10 Drop Inlets	432
12 Manholes	544
22 ft. Extra Manhole depth	149
6 Concrete Headwalls	78
	<u>\$21,450</u>

Of this \$21,450 total cost, WPA labor was \$8,617, and material furnished by the City of Clarksville was \$12,833. WPA labor included:

- 60 unskilled common laborers @ 23¢ per hour
- 1 Time Keeper @ 30¢ per hour
- 1 Drillman @ 30¢ per hour
- 1 Blacksmith @ 30¢ per hour
- 1 Pipe Layer @ 30¢ per hour
- 1 Foreman @ 40¢ per hour

All earth removed for this project was by manual labor using picks and shovels. Depths ranged from three feet to eighteen feet. Over three hundred pounds of dynamite was used for blasting limestone rock that was in the ditchline. Within four months, this storm drain was completed from Pettus Street to Red River.

After some thirty-five years of wear and tear, this drain is still in use; however, the City of Clarksville must make repairs yearly on this system. Reasons for this maintenance are that the corrugated steel pipe continues to rust and holes develop in the line, allowing dirt to fall into the pipe, resulting in a plugged up line. The City of Clarksville recognizes that within a few years this system must be replaced with a concrete type of pipe.¹³

¹³WPA Form 301, August 15, 1938, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

In March, 1940, WPA approved the extension of the municipal water distribution system to residents of Clarksville who had no available sanitary water service and no fire protection.

The total cost of this water system was \$11,042. WPA furnished \$5,572 and the cost to the City of Clarksville was \$5,470. A description and break-down according to the nature of the project was as follows:

4800 ft. 6" CI pipe	\$4,046
6000 lbs. CI fittings	332
5 Gate Valves	152
5 Fire Hydrants	371
1600 sq. yds. Pavement Repair	570
WPA labor	5,572

The water extension project was completed within two months after WPA approval. Forty-one men from WPA labor rolls were employed on this water system, installing 6" CI pipe. WPA labor included:

36 laborers @ 31¢ per hour
1 Water Boy @ 28¢ per hour
1 Blacksmith @ 37¢ per hour
1 Pipe Layer @ 37¢ per hour
1 Jr. Time Keeper @ 37¢ per hour
1 Foreman @ 48¢ per hour

The completion of the water line expansion within the city streets gave approved sanitary water and fire protection to dozens of residents within the City of Clarksville.¹⁴

In April, 1940, the City of Clarksville made a proposal to WPA requesting funds in the amount of \$12,104. The city would add an additional \$12,214 to rework and surface city streets,

¹⁴WPA Form 301, August 15, 1938, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

crush and quarry stone, install curb and gutters, and excavation for a storm sewer.

Justification for this proposal was, "Streets to be worked are in bad state of repair . . . and need immediate rebuilding for safety of public travel."¹⁵

Approval was forwarded from WPA to the City of Clarksville and work began immediately. Fifty-four men from WPA rolls were employed on this street improvement project. The job description was as follows:

- 41 laborers @ 31¢ per hour
- 2 Water Boys @ 28¢ per hour
- 2 Time Keepers @ 37¢ per hour
- 1 Crusher Feeder @ 37¢ per hour
- 1 Blacksmith @ 37¢ per hour
- 2 Concrete Finishers @ 37¢ per hour
- 1 Concrete Mixer Operator @ 37¢ per hour
- 1 Foreman @ 48¢ per hour

The duration of this project was over six months, utilizing over fifty WPA men crushing stone, spreading rock, finishing concrete, digging ditches and surfacing streets. Over thirty streets within the city were paved to permit easier and safer traveling. The majority of these streets that were rebuilt during 1940 with WPA funds are used today by citizens of Montgomery County.¹⁶

March 25, 1941, construction was started on Second Street for a city masonry garage building, concrete retaining wall, and wire fencing necessary to enclose the site. This new structure

¹⁵WPA Form 301, August 15, 1938, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

¹⁶Ibid.

was needed to house city owned trucks and equipment and to keep them safe from fire and vandals.

WPA furnished the labor and a portion of the material for this project. During a period of four months, some fifty-three WPA workers were utilized on this city garage project.

PAYOUTS:

Clear Site	\$ 81
Excavation	1,035
Fencing	252
Concrete Framework	819
Concrete	1,620
Reinforcing Steel	241
Structural Steel	681
Brickwork	976
Concrete Blocks	1,343
Roofing	162
Gutter	28
Down Spout	8
Doors	684
Steel Sash	164
Carpentry Work	755
Electrical Work	50
Plumbing	237
Asphalt Apron	321
Painting	102
	<u>\$9,559</u>

LABOR FURNISHED BY WPA ROLLS:

7,540 man hours of unskilled labor
 520 man hours of Jr. Time Keeper
 130 man hours of Concrete Mixer Operator
 130 man hours of Cement Finisher Helper
 1,755 man hours of Carpenter labor
 780 man hours of Brick Mason labor
 520 man hours of Reinforcing Steel Worker
 130 man hours of Painter labor

Material furnished by WPA included all portland cement and 25,000 common brick.¹⁷

¹⁷WPA Form 301, August 15, 1938, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

John Cunningham, City Engineer, talked with the writer concerning the construction of the Municipal Garage.

