

The American Guide Series

The **American Guide Series** of books was produced by the Federal Writers Project between 1935 and 1943. The Federal Writers Project was one of the many programs under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a Depression-era government program that assisted the millions of unemployed. The series is said to have originated from a casual cocktail party conversation between writer Katharine Kellock and WPA administrator Arthur Goldsmith. These wonderful travel guides cover the 48 states (Alaska and Hawaii were not yet states) and the District of Columbia and employed over 6,000 writers. Each volume covers a state's history, geography, and culture, and includes photographs, maps, and drawings.

The **American Guide Series** is a highly collectible set of books; many people search the shelves of antiquarian book shops in an attempt to bring together the entire series. The **Guide Series'** value continues to increase, with some titles now worth several hundred dollars. Two of the more desirable titles include the first edition Idaho volume, most of which were destroyed in a warehouse fire, and the Dakota volumes, which had very limited printings. The recent popularity of the series has also prompted publishing houses to reissue selected titles in attractive and affordable paperback editions.

In addition to the popular state series, the Writers Project also produced over 1,200 books and pamphlets, including guides to major cities and interstate roadways, folklore collections, oral histories, and even song recordings. The project enlisted the talents of such well-known writers as John Cheever, Saul Bellow, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison.

One of the most interesting **American Guide Series** volumes is *Washington City and Capital*. Originally published in 1937, it is replete with fascinating history and lore, but President Franklin D. Roosevelt questioned its utility as a guidebook because it weighs four pounds. A condensed, more portable size was subsequently published.

Alabama: A Guide to the Deep South

Writers' Program of the Work Project Administration in the State of Alabama
New York: R.R. Smith, 1941

This guide contains essays on the life and culture of the state that acknowledge the influence of African-Americans, especially in areas such as folklore and music. The guide profiles ten cities and includes photos of scenes of Southern poverty during the Depression.

A Guide to Alaska: Last American Frontier

Merle Colby, Federal Writers' Project
New York: Macmillan, 1945, c1939

This guidebook had its work cut out for it: Alaska has an area of about 586,000 square miles and a coastline of 26,000 miles. There are essays on history, people, and the environment, and this guide contains a lot of practical information that is more specific than most of the other guides. For instance, it includes hotel room prices: single rooms with a bath: \$2.50 to \$6. This guidebook does not have the detailed driving tours that the others have, due to the state's size and lack of roads. The book also provides a list of common Chinook expressions. It is the only state guide to feature the name of a single author.

Arizona: A State Guide

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration
New York: Hastings House, 1940

At the time of this guidebook's publication, Arizona was the youngest state in the union. The guide shows a state of contrasts: geographically, racially, socially, and culturally. It includes essays on "The Indians" and "Indian Arts and Crafts." The photographs show many facets of the state-mission churches, mines, mesas, and historic cowboy scenes. The volume follows the standard format with essays on history, transportation, arts, sports, and folklore.

The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Arkansas
With a new introduction by Elliott West
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987

The original volume was published in 1941. The reprint has an interesting introduction that discusses the changes in Arkansas in the last 45 years. As with the other guides, the

book gives a succinct look at Arkansas geography and its political, economic, and cultural history. The quality of the photography is much better in this reprint than the other reprint volumes. Eight cities and towns are described in full and there are 18 driving tours. There is an excellent bibliography.

California: A Guide to the Golden State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works
Progress Administration for the State of California
New York: Hastings House, 1939 (1943 printing)

The preface to this volume sums up the problem of trying to write a guide to this state: "California has so great a diversity of places and people and things that the problem of getting it between the covers of a single book seemed almost unsolvable." This volume stands out from the rest of the others in the series. The quality of the writing, photographs, and especially the pen-and-ink drawings are excellent. There are unique essays in the volume, such as the one on the movie industry. The history essay gives a good overview of the state. There is a 1984 paperback reprint called *The WPA Guide to California*.

