Register of the WPA San Joaquin County Projects Files, 1935-1941

Collection number: MS 104

Holt-Atherton Department of Special Collections
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Abstract
The U.S. Congress established the Works Progress Administration (later the Work Projects Administration) in Spring 1935. The Congress appropriated over $1 billion for this agency, which paid wages ranging from fifteen to ninety dollars per month to transform individuals then on direct relief into "work relief" public employees. The WPA carried an average of 2.1 million workers on its rolls each year between 1935 and 1941. These government employees engaged in tasks as widely varied as hoeing weeds and creating bibliographies.

Various county agencies submitted work proposals to the county Board of Supervisors, which, when approved by the board, were passed on to the WPA administration in San Francisco for final approval. The county was expected to pay some proportion of the work costs. Many projects failed to materialize due to lack of federal funds. The WPA was sometimes obliged to offer wages lower than they had expected to provide in order to salvage local projects.
The files in this collection date from July 1935 to April 1941. They consist of WPA project proposal application forms, San Joaquin County Supervisor’s resolutions on individual projects, and general correspondence relating to WPA policies, total county WPA expenditures, and approved or cancelled projects. Because project numbering varies from year to year and because numbering is sometimes lacking altogether on the official forms, the papers relating to specific project proposals are arranged by project proposal date.

Box 1

1935-1936

1935

- Index WPA projects
- General correspondence & project approvals/denials
- 7/18--Survey of El Rancho del Campo de los Franceses
- 7/19--Clerks./Welfare Dept. for tabulating relief trends
- 7/19--Clerical assistance for County Welfare Dept.
- 7/19--Clerical assistance for County Assessor’s Office
- 7/19--Adobe brick production, Cty. Fairgrounds
- 7/22--Production clay roof tiles for County Fair Grounds
- 7/22--Reconstruction County Fair horse barns
- 7/22--Construction adobe brick bldg. for County Fair Grounds
- 7/23--Construction of fences on county roads
- 7/25--Improvements physical plant, County Welfare Dept.
- 7/31--Flood Control Littlejohn Creek
- 8/1--Rd. improvement NE of Tracy
- 8/2--Clerical assistance for County Supt. Schools Office
- 8/6--Painting & roofing, SJ Gnl. Hospital
- 8/8--Flood control, Calaveras R.
- 8/9--SJ Co. scenic exhibit for San Diego Fair
- 8/19--Weed removal cty. roads
- 8/22--Painting wards & kitchen, SJ Gnl. Hospital
- 9/10--Filling abandoned ditch, levelling street [loc. unspec.]
- 9/16--Physiotherapy training for trainees in Bur. Rehabilitation
- 9/23--Gathering, splitting, piling wood for indigent families at County Fair Grounds
- 9/25--Do. for south county families
- 10/3--Clerical assistance new filing system, Bur. of Identification
- 10/3--Construction, County Supt. Schools Offices
- 10/8--Garment renovation for relief recipients
- 10/12--Garment manufacture for relief recipients
- 10/14--Brush clearing, Paradise Park, Stockton
- 10/18--Maintenance & operation of sewing rooms in Lodi and Manteca
- 10/23--Housekeepers for elderly & infirm
- 10/24--Construction of shoulders on cty. rds.
- 11/13--Architectural draftsman to design bldg. County Fair Grounds
- 11/19--Establishment camp at Paradise Park for county weed abatement crew
- 11/19--Preparing advertisements for WPA jobs
- 11/21--Personnel for three nursery schools
- 11/30--Construction judging ring, main exhibit bldg., etc. County Fair Grounds
- 12/16--Sewing project for women
- 12/23--Installation metal drainage pipes, central cty. rds.

1936

- General correspondence & project approvals/denials
- 1/13--Construction of rd., south levee, Smith’s Canal
- 1/18--Cty. Office bldg., Stockton
- 1/20--Rodent eradication, eastern cty.
- 1/29--Drainage improvement, Commeta & Bellota rds.
- 2/6--Do., West Ln. betw. 8 Mile Rd. & Hammer Ln.
-2/7---Improvement shoulders, Old French Camp Rd.
-2/7---Raising rd. grade on Copperopolis Rd. from Diverting Canal east
-2/7---Improvement shoulders, Jack Tone Rd. betw. French Camp Rd. and Mariposa Rd.
-3/1---Concrete drainage pipe from Acampo Rd. to Mokelumne R.
-3/1---Improvement interior Ag. Exhibit bldg., Cty. Fair Grnds.
-3/3---Construction sidewalks, Escalon
-3/12--Loading, hauling, spreading dirt, SJ Genl. Hospital
-4/20--Construction storm sewers, Ripon
-5/13--Repair concrete apron, Diverting Canal, nr. Belotopa
-5/25--Gathering, cutting, collecting wood for indigent use, County Fair Grounds
-7/17--Improvement, rd. right-of-ways [loc. unspec.]
-8/14--Surveying throughout cty. of unsurveyed rds.
-8/16--Construction warehouse & parking shed, SJ Genl. Hospital
-11/3--Clerical assistance for indexing, Cty. Sheriff's Office
-12/10--Reconstruction rd. drainage thru Bethany
-12/16--Demolish timber bridge, Mormon Slough & replace w/ earth fill

Box Box 2

1937-1941
1937
-General corresp. & project approvals/denials
-2/19--Production clay roofing tiles
-4/15--Grading streets in El Ricardo Terrace
-4/20--Wood cutting for indigent persons
-4/26--Shoulder & drainage work on Mariposa Rd. betw. Jack Tone Rd. & Hogan Rd.
-5/15--Repair & improve cty. hwys. [loc. unspec.]
-8/8--Maintenance & operation of sewing rms., Stockton
-8/10--Cataloguing, indexing for Cty. Sheriff's Office
-9/8--Improvement north levee, Mormon Channel
-11/18--Improvement shoulders & drainage on Copperopolis Rd.
-12/22--Additions to storm sewers, Ripon

1938
-General corresp. & fiscal report on expenditures, July 1935 to December 1937
-5/7---Sewer installation, County Fair Grounds
-5/10--Cataloguing, indexing for Cty. Sheriff's Office
-5/23--Housekeepers & childcare for indigent families where mothers are infirm
-6/16--Federal Rd. improvements, [loc. unspec.]
-6/30--Cty. rd. improvements [loc. unspec.]
-7/6--Cty. rd. improvements, Sup. Dist. #5
-7/7--Improvements at Micke Grove Cty. Park
-7/8--Improvements to streets, SJ Genl. Hospital
-7/10--Improvements, County Fair Grounds
-7/18--Cutting timber for indigent poor
-8/4---Cty. rd. improvements, Sup. Dist. #4
-8/5---Oiling, spreading gravel, cty. rds. [loc. unspec.]
-8/15--Clerical, professional workers to assist in county-wide lands survey
-9/12--Construction dormitory, poultry & cattle barns, County Fair Grounds

1939
-General corresp.
-3/14--Recreation supervisors, SJ Genl. Hospital
-6/7--Garment renovation, Stockton
-10/2--Housekeepers & childcare for indigent families where mothers are infirm

1940
-1/19--Cutting timber for indigent poor
-1/?---Construction warehouse, Cty. Corp. Yards, Stockton
-8/12---Establish triangulation system for county-wide survey
-9/3---Garment renovation for indigent poor
-12/5---Housekeepers & childcare for indigent families where mothers are infirm

1941
-4/28---Agricultural Dept. relief workers