When the city officials recommended to build a Municipal Garage, plans and specifications for the structure were written. The idea was to place this construction for open bidding. After lengthy consideration, city officials felt that if WPA would furnish labor and a portion of the material, the City of Clarksville would save money by furnishing the material and needed supervision. By March, 1941, approval was received from WPA headquarters stating that WPA would furnish over \$3,000 in WPA labor plus all the portland cement and some 25,000 brick. Shortly after this WPA approval, the City of Clarksville started construction of the Municipal Garage. It has been estimated that several thousand dollars was saved by the city on this garage by not letting an outside contractor build the structure.¹⁸

In May, 1941, the last WPA approved project was started within the City of Clarksville. This was to grade and resurface city streets and construct sidewalks. John Cunningham gave as justification to WPA that, "The streets in Clarksville, Tennessee, to be worked are in bad state of repair and immediate rebuilding is a necessity. Sidewalks are needed in certain areas of the city."¹⁹

The total cost of the project was \$8,547. WPA approved \$5,392 for WPA labor and the City of Clarksville paid \$3,155 for materials and supervision. Work began in May, 1941, and was completed in August, 1941. Manual labor and hand tools were the principal items used to rework the streets, quarry stone, and build sidewalks. Twenty-nine men from WPA rolls were employed on this project.²⁰

¹⁸ John Cunningham, City Engineer, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, May 1, 1973.

¹⁹ WPA Form 301, August 15, 1938, Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham.

²⁰ Ibid.

With the completion of these streets and sidewalks, and various other projects, the City of Clarksville could point to various segments of the city showing the many improvements that were accomplished during the past seven years with the help of WPA funds and labor. Several hundred men were employed on these WPA sponsored projects. Their income varied according to their ability and position. Wages ranged from \$20 per month to \$250 per month. The money received by these men supported their families and secured their needs. These workers were men again since they were employed, receiving a check and not on a dole line.

The economy in Montgomery County like the rest of the United States was at a low level during the mid 1930's. With the enactment of the WPA, men could work for their food and needs, and by so doing, the completed projects of the WPA would serve as an economic and beneficial asset to Clarksville and Montgomery County, U.S.A.

CHAPTER III

COUNTY AND CITY SCHOOLS

One of the first approved WPA programs in the county was the construction of two schools. The communities of Union and Sunnyside would be the location of the WPA financed schools. WPA would furnish all labor plus \$500 toward the construction of each school. The remainder of the costs would be furnished by the county and the citizens of each community. Edgar Walker, a county employee, supervised the construction. The county school superintendent, N. L. Carney, announced, "Both schools will be modern buildings with a cloak room and a ten-foot stage. The schools will be constructed so that they can be converted into one large auditorium."²¹

Within a month after these two schools were planned, the WPA approved a project of seven million dollars towards re-building larger and more beautiful schools within Tennessee. The program in each county would be on a 70-30 basis--the county to bear 30 per cent of the costs and the WPA 70 per cent. These new structures and additions were required to meet state requirements in order to qualify for the 70 per cent WPA funding.

Construction of the new schools at Union and Sunnyside started in September, 1935, with the financial aid of WPA.

²¹Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 26, 1935, p. 1.

Twenty-two unskilled laborers and five semi-skilled men were employed on these projects. Each of the two schools had two classrooms and two cloak rooms. By mid December, 1935, these projects were completed.²²

On July 10, 1935, the City Board of Education proposed landscaping, parking area, and tennis courts at Clarksville High School with WPA labor. WPA requested a contour map be provided with the application. Mr. Clarence Speight made a drawing of the proposed tennis court with an estimate of the amount of earth to be removed.²³

On September 6, 1935, approval was received from WPA on the landscaping, parking area, and tennis courts at Clarksville High School. The total project amounted to \$2,995, of which the Federal Government provided \$2,266 in labor and the sponsor provided the remainder of the cost.²⁴

The construction of a new school in the Saint Bethlehem area was started in January, 1936. Edgar Walker, Montgomery County foreman of rural school building, headed this project. The new school was to be modern in every respect with four rooms, each having a separate cloak and hat room. Two of the rooms were to be divided by a removable partition so that they could be thrown into an auditorium for school entertainment and community

²²Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 31, 1935, p. 1.

²³Minutes of the City Board of Education, Clarksville, Tennessee, July 10, 1935.

²⁴Minutes of the City Board of Education, Clarksville, Tennessee, September 6, 1935.

programs. The heating system was a coal furnace. This project would take approximately ninety days. The majority of the costs of this new school would be by WPA appropriated funds and the remainder by county appropriation. The location of this school would be on the Jim Jerles property, which was donated to the county. Within three months this school was completed and a dedication was held at the school.²⁵

On February 14, 1936, the Montgomery County Board of Education in their monthly session unanimously agreed to request Colonel Harry S. Berry, State Administrator of WPA, to give due consideration in securing funds for remodeling the Jordan Springs Elementary School.²⁶ This school was in the western part of the county, now within the Fort Campbell Reservation area. Approval was received within two months. WPA labor did the entire remodeling of Jordan Springs School with supervision from the county school system. This project was completed in early August, 1936.²⁷

On September 14, 1936, approval was received from the Washington office of Works Progress Administration for a new brick building to be used as an agriculture and mechanical shop building at Clarksville High School. Work would begin on this project September 25, 1936. Mr. Edgar Walker was to be foreman on this project and his salary was to be paid out of funds set

²⁵Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 10, 1936, p. 1.

²⁶Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, Clarksville, Tennessee, February 14, 1936.