The WPA Guide to Cincinnati: A Guide to the Queen City and Its Neighbors

With a new introduction by Zane L. Miller and a new preface by Harry Graff
Cincinnati, OH: Cincinnati Historical Society, 1987

This was the last volume in the **American Guide Series**. There are 28 tours of the city and surrounding communities. The guide is profusely illustrated with interesting photographs. An invaluable guide to the Queen City.

Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Colorado
New York: Hastings House, 1941

Not surprisingly, this guide emphasizes the natural beauty of the "Highest State." The photos of Denver show a smaller and less cosmopolitan city than today. Each of the major cities and towns are described. The Native American presence is discussed in detail. The economic base chapter surveys the mining and agriculture industries. There is also a paperback reprint entitled *The WPA Guide to 1930s Colorado*, published by the University Press of Kansas. The reprint has a wonderful essay on the changes that have taken place in the state in the past 50 years and provides some background on the writing of the original volume.

Connecticut: A Guide to Its Roads, Lore, and People

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
Connecticut

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1938

The "Nutmeg State" guide is full of historical facts and figures about the history of Connecticut. There is an interesting timeline called "Connecticut Firsts" that list historic happenings in Connecticut from 1636 to 1936. The guide contains many photographs of picturesque churches and historic homes and provides a unique and comprehensive index of old and historic houses. Numerous towns and cities described in detail (Yale University is well represented) and the guide presents a number of interesting tours throughout the state. The industrial base is well covered; now, much of the heavy industry described in the guide has left Connecticut.

Delaware: A Guide to the First State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
Delaware

New York: The Viking Press, 1938

The "First State" guide has 549 pages, which is a fairly large guidebook for the second smallest states in terms of area. The eight major cities of Delaware are described, and the history essay is especially interesting. The tour section of the book is profusely illustrated with a number of interesting photographs and lovely pen-and-ink drawings. There are 27 tour descriptions that follow the principal highways.

Florida: A Guide to the Southern-Most State

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of
Florida

New York: Oxford University Press, 1939

The "Sunshine State" guide shows the state before its explosive growth. The photos display a rather rural and quiet state. The emphasis on the Seminole roots (including such things as music) is especially interesting. Since the state is so large and varied, the tour section is quite large. It has been said that this guide strikes a nice balance between tourism and serious scholarship.

Georgia: A Guide to Its Towns and Countryside

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Georgia
Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1946

The guide follows the template of the project, but includes numerous interesting

descriptions of the history and culture of the state of Georgia. The chapters try to give a historical context to aspects of the state's history. For instance, the chapter on education begins with presentation on 1,000 spelling books in 1732. The photos are varied and interesting .

Idaho, A Guide in Word and Picture

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration
St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1976, c1950

The Idaho guide was the first state guide to be published in the **American Guide Series**. The format differs from the standard guide series in that the placement of the essays and tours are different. There are eleven tours of the state. There are excellent essays on the natural elements of the state as well as on the American Indians. The photographs mainly cover these topics.

The WPA Guide to Illinois: The Federal Writers' Project Guide to 1930s Illinois

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
Illinois

With a new introduction by Neil Harris and Michael Conzen
New York: Pantheon Books, 1983

The guide contains an essay called "The Hub of the Continent : Transportation, Commerce, and Industry," which places the state, and especially Chicago, at the center of the continent. The chapter on Chicago takes up more than 100 pages and can stand alone as a guidebook. It is an excellent introduction to the history and sights of this city. There is a unique essay on Abraham Lincoln, written by then-governor of Illinois, Henry Horner. The guide also provides 26 tours of the state, and a list of 50 books about the state of Illinois.

Indiana, A Guide to the Hoosier State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Indiana
New York: Oxford University Press, 1941

The "Hoosier State" guide portrays Indiana in terms of its people and their background, its points of interest, natural setting and resources, and its social and economic development. There is a great deal of interesting recent history in the volume. In addition to the usual photographs of rivers and forests and historic buildings, there a number of pictures of hard-working Hoosiers.

Iowa, A Guide to the Hawkeye State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
Iowa
New York: The Viking Press, 1938

This guide stresses the agricultural roots of the Hawkeye state. It has an essay on farm life and a description of the crops grown in the state. There are many photographs of farms and agrarian life, though the quality of the photos is somewhat poor. Seventeen cities are described in full. There are 23 tours of the state. There is an excellent subject bibliography.

