



GOVERNMENT WORK ON THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF OKLAHOMA

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Natural resources is a comprehensive term that includes many things. I shall confine myself to the mineral resources of Oklahoma.

As early as 1895, the U. S. Geological Survey sent a young geologist, Joseph A. Taff, to Indian Territory to study the coal and asphalt deposits of the Choctaw and Chickashaw nations. This work continued for more than 10 years, finally terminating in 1908. A number of reports were issued, culminating in the exhaustive paper entitled "Coal Lands in Oklahoma." For the lead and zinc area of Ottawa County, Siebenthal and others of the U. S. Geological Survey have prepared exhaustive reports. Oil and gas have also received considerable attention and numerous reports have been issued on this subject. It is the province of this paper, however, to discuss particularly the work accomplished during the past few months by two of the "Alphabet Agencies" in the so-called "white collar" and relief programs.

On September 1, 1934, there was set up in Oklahoma City under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, a project known as the "Construction Materials Survey of Oklahoma." The object of the survey was primarily two-fold: to give employment to unemployed geologists and engineers and to make a catalog of the materials of construction in Oklahoma. I was placed in general charge of the project, with J. O. Beach as office manager. Our headquarters were on the fifth floor of a building at 12th and Santa Fe, Oklahoma City. A meat-canning plant with its attendant odors occupied the basement and first floor; the third floor housed a mattress factory with its accompaniment of lint.

When we started to select our personnel, we found, much to our surprise that there were very few unemployed geologists. For this we were very thankful but it left us in an embarrassing position. Finally, by dint of much correspondence and many interviews, we were able to secure enough qualified men to carry on the project. I was successful in securing

E. G. Woodruff and Roy A. Wilson, both of whom had been connected in former years with the Department of Geology at the University of Oklahoma. These men carried the burden of the scientific work, thus leaving me free for matters of administration. We employed some thirty typists and helpers, and issued reports on the following subjects: sand, gravel, limestone, sandstone, granite, marble, clays, gypsum, volcanic ash, tripoli, novocalite, water, and timber. These reports were mimeographed and covered about 650 pages. They were sent to libraries, Chambers of Commerce, and other interested agencies. Copies are still available. If one takes into account the limited time and the difficulties of securing proper personnel, the results justified the project.

With the passing of the F. E. R. A. and the installation in Oklahoma of the Works Progress Administration under the direction of General W. S. Key, another phase of the same general subject is being undertaken. This is known as "The Oklahoma Mineral Survey." It was instigated by the State Planning Board and is under the general direction of the Oklahoma Geological Survey, at Norman. F. C. Wood of the Survey is director of the project.

An allocation of approximately \$264,000 was made for this work, which was supposed to include the entire State and last for one year. This allocation passed the President's desk, but the Comptroller of the Currency reduced the amount to \$166,000. This amount is to be augmented by certain State funds.

The curtailment of the money necessitated a revision of the program, so that only 43 of the 77 counties of Oklahoma are now being worked, and the present program has been set up for five months instead of for a year. It was decided to devote the greater part of the energies of the project to those parts of Oklahoma where the relief load is heaviest, and where mineral products are most abundant; in other words, the eastern and southern counties. A group of counties in northwest Oklahoma was included because a good-road building program is in progress in that region and the location of available deposits of sand, gravel and caliche were needed.

The 43 counties were divided into eleven districts with headquarters at Tulsa, Miami, Muskogee, McAlester, Hugo, Ardmore, Ada, Lawton, Alva, Clinton, and Woodward. Each district is in charge of a district supervisor. Each county has a county supervisor. There has been considerable difficulty in filling these positions. At the present time trained men are not easy to secure; in several instances we were obliged to assign to counties either engineers or geologists with little field experience. Each county supervisor secures from the relief rolls certain helpers, such as laborers, truck drivers, testing engineers, stenographers and draftsmen. Again we experienced much difficulty; in many counties semi-skilled positions cannot be filled from relief rolls for the reason that people suitable for such positions are not now on relief. Thus the starting of the work has been greatly handicapped. When the personnel has been completed this project will employ more than 600 people.

It is planned to make as complete a survey as possible of the various mineral resources in each of the 43 counties. This will include gravel beds, sand beds, deposits of gypsum and gypsite, caliche, volcanic ash, limestone, granite and other materials that go into the construction of roads and buildings. At the same time, a study will be made of various water problems, including wells, springs, streams and ground waters. Fossil localities will be spotted, and objects of archaeological importance listed. The Oklahoma Geological Survey expects to publish the results of this work.