²⁷*Ibid.*, August, 1936.

up in the project. This new building was to be 107 feet long and 48 feet wide and was to be located at the rear of the high school. The building would be fireproof having a concrete floor and shingled roof. Sidewalks would be constructed from this building to the gym and main portion of the school.²⁸

This project lasted for some four months using unskilled labor from the WPA rolls while expert workmen were furnished by the Board of Education. Plans for the new building were made by A. F. Speight and Son of Clarksville, Tennessee.²⁹ Agriculture Instructor H. E. Gholson and Manual Training Instructor David Howard occupied this new building.³⁰

The new gymnasium of the New Providence Demonstration School built with county, community, and WPA funds was completed in September, 1936. This gymnasium would be used to play a number of basketball games that winter besides using it for gym classes during the school day. The Austin Peay Normal team also played a number of games in that new facility. The funds used for the new facility also included an athletic field which joined the building, two tennis courts, and a baseball diamond.³¹

The flooding that occurred within the county during early 1937 was beneficial to the students of the Hackberry Community. The flood waters entered the small community school and rose

²⁸Minutes of the City Board of Education, Clarksville, Tennessee, September 14, 1936.

²⁹Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 23, 1936, p. 1.

³⁰Ibid., February 4, 1937, p. 8.

³¹Ibid., September 28, 1936, p. 1.

to a depth of forty inches within the school. Desks, chairs, and blackboards were ruined. WPA labor was utilized to clean and repair the school after the water subsided. After a week of cleaning and repairing, the students returned to the classroom. The Hackberry Community expressed its gratitude to the Board of Education for the good work of the WPA men in this crisis.³²

During the first two years of WPA projects within Montgomery County several new schools were built by WPA funds and labor. After the 1936-1937 school year ended, WPA approved the wrecking of several old schools within the county. The labor was furnished by WPA and the material from the old schools would be utilized later for building additions to existing structures. St. Bethlehem and Shiloh were two old structures that were wrecked with WPA labor. Material from St. Bethlehem was taken to the Kirkwood Community to be used for an addition to the school there later that year.³³

On June 28, 1938, WPA approved the construction of the Roosevelt Elementary School. This school would be a new stone structure with four large classrooms. Four schools would be consolidated into this new facility. The old schools that would be closed were Center Grove, Bethlehem, Mt. Olivet, and Hickory Point. The cost of this new school would be \$14,000 and WPA

³²Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, Clarksville, Tennessee, February 15, 1937.

³³Ibid., May 21, 1937.

would pay forty-six per cent of the cost.³⁴ WPA labor for this job required common laborers, carpenters, brick masons, time-keeper, and water boys. By the end of 1939 this new school was completed. There were 118 students enrolled in this new school.³⁵

On February 9, 1940, approval was received from WPA headquarters to start construction on the new Montgomery Central High School. The county had approved \$12,000 toward this school with the remainder of the cost furnished by WPA. This new high school was to be built similar to the Roosevelt Elementary School.³⁶ As the school progressed, WPA set up new requirements and standards pertaining to the heating and water systems of schools. With these new regulations, the heating and water system was required to be planned by engineers acceptable to WPA. The county advertised for bids and the American Radiator Company was low bidder for installing the heating and water system of the school.³⁷ This new school was completed in November, 1940, with the approval of WPA.³⁸

Mr. Mort Paisley made the following statement regarding WPA and Montgomery County schools:

From mid 1930 up to early 1940's I worked for the State of Tennessee. I was assigned to Montgomery County to check on various WPA projects and WPA labor. Two projects I remember were those of Roosevelt and Montgomery Central schools. About twenty to twenty-five WPA laborers and brick masons

³⁴Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, June 28, 1938, p. 1.

³⁵Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, Clarksville, Tennessee, January 11, 1940.

³⁶Ibid., February 9, 1940.

³⁷Ibid., August 12, 1940.

³⁸Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, November 18, 1940, p. 1.

worked for more than a year building those schools. Edgar Walker was foreman on these jobs. All the stone on these buildings were cut and placed by WPA labor. There was a quarry near Fredonia to furnish stone for Roosevelt School. In the Cunningham and Palmyra area was another quarry. The stone for Montgomery Central School came from this quarry.³⁹

In April, 1941, the county submitted to WPA a request for labor and funds to build a new high school in the Woodlawn area.⁴⁰ The county had just purchased twenty-one acres of land from Mr. G. I. Manners for this new proposed structure. The cost of this property to the county was \$1,000. Approval was not received for this project.⁴¹

Jordan Springs school had been taken within the new established Camp Campbell Military Reservation. This school had just been remodeled in 1936 with WPA labor and funds, and was considered a sound structure. The county school officials gained permission from the military to move Jordan Springs school to the Woodlawn location. In the latter part of 1941 this wooden structure became Woodlawn High School.⁴²

³⁹Mort Paisley, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, June 29, 1973.

⁴⁰Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, Clarksville, Tennessee, August 29, 1941.

⁴¹Ibid., July 30, 1941.

⁴²Ibid., October 24, 1941.

CHAPTER IV

FARM TO MARKET ROADS

WPA Farm to Market roads required certain provisions and specifications. The sponsor was required to furnish the complete cost estimate of work performed, giving plan of procedure showing the equipment and labor required, together with necessary data for location and design of drainage structures. WPA workers and equipment were not shifted from one road project to another unless approved by the Area Engineer or a WPA representative.