Kansas, A Guide to the Sunflower State

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the state of
Kansas
New York: The Viking Press, 1939

The “Sunflower State” guide reflects the agricultural roots and the agrarian society of Kansas. There are many photographs of farms and farm life. The guide follows the standard template of the series with essays on history, education, transportation, art, and industry. The narrative sections on the background of the state take up a mere 144 pages, making it one of the shortest in the guidebook series.

Kentucky: A Guide to the Bluegrass State

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of
Kentucky
New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939

The “Bluegrass State” was primarily a rural state in the 1930s with Louisville as the only major city. The guide is full of the rich history of Kentucky with characters such as Daniel Boone. There is an interesting chapter (that other of the guidebook series have) simply entitled “The Negro,” which discusses the role and place of African-American Kentuckians.

Louisiana: A Guide to the State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Louisiana
New York: Hastings House, 1941

This guide is full of the rich history of this interesting state. The photographs are some of the best in the entire series. The plantations and farm workers are particularly evocative of the Depression. The cuisine chapter (no surprise here) is one of the finest in the series. All in all, one of the best books in the **American Guide Series**.

Maine: A Guide "Down East"

Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums
Rockland, ME: Courier-Gazette, 1970

The foreword to the original 1937 edition states that the guide was the "most authoritative short, comprehensive narrative of Maine history." The second edition updates the history essay. Two interesting sections are the essay on Maine folklore and the photographs of the state's "maritime heritage." There is a long section on Maine's arts and humanities.

Maryland, A Guide to the Old Line State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Maryland
New York: Oxford University Press
St. Clair Shores, MI: Somerset Publishers, 1973 [c1940]

The "Old Line State" guide is one of the largest guides at over 550 pages. The 1973 reprint by Somerset Publishers is of rather poor quality. The text and photographs are grainy and the fuzzy. The tours go into a great deal of detail, which is a plus for so small a state. The descriptions of Baltimore and Annapolis are especially interesting.

Massachusetts: A Guide to Its Places and People

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
Massachusetts
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937

The Massachusetts guide is one of the best and most comprehensive in the series. There is a funny introduction called "One Moment, Please!" that talks about trying to fit the mass of information into one volume. The quality of the writing and editing is excellent. The photographs are arranged in a logical and thoughtful manner. There are a number of prints showing the state in pre-photographic times. There is a useful list of 50 books about the state. The volume has one the most comprehensive tour schemes of any of the guides.

Michigan: A Guide to the Wolverine State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Michigan
New York: Oxford University Press, 1941

At 696 pages, the "Wolverine State" guide is one of the longest and most comprehensive of the guide series. The dramatic foreword calls the guide "an improvised, a homespun, an amateur epic." The writers are too modest: the quality of

the volume is of the highest sort. Two of the best essays are signed (unique in the series). One is on marine lore and the other is on the development of architecture. Seventeen cities are described in full and there are over 20 tours laid out. The description of Mackinac Island is particularly interesting.

Minnesota: A State Guide

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration
New York: The Viking Press, 1938

The preface of the "Land of Ten Thousand Lakes" guide sums up a problem with the guide series, namely: "How do you compress between two covers a state 84,000 square miles in area?" This volume does an admiral job of giving an overview of Minnesota. It differs from the other volumes in that all of the photographs are grouped together at the front of the book. They show a state of great beauty coupled with agrarian and industrial might. The chapter on industrial development is quite comprehensive.

The WPA Guide to the Minnesota Arrowhead Country

Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Minnesota
With a new introduction by Francis M. Carroll
St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1988

This guide to the northeastern part of Minnesota was originally published in 1941. An original edition is expensive and difficult to find. It is unique in the guide series in that does not cover the entire state or a particular city, but rather a region in a state. It profiles 47 towns, but the emphasis is on outdoor recreation. There are four road tours. Also unique are the 15 canoe trips. An appendix has a long chronology of important events in the Arrowhead Country. The bibliography was updated for the new edition.