There were three groups of Farm to Market roads: (a) Group I. The width of surface not less than eighteen feet, shoulders required to be a minimum width of three feet, making a total width of road bed of twenty-four feet. Ditches cut five feet from shoulder area making thirty-four feet from center of ditchline to ditchline. (b) Group II. The width of surface not less than eighteen feet, shoulders required a width of two feet, making a total width of road bed of twenty-two feet. Ditches cut five feet from shoulder area, making thirty-two feet from ditchline to ditchline. (c) Group III. The width of surface not less than sixteen feet, shoulders required a minimum width of two feet, making a total width of road bed of twenty feet. Ditches cut three feet from shoulders, making twenty-six feet from ditchline to ditchline.

The road bed must consist of crushed stone, none larger than two inches in diameter. Four to eight inches of crushed stone required, according to the type and use of the proposed Farm to Market road. Drainage must comply with the Engineer's recommendation of the roadway and terrain involved.

Inspection of all Farm to Market roads was required and inspectors were furnished by the WPA. Roads were inspected in different stages of completion such as the clearing of right-of-way, dirt moving as to grade of road, ditching, drainage, surfacing and bridges. Final inspection and acceptance of all completed projects were made by the WPA Area Engineer.⁴³

The first article to appear in the Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle regarding WPA was on July 6, 1935. In this article, Colonel Harry S. Berry, State Director of the Works Progress Administration, stated:

All of Tennessee's ninety-five counties would be able to participate in the WPA rural road building program. The counties will have a choice of either putting up local gasoline tax money or a lump sum of money to the state for financing these road projects.⁴⁴

Over 100 men were assigned to G. G. McClure, County Road Supervisor, by the WPA on November 12, 1935, for the construction of Farm to Market roads. This project would last for approximately five months. Wages for 140 hours of work consisted of \$22 per month or approximately \$1.26 per day.⁴⁵ WPA furnished in material

⁴³WPA Memorandum 2nd District Office Nashville, Tennessee, Office of Gus Norfleet, Montgomery County Road Supervisor, Clarksville, Tennessee.

⁴⁴Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 6, 1935, p. 1.

⁴⁵Ibid., November 12, 1935, p. 1.

and labor \$94,678. Some items included were gasoline, dynamite, cement, culvert pipe, timber, tar prime, asphalt seal, diesel fuel, and labor. The total cost of this Farm to Market road project was \$132,571.65 with WPA furnishing \$74,699 for labor and \$19,978 for non-labor. The sponsor furnished \$11,399.30 for labor and \$26,494.35 for non-labor.⁴⁶

Bill Bagwell, Montgomery County Road Superintendent, commented on the Farm to Market roads that were built in Montgomery County in 1935-37. Mr. Bagwell was employed by the Montgomery County Highway Department during these years and worked closely with the WPA labor that was assigned to the highway department.

I worked for the Montgomery County Highway Department during the time WPA came into being. We were assigned about 100 men from WPA rolls to help on the Farm to Market roads within the county. The roads built under this program were Cooper Creek, Shady Grove and Webb. These WPA laborers would cut trees and blow stumps within the fifty-foot right-of-way. All of the labor was done by hand with picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. In case solid rock was hit, dynamite was used and then the WPA laborers would crush the rock with hammers. Ditches were cut by a pull grader and the dirt from the ditches was thrown on the banks or in the road by hand shovels. There were two quarries set up for these Farm to Market roads. The Shady Grove Quarry was used only for the Shady Grove to Fredonia road. The other quarry at Port Royal was used for Cooper Creek and Webb Roads. The WPA laborers were paid about \$1.50 per day. This was twenty-five cents a day more than the county workers were making. These roads took many months to build and rock.⁴⁷

July 22, 1937, 150 road men attended a meeting at Dunbar Cave. Colonel Harry Berry, WPA Administrator, complimented Judge Cunningham for his responsibility for building one of the best

⁴⁶WPA Files, Office of Gus Norfleet, Montgomery County Road Supervisor, Clarksville, Tennessee.

⁴⁷Bill Bagwell, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, February 14, 1973.

county road systems in Tennessee. Berry stated, "The Farm to Market roads over the state are second to none. The WPA in Tennessee has spent over \$8 billion on Farm to Market roads." Berry also commented that "there would be no change in the present Farm to Market road setup, that the program would be continued for the time being just as in the past."⁴⁸

During the latter part of 1937 the county roads were in good condition. A lack of funds had checked highway construction, but fifty WPA laborers were still employed by the county doing chiefly right-of-way cutting.⁴⁹

In April, 1938, Orgain Road in District 17 was being built with the help of a caterpillar tractor and grader and WPA labor. The WPA oil program was being utilized within the county on several roads. The base stone had been placed on the roads and the oil crushed stone was to follow. Approximately 3600 cubic yards of oil stone was required for Orgain Road. This road was completed by June 1, 1938.⁵⁰

In April, 1938, Rossvie Pike received a new coating of stone from its intersection with old Highway 13 at St. Bethlehem for several miles toward Rossvie. This stone was needed before the oil could be placed on the road. Under compliance with WPA this stone had to be placed and the width of the road had to be twenty-four feet. During this month, WPA funds permitted about

⁴⁸Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 22, 1937, p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid., October 4, 1937, p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., April 4, 1938, p. 1.

eight miles of road within the county to be oiled. WPA furnished labor and funds for oil during this operation.⁵¹

Rossvie, Edmondson Ferry, Station Lane, Stringtown, and Seven Mile Ferry Roads were oiled during the last few months of 1938.

Mr. J. F. Anderson commented on the roads built with the aid of WPA:

I worked for the State of Tennessee as Highway Maintenance Supervisor. Montgomery County was one of four counties under my supervision. Roads, bridges, widening shoulders, cutting ditchlines, clearing ditchlines, and clearing right-of-way fell under my job. During the 1930's the state furnished the equipment for these various jobs and the WPA furnished and paid for the labor. All of these projects were done by manual labor using picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. We ordered picks and shovels by the truck load for these WPA laborers. Projects were started and completed all over the county during the 1930's. In fact, most of the Farm to Market roads that exist today were built with state equipment and WPA labor. Most of these men made \$2 per day. This was a period of time that men wanted to work and would walk many miles in order to work and draw a pay check.⁵²

During the summer of 1940 five roads were oiled with WPA aid. These roads were: (1) Palmyra Road, 3.6 miles, (2) Porter's Bluff Road, 1/2 mile, (3) Lafayette Pike, 2.4 miles, (4) Rossvie Pike, 1.9 miles, and (5) Clarksville Airport Road, 1/2 mile. The quantity of oil used on these five roads was 133,000 gallons. Under the original 1940 oiling program fifteen miles were to be surfaced with the county putting up one-third of the cost. WPA slashed it to six miles for the federal agency, three miles for

⁵¹Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 11, 1938, p. 1.

⁵²J. F. Anderson, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, June 30, 1973.

the county. The year before twelve miles were oiled, eight by WPA and four by the county.⁵³

The last Farm to Market WPA Contract with Montgomery County covered a period of twelve months and twenty-five days, ending August 21, 1941. The WPA contribution was \$94,878. The sponsor contributed \$47,771, a total of \$142,649. WPA labor was \$74,799 and WPA non-labor was \$20,079. Sponsor's labor was \$16,140 and sponsor's non-labor was \$31,631, making the WPA 66.51 per cent and sponsor 33.49 per cent.⁵⁴

⁵³Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 24, 1940, p. 1.

⁵⁴WPA Files, Office of Gus Norfleet, Montgomery County Road Supervisor, Clarksville, Tennessee.

CHAPTER V

ARMORY

On January 11, 1940, Mayor William Kleeman was authorized by the city council at a called meeting to exercise options on two tracts of land on Marion Street at the rear of Austin Peay Normal on which an armory and auditorium would be constructed. The options totaled \$4,000. The city would pay not more than \$3,000 and the county would pay not more than \$2,000 on this purchase.

The State of Tennessee was to provide some \$10,000 toward this reinforced concrete structure. The WPA would provide some \$60,000 in labor and material in building the armory. The new structure would be valued between \$70,000 and \$80,000.⁵⁵

Within two weeks, twelve acres of land was purchased for \$4,900. The City of Clarksville paid two-thirds and the county one-third. This land was in two tracts, one owned by Ed and Charlie Cooke, while the other tract was owned by B. A. Patch and Stuart Leipton.

The north tract bought from the Cooke brothers would be used for the stables and drill field, while the south tract would be the site of the armory and auditorium.

The city and county provided \$5,000 each while the state matched these funds. The WPA provided the remainder of the needed

⁵⁵Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 11, 1940, p. 1.

funds for this construction. Plans and specifications included a one-story building, equipped with wash rooms, lounge rooms, officer's rooms, American Legion room and a large drill floor which was equipped with convertible bleacher seats. This floor served as a basketball court and an auditorium with a stage in the rear.⁵⁶

Speight and Hibbs, architects, provided the plans and specifications for the armory. The seating capacity for a stage performance would be 2,000, but during a basketball game the capacity would be only 1,300. The auditorium would be available for public gatherings, county fairs, athletic events and various other forms of entertainment and amusements.⁵⁷

On May 25, 1940, Mayor William Kleeman received official approval from WPA on the armory grant project. With this final approval, plans and specifications were finalized so construction could start on the concrete structure, the future home of Troop K, 109th Cavalry.⁵⁸

During September, 1940, Speight and Hibbs, architects, received notification from R. W. Jones, Chief Engineer of WPA, to have a tool house constructed on the site of the new armory grounds in order that work might begin.⁵⁹ Within a week, construction was started on the armory. Larry Bryant, Sr. was appointed by the WPA as Superintendent of the project. This

⁵⁶Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 20, 1940, p. 1.

⁵⁷Ibid., March 5, 1940, p. 1.

⁵⁸Ibid., May 25, 1940, p. 1.

⁵⁹Ibid., September 12, 1940, p. 1.

concrete structure was to be built in 365 days utilizing some seventy WPA workers. Engineer Manley of the State Adjutant General's office was the supervisor of the project. Lacy Hibbs, the architect, stated, "A representative of my firm will be on the job to see that the building is erected according to plans and specifications."⁶⁰

Clearing the site was the first construction on this WPA project. For several weeks thirteen WPA laborers were utilized clearing the site and unloading arriving material.⁶¹

WPA labor began to hand dig the footing and place reinforced steel within the ditches. Concrete was made on the grounds by the aid of a one bag mixer with a gasoline motor. WPA laborers would haul the concrete in wheelbarrows to the designated pour site. Large timbers were used to make scaffolds, forms and catwalks. The walls and floor were solid concrete and steel. As many as ninety WPA workers were employed on this project during the first nine months of construction.

Mr. Larry Bryant, Sr., age seventy-nine, gave the following statement to the writer in an interview July 6, 1973.

I was superintendent over the building of the armory. WPA labor was used. That building was built as strong as any building I've ever seen. The foundation was wide and deep, requiring many yards of concrete. It was loaded with steel. The side walls have two rolls of steel in the concrete. There are four uprights of steel in the side walls. Dynamite would be the only way to remove the walls of the armory. The span of the armory is 112 feet. There are five steel trusses that hold a wooden built-up roof. The archway across the stage

⁶⁰Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 18, 1940, p. 1.