Mississippi: A Guide to the Magnolia State

Federal Writers's Project of the Works Progress Administration
New York: The Viking Press, 1938

The "Magnolia State" guidebook is somewhat different from the others, as stated in its preface. Its main emphasis is on typical and average people. There are two essays on farmers: white farmers of the Central and Tennessee Hills and African Americans farmers of the Delta. The photos are not as interesting as in some of the other volumes in the series.

Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Missouri
New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941

"Show me" are the operative words for this guide. There are numerous photographs of all aspects of the state. Black and white photographs show buildings, farm scenes, and the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. The history section is of particular interest and the influence of the Mississippi River is discussed. There is a bibliography, arranged by subject.

The WPA Guide to 1930s Montana

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of
Montana

With a new foreword by William Kittredge
Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994

The only drawback of the 1994 reprint is the murky quality of the photographs. The original guide was published in 1939 and evokes the wild-west past of Montana. The population was mostly rural and cities were small. Most of the economy was tied to either the land, mining, or cattle. Tourism was in its infancy—dude ranches were just starting to take off—so a tour guide to Montana was a novelty. The guide stresses the natural beauty of the state. Outdoor recreation consisted of camping, hunting, and fishing. There are 10 trail tours of Glacier National Park and 18 tours throughout the state.

Nebraska; A Guide to the Cornhusker State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
Nebraska

New York: The Viking Press, 1939

The guide to the "Cornhusker State" is full of many interesting photographs of the people and places of Nebraska. They portray a largely agrarian state of hard-working farmers. There is an interesting essay on the unicameral legislature of Nebraska. The guide sticks pretty close to the series format. Eight cities are given detailed descriptions. There are 13 detailed tours of the state.

Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Nevada
Portland, OR: Binford & Mort 1940

The Nevada guide has some unique features such as "Mining and Mining Jargon,"

“Ranch and Stock Growing,” and “Stock Jargon.” There are interesting profiles on ghost towns, mining, and pioneers. The photographs run the gamut from rodeos, Indian reservations, mines, and spectacular scenery. There are 12 tours of the state. There is an extensive bibliography of Nevada books and a chronology of Nevada history in the appendix.

Here's New England! A Guide to Vacationland

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in the New England States

Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge MA: Riverside Press, 1939

This regional volume is unique in the series in that it covers more than one state. It would have been useful to a traveler making an automobile tour of the New England region. It provides an excellent overview and includes some history, lore, and photographs.

New Hampshire: A Guide to the Granite State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of New Hampshire

Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938

The “Granite State” guide covers the rich history and varied landscape of New Hampshire. The tours cover highlights such as the White Mountains, Lake Winnepesaukee, and the coast near Portsmouth. As with the other New England guides, there are numerous photographs of Colonial houses and churches. There are also a number of landscape pictures along with an attractive map, done in 1937.

New Jersey: A Guide to Its Present and Past

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of New Jersey

New York: Hastings House, 1946

The “Garden State” guide covers a number of interesting aspects of this varied state. New Jersey’s numerous industries are explored. There was some controversy (explained in the foreword) about including material relating to labor unions and demonstrations that was eventually deleted from the volume. The lore of the “Jersey Devil” is explained. There are numerous photos of both industrial and natural New Jersey. There is also a 1989 paperback reprint, published by Rutgers University Press.

New Mexico: A Guide to the Colorful State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of New Mexico

New York: Hastings House, 1953

The guide captures well the blend of the three cultures of New Mexico: Indian, Spanish, and Anglo-American. As with so many of the western guidebooks, the photography is stunning. The drawings in the volume also stand out. The essays on New Mexican art, folklore, and especially language (which includes a glossary) are perhaps the most interesting. This guide is one of the most outstanding in the series. First published in 1940, the guide was completely revised in 1953.

New York: A Guide to the Empire State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of New York

New York: Oxford University Press, 1940

The "Empire State" guide provides an in-depth tour of the state. The volume opens with an interesting essay called "The New York Countryside." The New York City chapter is a much truncated version of the volume devoted to the city. Eighteen cities are explained in full. The photographs are many and capture the diversity of New York. There are 45 tours of the state, including four additional tours of Long Island. There is a useful bibliography.