⁶¹Ibid., September 25, 1940, p. 1.

has 1-1/4" steel and plenty of it. The floor has at least four inches of concrete. We used a one bag mixer with a gasoline motor on this job. All labor was manual labor, using hands, picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. There were about ninety WPA workers that worked thirty hours a week. Each man would work five hours per day, either in the morning shift or evening shift. I worked ten hours per day, six days per week.

Most of the time, WPA workers were hard workers and pleasant to work with. After we completed the armory, the parking lot was paved with WPA labor and funds. After construction had started, nearly a year passed before we completed the job. I remember Mr. Whitworth, a high official of WPA, told me at the start of the job, 'I don't care how much material you use, or how much time it takes you to build this building or what it costs--all I want you to do is to keep these WPA workers busy and construct a strong building.' I took Mr. Whitworth at his words and did just that. I kept ninety WPA workers busy and out of trouble, and the armory is as strong as steel and concrete can make a structure. After this project was completed, the city started work on the stadium but not with WPA labor. The armory was the last major construction in Montgomery County utilizing WPA labor.⁶²

In a personal interview July 5, 1973, Mr. James Hester made the following comments about the construction of the armory:

A large earthen ramp was constructed on the west side of the building with wooden ramps that connected to the structure. These ramps were used by workmen and the 'Georgia Buggies' to haul concrete to the structure. As the building increased in height wooden 'catwalks' were constructed for workers and 'Georgia Buggies.' Construction lasted for more than a year and employed many WPA laborers, WPA carpenters, and WPA concrete finishers.⁶³

During September, 1941, WPA funds were halted. Federal money was being used for a military and arms build-up. WPA laborers on this armory project were cut from ninety to twenty. These twenty men were used for several weeks landscaping and beautifying

⁶²Larry Bryant, Sr., private interview Hopkinsville, Kentucky, July 6, 1973.

⁶³James Hester, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, July 5, 1973.

the grounds surrounding the armory. Before the work stoppage occurred, all the walls of the armory were completed with the exception of part of the front and rear walls. The steel trusses were in place awaiting the decking of the roof. Material for the floor, roof and interior were on the job site, but WPA funds were needed to buy cement, steel and pay WPA labor.⁶⁴ Within several weeks WPA funds were designated for this armory project for its completion. Some seventy WPA workers returned to their jobs to complete this monolithic concrete structure. After the completion of the armory in 1941, WPA played a very insignificant part of the history of Clarksville and Montgomery County, Tennessee. No other major WPA projects were funded or approved after the armory was completed.

⁶⁴Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, October 7, 1941, p. 1.

CHAPTER VI

VARIOUS WPA PROJECTS

Many of the WPA projects which seemed to be insignificant did much to raise the morale of the citizens of Clarksville and Montgomery County during these years of depression. This chapter will cover the various WPA projects researched by the writer not included in other chapters of this thesis.

Sanitary Closet Construction

WPA funds were approved to build sanitary closets within Montgomery County. Dr. F. J. Malone, Health Director, stated, "Free labor is provided through the WPA for the construction of sanitary closets. The homeowner must furnish the material and WPA will furnish all labor required to build the sanitary closets."⁶⁵ Mr. Lauren Waller was employed as the superintendent of sanitary closet construction. Mr. Waller stated:

I worked for an oil company receiving \$100 per month and business was slow so I got a chance for this job and talking to several officials, I was hired at \$150 per month. During 1936 this was a lot of money per month. I had from one to five crews with seven men to a crew. We usually built one-holers for residential areas but schools, businesses and parks sometimes required two to four-holers. The WPA furnished all the labor and the homeowner was required to furnish the material. The first year we built over 700 sanitary closets. Most members of my crews made from 45¢ to 75¢ per hour.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, February 11, 1936, p. 1.

⁶⁶Lauren Waller, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, January 12, 1973.

During the first eighteen months of operation a total of 694 sanitary toilets were built in Montgomery County at a cost of \$8,475 utilizing some fifteen employees of WPA. Dr. W. C. Williams, Tennessee Commissioner of Health, stated:

The cumulative benefits of this program are apparent, since the number of death cases and deaths from typhoid fever in 1936 was the lowest in history of the state. These projects also have an educational value for it has been reported that many property owners are not waiting for WPA crews to make needed improvements on their premises, but are proceeding to construct approved conveniences without the assistance of WPA.⁶⁷

Three new crews were added in June, 1937, a total of twenty-one men, to construct sanitary closets. If sewer lines were available, homeowners were required to connect on and not build a closet. The WPA and Health Department furnished the work and material was furnished by the homeowner.⁶⁸

Mrs. Lottie Bradley gave the following statement to the writer in an interview March 26, 1973.

I worked as secretary for Dr. Malone at the Health Department from 1922 to 1942. The building of sanitary toilets with WPA labor was actually under the Health Department. These buildings had to meet certain specifications. Mr. Lauren Waller was the supervisor in charge of construction. He had several crews that built sanitary toilets. The project was financed with WPA funds for labor only, the homeowner furnished the material.⁶⁹

WPA Aid for Flood Sufferers

January, 1937, rain continued to fall within the watershed of the Cumberland River Basin. With a week of heavy rains,

⁶⁷Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, March 24, 1937, p. 4.

⁶⁸Ibid., June 23, 1937, p. 1.

⁶⁹Mrs. Lottie Bradley, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, March 26, 1973.

the Cumberland River began to break from its banks and intrude into many homes and businesses along the river front.

Mr. George Foust commented on the 1937 flood:

During January, 1937, I think it rained for several weeks. The river broke from its banks and worked its way up to the old Montgomery County Jail, which was on Commerce Street across from Orgain Supply Company. The water from the Cumberland was in many parts of the jail and also into most of Orgain's buildings. The water reached within fifty feet of the Clarksville Foundry. The railroad underpass above Shoney's was just about two feet above the flood waters. The old Clarksville Water Works Plant was under water and cut off the water supply to Clarksville. The people did catch rain water in tubs and barrels to use for drinking.

During this period, there were many houses along the river. This flood covered most of them or either part of them. Many people were left homeless for a long period of time.⁷⁰

January 26, 1937, Mayor W. D. Hudson announced that notification had been received from the Fifth District Congressman, Richard M. Atkinson, that flood sufferers would be given work on WPA rolls in cleaning up after the waters had subsided. All people rendered penniless as a result of the flood of the Cumberland River would be given jobs with the WPA. This cleanup lasted for many weeks utilizing the personnel that had been hit the hardest. This cleanup operation achieved two major objectives: first, the needed cleanup and, secondly, an income for the penniless flood sufferers.⁷¹

Airport Development

Montgomery County was eligible for Federal Airport Development, Clarksville being a central point between Nashville and

⁷⁰ George Foust, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, May 2, 1973.

⁷¹ Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 26, 1937, p. 1.

St. Louis and also between Louisville and Memphis. The Montgomery County Quarterly Court agreed in June, 1937, to buy the existing airport with some 225 acres of land from Mrs. J. C. Caroland, Capt. John Outlaw, and some 96 stockholders. The airport had been recently expanded by the help of the C.W.A. Over \$20,000 was spent toward grading, concreting, and permanent improvement.

The airport had been established in 1928 consisting of 225 acres of land situated in District 3 about eight miles north of Clarksville. Colonel Harry Berry, WPA State Administrator, agreed to give a written guarantee to the county that work would be done by WPA labor if the county purchased the field from the existing owners.⁷²

During the summer of 1940, \$3,500 was appropriated by the state Aeronautics Commission to supplement the \$15,000 approved by WPA for labor to finish the newly constructed runways and landscaping.⁷³ A crew of twenty-one WPA workers were involved in this work for several months.⁷⁴

Hot Lunch Program for Schools

Miss Mattie Lee Fort, the supervisor in charge of certain WPA projects in Montgomery County, stated that a movie would be shown and the proceeds would go for the WPA school hot lunch program. Miss Fort said:

The movie will be shown at the Lillian Theater and the title of the movie will be 'Collegiate.' Twenty-five per cent

⁷²Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 6, 1937, p. 1.

⁷³Ibid., August 28, 1940, p. 1.

⁷⁴Ibid., September 2, 1940, p. 1.

of all money collected from the sale of tickets will be used in equipping additional rural schools for noonday hot lunches. Up to this date, a total of fifteen schools are now being served hot lunches. White Chapel and Fredonia are now being added to the list of White institutions being served. With the addition of Ranson, Walnut Grove, Round Pond, and New Providence the total number of Negro schools being served is now seven.⁷⁵

Miscellaneous Projects

Among other projects were copying old records in the County Courthouse, county health records, and recreational projects.

The State Recreation Division of WPA under direction of Miss La Venia Tension, Recreation Supervisor for District 4, sponsored a four-day training program at the community house. The program was composed of training in social games, group singing, contests, folk games, handicrafts, athletics, and community drama. Miss Marguerite Woodard was selected to lead a "Rhythm Band," the instruments of which were hand-made. Recreational leaders from surrounding communities and volunteer leaders from the churches of Clarksville attended the course.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 28, 1936, p. 1.

⁷⁶Ibid., May 24, 1937, p. 1.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The WPA's role in Montgomery County during the mid-thirties and early forties was very significant. The country was in the midst of a depression, and people were suffering from a lack of money and jobs. There were many needed projects throughout the county but there was a lack of funds needed to incorporate and materialize these projects.

With the enactment of the WPA, funds would now be available to city and county governments for various projects. Leaders of the local government organizations began to make application to WPA toward implementing beneficial programs within the city and county. These projects would employ local citizens and at the same time upgrade standards in Clarksville and Montgomery County, Tennessee.

Construction of schools during this period of history was a major issue. There were over a dozen schools constructed or remodeled utilizing WPA funds for labor and material. Several hundred WPA men were employed during the 1930's on various jobs at different school locations. Of the many schools that were constructed by WPA, two remain in use today. Central school located on Highway 13 is currently used by the Board of Education as an elementary school. Roosevelt school located on the Nashville highway is currently used as a vocational training center by the

Montgomery County School Board. These rock structures are reminders of the accomplishments of this WPA program.

The Farm to Market roads required more WPA labor than any other local project during the 1930's. Hundreds of men worked under the supervision of the County Road Supervisor building over 282 miles of Farm to Market roads during the latter 1930's. They constructed over thirty new bridges, improved over a dozen existing bridges, and installed 455 new culverts.⁷⁷ Rural roads within Montgomery County are reminders of the work performed by WPA workers during the depression years of the 1930's.