New York City Guide: A Comprehensive Guide to the Five Boroughs of the Metropolis—Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Richmond

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in New York City

New York: Random House, 1939

The New York City guide is one of the gems of the **American Guide Series**. The volume is a detailed description of the communities and points of interest in all the five boroughs of New York City. This guide is the companion volume to "New York Panorama," which is more an interpretation of the city's life and history. It is arranged by borough and provides detailed descriptions of all points of interest. Manhattan alone takes up 406 pages. One of the glories of the volume are the numerous pen-and-ink drawings and woodcuts. No other guide has this quantity of drawings. The photographs show a much different city than the New York City of today. Even after 60 years, this guide is invaluable to anyone interested in the "Big Apple."

North Dakota: A Guide to the Northern Prairie State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
North Dakota

St. Clair Shores, MI: Somerset Publishers, 1973, 1950

The original versions of this guide are quite rare due to a fire that destroyed most of them. The quality of the reprint version is fine and the photographs are crisp. The essays capture the pioneer spirit and agrarian character of North Dakota.

The Ohio Guide

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Ohio
New York: Oxford University Press, 1940 [1948 printing]

One of the highlights of the Ohio guide is a series of photographs of small-town life by Ben Shahn for the Farm Security Administration. There are 17 essays that deal with the political, industrial, and cultural life of Ohio. The essay on the economy provides interesting information on the labor movement in the state. There is also an essay of the history and role of religion in Ohio.

Oklahoma, A Guide to the Sooner State

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947

The guide to the "Sooner State" is imbued with the civilizations of the Native Americans who have lived in this state for generations. There are numerous fascinating photographs of Native Americans. Edward Everett Dale in his essay, "The Spirit of Oklahoma," calls Oklahoma the "last American frontier" and says that Oklahoma "has made greater material progress in a single generation than has any other area of comparable size in the United States." The photos of the cities document the swift development of the state.

Oregon: End of the Trail

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Oregon
Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, c1940

The Oregon guide sings the praises of the state's beauty. It also contains some unique features, like an amusing chapter called "Tall Tales and Legends," and a recipe for huckleberry cakes. The chapter on social welfare discusses the impact of the Depression on the people of Oregon.

Pennsylvania: A Guide to the Keystone State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of
Pennsylvania

New York: Oxford University Press, 1940

The guide to the "Keystone State" is divided into four parts: general background, cities and towns, tours, and appendices. The essays, which take up 178 pages, explore the rich history of Pennsylvania. They describe the diversity of the state: heavy industry, mines, farms, big cities, and small towns. The photographs capture the many historical sights of the state, such as Independence Hall. Eighteen towns are explored in full, and 38 driving tours of the state. There is a guide to further reading about the state.

Puerto Rico: A Guide to the Island of Boriquen

Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration in Co-operation with the
Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration

New York: The University Society, 1940

The preface says this guide, "written by Puerto Rican citizens and residents for their fellow-Americans in Puerto Rico and on the mainland, is . . . intended merely as a guide for the visitor or stay-at-home voyager, indicating points of interest along highways and in cities and towns, outlining the natural history and resources of the Island, sketching the general background of Puerto Rico's history and tradition, tracing the great stream of Puerto Rican culture to the point where it mingles with that of the mainland, and describing some of the energetic efforts of the Insular and Federal governments . . . to make Puerto Rico a better place to live in."

Rhode Island: A Guide to the Smallest State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of
Rhode Island

Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1937

The "Smallest State" has a large history that is thoroughly covered by this guide. Since its geographic area is small, the guide concentrates instead on the state's numerous historic sites. The volume is full of pictures of historic churches and houses. About 150 pages of the volume are driving tours of the tiny state.

South Carolina: A Guide to the Palmetto State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of South
Carolina

New York: Oxford University Press, 1941

The guide to the “Palmetto State” reflects the role of the arts in the state—music, drama, and architecture are covered. There are even recipes for such delicacies as Cracklin’ Bread and Peach Leather. The chapter on religion is of particular interest. As with the other guides, the “tours” are helpful for an introduction to the state.

Tennessee: A Guide to the State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration for the State of
Tennessee
New York: The Viking Press, 1939

The Tennessee guide is a slim one. The essay section is rather short at 176 pages, but is packed with useful and interesting information. The essay on the Tennessee Valley Authority provides numerous statistics on the energy produced by the TVA. Seven of the major cities are described in full. There are 16 tours in addition to a tour of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The photographs are not as good as some of the others in the series, and there are none of the pen-and-ink drawings that enliven the other guidebooks.

Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Texas
New York: Hastings House, 1940

The “Lone Star” state’s guide is a long one at 718 pages, befitting the size of the state. It follows the standard WPA guide format with many of the standard essays. There is an interesting essay called “Social Life” that discusses the ways Texans have fun. The photographs show the people of Texas at work and play. There are 29 tours of the state. Fifteen Texas cities are discussed in great detail. A useful reading list of books on Texas is provided.

Utah: A Guide to the State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Utah
New York: Hastings House, 1945, c1941.

This guidebook illustrates the close relationship between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the history of the state of Utah. There is an entire chapter on the church. There is also an interesting chapter on mining. The wonderful black-and-white drawings throughout make this volume stand out.

Vermont: A Guide to the Green Mountain State

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Vermont

Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1937

The "Green Mountain" state guide is arranged according to the standard plan for all the state guide books with essays on the standard topics: literature, architecture, history, transportation, etc. Twenty-five hundred miles on roads were traveled to come up with comprehensive tours. There is a fascinating essay entitled "Vermonters" by Dorothy Canfield Fisher that attempts to explain the unique spirit of the people of Vermont. The photographs are heavy on picturesque New England scenes, with numerous church and Colonial homes.

Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia

New York : Oxford University Press, 1940 (1946 printing)

The 710-page guide to the "Old Dominion" provides a detailed look at Virginia. Since Virginia has long played an important role in the history of the United States, the guide is packed with historical information. The photographs document the many historic buildings and places. The essay on architecture is very informative. The 15 principal cities are discussed in full. There are 24 tours.

Washington, A Guide to the Evergreen State

Writers' Program (Wash.)

Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1941

The "Evergreen State" guide is the second longest in the series (with the Washington, D.C. guide being the longest). This guidebook, like many others, can be enjoyed by the armchair traveler. There are a number of special driving tours. The descriptions are full and the photographs capture the beauty of the state.

Washington: City and Capital

Writers Program of the Work Projects Administration

Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937

This guide, which weighs in at four pounds, is the longest guidebook in the series. It provides an excellent history and description of the nation's capital. Each of the monuments and historic sights are described in detail, and the photographs of the city are of special interest. It is said the President Franklin D. Roosevelt was upset with how heavy this tome was, so a smaller, more portable one was produced.

West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of West
Virginia

New York: Oxford University Press, 1941

The "Mountain State" guide follows the standard format of the **American Guide Series** with a mixture of essays and tours. The guide describes both the raw beauty of the state as well its industrialization. The coal mining industry is also discussed. Eleven cities are covered, including tiny Shepherdstown because of its history. There are 23 detailed tours of the state. The photographs provide an excellent pictorial record of the state.

Wisconsin: A Guide to the Badger State

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Wisconsin

New York : Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941

The "Badger State" guide is divided into three sections (as are most of the guides): a series of historical essays, a description of Wisconsin's nine principal cities, and a series of selected tours along the state's major highways. There are a number of photographs of lakes and rivers, farmlands, and the lumbering industry. The chapter on the labor movement in the 1930s goes into some detail on labor strife. The dairy industry is discussed in full.

Wyoming, A Guide to Its History, Highways, and People

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Wyoming

New York, Oxford University Press 1941

This guide was published during the 50th anniversary of the state. The WPA workers traveled every highway and main road and even the trails in the national parks to check the accuracy of existing sources. The history section stresses the state's pioneer roots . The photographs attempt to capture the immense beauty of Wyoming.