Sanitary toilet construction was one of the major projects of WPA in Clarksville and Montgomery County. Each household was required by the Health Department to build a sanitary closet if the dwelling was not on sanitary sewage. Several crews of seven WPA laborers were dispatched to construct these small units. The material was furnished by the homeowner and all labor was furnished by WPA. County wide, WPA constructed over 2200 sanitary toilets during the WPA years. Tennessee led the nation in construction of sanitary closets and Montgomery County was a leader in Tennessee.⁷⁸

WPA projects within the City of Clarksville were beneficial and economical to its citizens. WPA labor was utilized in quarrying rock for the streets, installing water and sewer lines, and construction of buildings and parks. These projects aided the

⁷⁷ Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 24, 1941, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid., April 24, 1941, p. 1.

citizens in safety, health, sanitation, fire prevention, and recreation. The city garage on Third Street and Mericourt Park, located on Madison Street, are still being used for their original purpose.

The armory, the last major WPA project in Montgomery County, stands as a monument to WPA years. The manual labor and crude tools that were used to construct this building make an individual appreciate the historical past and the inventions and automation of today.

Taxpayers over the nation including Montgomery County were concerned with many WPA laborers loafing. A statement was forwarded to all counties stating that any man found loafing on the job would be warned by the superintendent and if he did not improve, he would be suspended for two days without pay. If after returning, he still loafed, he would be dismissed for a week without pay. On the fourth offense, he would lose his job entirely.⁷⁹ The writer talked with Mrs. Ursula Beach, Montgomery County historian, and she stated:

Many of these workers were not able to have a hot breakfast before going to work. I think many of these workers had the right to lean on a shovel for a few minutes and I believe that all of the projects that were accomplished by the WPA were of an equal economic asset as well as being beneficial to Clarksville and Montgomery County.⁸⁰

In August, 1940, a WPA worker, Harrison Shelby--a Negro World War veteran, was fined \$10 and fired for cursing and threatening his boss. Shelby was quoted as declaring, "By _____, I'll

⁷⁹ Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 21, 1936, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Ursula Beach, private interview Clarksville, Tennessee, January 17, 1973.

stay up here and see what you're going to do," while hinting that his knife might be brought into use. The supervisor immediately went to the courthouse and swore out a warrant for Shelby.⁸¹

There were criticisms of the WPA programs and some people referred to WPA as "We Piddle Around" while others called it "Wrong Program Again."

WPA sponsored projects within the City of Clarksville and Montgomery County saved the taxpayers a large sum of money during the 1930's. It provided jobs for hundreds of men who desired to work rather than accept a dole. Probably many of the streets, curbs and gutters, storm drains, sewer and water lines, buildings, and parks would not have been a part of Clarksville and Montgomery County if it had not been for the WPA.

⁸¹Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 15, 1940, p. 1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Leuchtenburg, William E. The New Deal. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968.

Patterson, James T. The New Deal and the States. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

B. NEWSPAPERS

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 6, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 10, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 11, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 13, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 20, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 26, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 27, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 10, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 12, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 19, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 21, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 24, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 26, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 31, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 16, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 19, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 25, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 30, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, October 1, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, October 12, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, November 2, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, November 8, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, November 12, 1935.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 2, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 10, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 11, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 28, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 31, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, February 11, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, February 13, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, March 28, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 8, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 18, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, May 8, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, June 5, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 1, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 21, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 23, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 28, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, December 31, 1936.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 8, 1937.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 9, 1937.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 26, 1937.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 27, 1937.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, February 4, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, March 24, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 21, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, May 6, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, May 24, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, June 23, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, June 28, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 6, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 22, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 30, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, October 4, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, December 19, 1937.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 4, 1938.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 11, 1938.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, May 19, 1938.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, June 28, 1938.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 25, 1938.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, November 7, 1938.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 7, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 11, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 16, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 20, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, February 7, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, March 5, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, May 25, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, July 24, 1940.
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 15, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 22, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, August 28, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 2, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 12, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 18, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, September 25, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, November 18, 1940.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, January 16, 1941.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 19, 1941.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 24, 1941.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, April 29, 1941.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, May 5, 1941.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, October 6, 1941.

Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle, October 7, 1941.

C. SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

Minutes of Clarksville Board of Education, July 10, 1935.

Minutes of Clarksville Board of Education, September 6, 1935.

Minutes of Clarksville Board of Education, September 14, 1936.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, February 14, 1936.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, August, 1936.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, February 15, 1937.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, May 21, 1937.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, January 11, 1940.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, February 9, 1940.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, August 12, 1940.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, July 30, 1941.

Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, August 29, 1941.
Minutes of Montgomery County Board of Education, October 24, 1941.

D. RECORDS FILED IN PUBLIC OFFICES

Office of Gus Norfleet, Montgomery County Road Supervisor, Clarksville, Tennessee. WPA Memorandum 2nd District Office Nashville, Tennessee.

Office of Gus Norfleet, Montgomery County Road Supervisor, Clarksville, Tennessee. WPA Files.

Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham. WPA Form 301, October, 1935.

Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham. WPA Form 301, September, 1936.

Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham. WPA Form 301, August 15, 1937.

Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham. WPA Form 301, August 15, 1938.

Office of City Engineer, Clarksville, Tennessee, files of John Cunningham. WPA Form 301, August 16, 1938.

E. INTERVIEWS

Anderson, J. F. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Bagwell, Bill. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Beach, Ursula. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Bradley, Lottie. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Bryant, Larry, Sr. Private interview Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

Cunningham, John. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Foust, George. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Hester, James. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Paisley, Mort. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.

Waller, Lauren. Private interview Clarksville, Tennessee.